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Do You Communicate With Power And Authority? Three Simple Questions To Ask Yourself

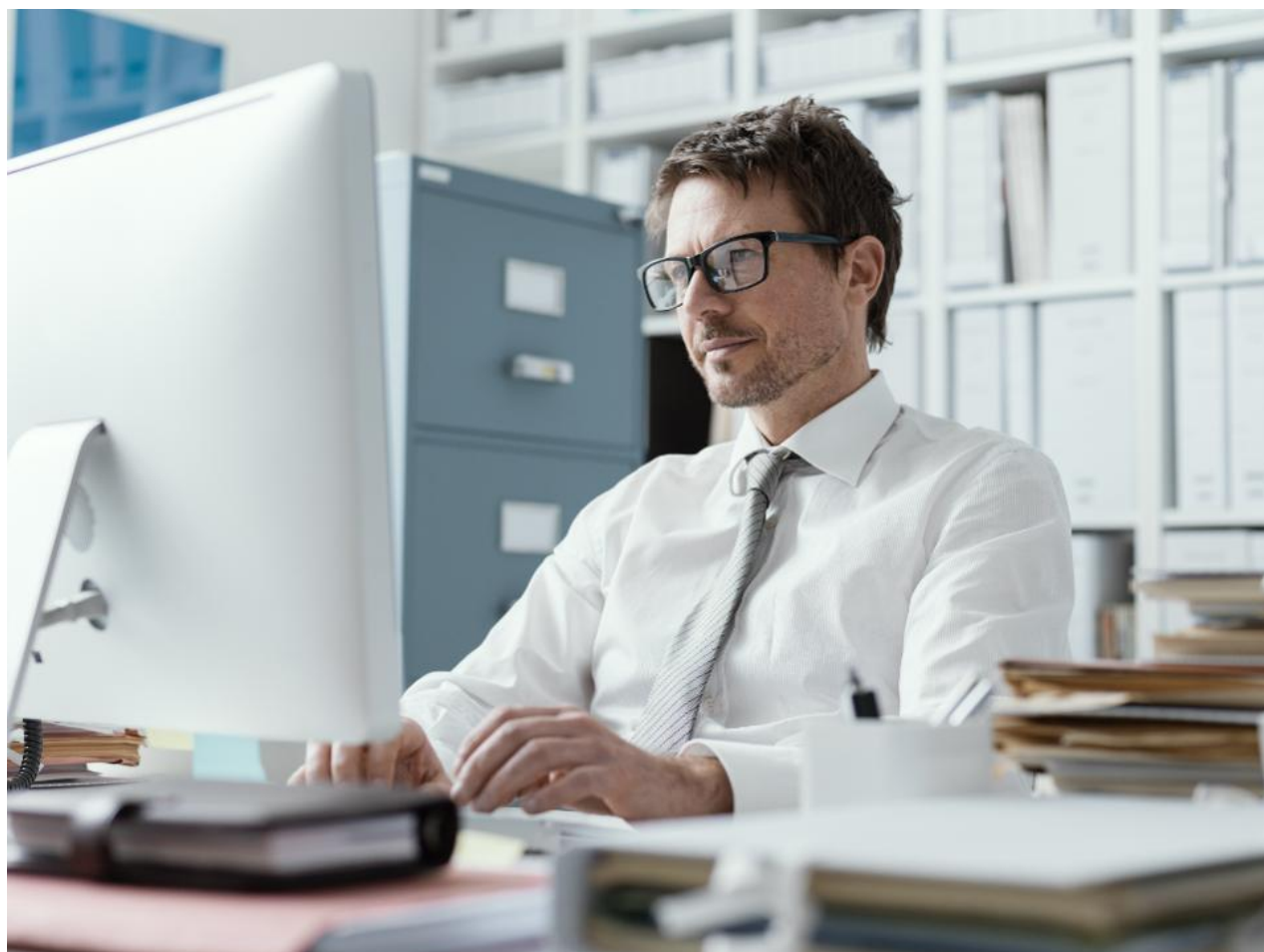


Karen Dee CommunityVoice
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POST WRITTEN BY

Karen Dee

Karen is a certified executive coach, Co-Founder & Managing Partner of [Accendo Leadership Advisory Group](#).



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It is critical in today's business environment to have the ability to come across with confidence and conviction. Promotability is enhanced for leaders who outwardly show that they believe in their abilities, have that crisp executive appearance and express themselves clearly. When it comes to vying for senior leadership roles, the price of entry is a solid resume, and often, the differentiator is the leaders' ability to communicate with power and authority.

How do you know if you are communicating with power and authority? Here are three simple questions to help you self-assess:

How Do I Feel?

Are you confident in your competence? Are you using your emotions as a strength or taking things personally? When you look in the mirror, is the reflection you see back that of a lion or a cat? How you feel about your own abilities translates into how others view your competency and, often, confidence trumps competency.

When presenting, rehearse to be comfortable with the facts and supporting information. If self-confidence is an issue, force yourself to take small risks that convert into wins. Then, build upon it and try taking bigger risks, which will lead to bigger wins. The key is to make sure you *feel* confident -- and display it.

How Do I Look?

Are you dressed for success? Are you claiming the power seat at the table? Is your body language open and large versus closed and small? Dressing for the job you want instead of the job you have enables others to visualize you in that promotable role. When you look good, you feel good, which translates into confidence.

Evaluating how you enter a room, where you sit and how you stand all contribute to your executive presence and that "wow" factor that organizations want to see their top executives demonstrate.

How Do I Sound?

Are you coming across in a way that truly allows you to be heard? Eliminating undermining language and phrases (e.g., just, actually, kind of, almost, sorry, a little bit) help leaders to communicate more clearly and deliberately. Taking credit

for one's own work without it sounding like boasting, as well as speaking in the right tone and pitch (not too soft or high pitched), can aid towards displaying authority. Jumping into conversations at the appropriate time, challenging viewpoints and negotiating are also key ingredients to demonstrating power. Experimenting in less critical situations and then asking for feedback on appropriateness from a trusted stakeholder can aid in the ability to judge timing and frequency.

We all know that *how* we communicate can be just as important or more important than *what* we communicate. Title, gender, age, race, time on the job and our own bias all can contribute to communication barriers. Understanding how we come across and are viewed by others is critically important to leaders' success. Use the three questions above to help evaluate and direct your ability to communicate. The next time you are about to enter that next big meeting or situation, remember to ask yourself, "How do I feel? How do I look? And how do I sound?" Then go stand, deliver and be heard.

Forbes Coaches Council is an invitation-only community for leading business and career coaches. ***Do I qualify?***
