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How To Know If You Need To Increase Executive Presence?

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🐦 Executive presence involves the ability to be selective, not necessarily comprehensive.

By Dianna Booher

Oddly enough in our small rural school, we had three of us in the seventh grade class with virtually the same name: Dianna (me), plus Diana and Diane (a set of identical twins). Pity the poor teacher. Because the twins were identical—and I do mean identical—in appearance, they played all sorts of “switching” pranks on substitute teachers.



Here's how to increase your executive presence. ICLIPART

But after people got to know them, differentiating was easy. Even as a young teen, one had a much stronger personal presence than the other. Not that “presence” is all about personality, but their habits, attitudes, communication styles, poise, sense of humor, values, and so many other things contributed to that assessment.

Your personal presence—or lack thereof—becomes just as quickly evident to those around you. While none of these items listed below is a negative by itself, altogether these characteristics, attitudes, skills, or traits may lead to a plateaued career.

5 Signs That Suggest You Need Stronger Executive Presence

Today In: Leadership



1) You Prefer to Offer Your Ideas *After* the Meeting Than Speak Up *In* the Meeting

Would others consider you “quiet” in meetings? Do you prefer to give serious thought to topics and then email your ideas or feedback *after* the meeting? Is that preference so that you can be more complete—or because you feel uncomfortable in speaking before a group? Do others seem to “talk over you,” modify your ideas somewhat, and then take credit for them?

How to turn it around? Realize that every idea offered doesn't require eloquence. Sometimes the simple act of speaking up is more important than the comment itself. Participation and engagement reflect confidence and your ability to interact with colleagues at all levels.

2) Friends Say You're “Undiscovered” Talent

While everyone in the workplace can immediately identify the loudmouths and social butterflies, you tend to keep your head down and deliver results. As a result, you've been passed over for projects and promotions that you think should have been yours.

Friends working closely with you frequently praise your expertise in specific areas. You feel confident and competent. But somehow, wider recognition has not come your way.

How to turn it around? Consider letting your boss know of accomplishments in the same way you'd report new training to HR for tracking purposes. That is, consider “reporting” your goals, books you're reading and applying to your job, metrics met, or favorable client comments. No need to editorialize. Just inform “in light of providing input on your career goals.”

3) You Have a Differential Approach

If you were decorating your office wall with the “mottos” you live by, your selection would include “Go along to get along.” On the other hand, “let's rumble” would definitely *not* make the display. Confrontation keeps you awake at night.

How to turn it around? Understand the value you contribute to the organization. Earning your paycheck is often about standing your ground and defending your ideas,


approaches, programs, and projects.

4) You Run on Multiple Tracks But Lack Systems

Because you're smart, your thoughts often race along many tracks at once. When someone asks you a question, you can envision seven ways to respond. You want to be accurate and complete, so your mind races back and forth, trying to decide which approach to take as you answer.

As you work on complex projects under a tight deadline, your brain operates in the same way. As a result, your work style and space tend to mimic your brain as it races from point to point. Your status reports may sound disjointed. You may miss a few deadlines or details. Your appearance may look disheveled. After all, you're in a hurry and often feel like the proverbial "mad scientist" as you deliver results.

To an outsider, you look disorganized and "out of control."

How to turn it around? Develop systems to allow time for polished results. Executive presence involves the ability to be selective, not necessarily comprehensive. 

5) You Always Avoid the Bleeding Edge

If something works well, you follow the plan. But innovative approaches give you pause. You have no desire to go where others fear to tread. You prefer to "stay in your lane." You're a firm believer in earning credibility by doing quality work, not necessarily by being an early adopter or project pioneer.

How to turn it around? Take on more stretch assignments. Become more comfortable with risks. Learn that failure is not permanent unless you refuse to learn from it.

Those with executive presence think strategically. They organize their ideas coherently and express themselves clearly as they write and speak. They interact comfortably to convey genuine interest and respect. A small tweak in these traits, attitudes, and skills can give you a significant career boost.

*Dianna Booher is the bestselling author of 48 books. Her newest is **Faster, Fewer, Better Emails**. She helps organizations communicate clearly. Follow her at BooherResearch.com and [@DiannaBooher](https://twitter.com/DiannaBooher).*

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