



NEWS FOR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS OF BYWATER CONSULTING GROUP

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## How to Increase Your Leadership Presence

In my work with Fortune 50 leaders, I help executives up their game in any number of ways. Sometimes the work is about being more strategic. Sometimes it's about elevating the performance of the leadership team. Sometimes it's about improving relationships and communication with key stakeholders.

Whatever the primary focus, one thing is a constant. Good leaders become remarkable leaders when they learn to exert greater influence across their organizations. Influence involves having strong relationships, outstanding communication skills, and the credibility that comes from resounding executive presence.

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## What Clients Are Saying



***"With her  
engaging  
personality and  
sophisticated  
approach to  
working with  
senior***

Whether you are a senior leader or still coming up the ranks, here are 3 simple ways to increase your executive presence right away.

**1. Dress the part.** Okay, I get it. This sounds a bit superficial, doesn't it? Being an executive should be about substance not style - shouldn't it?

Being a leader should be about taking a strategic approach rather than getting 'caught in the weeds' - agreed?

Well, yes, substance is indeed essential. But it's not all that matters.

Think of it this way. The last time you checked into a luxury hotel, what did you notice? Chances are, you took immediate inventory of the lobby - the decor, brightness and general ambiance. And just as the foyer provides your first impression of a hotel, a leader's style of dress establishes a first executive impression.

So do this. Invest in a few high-end items of clothing. For key business meetings, show up in a sharp, tailored suit. Wear a fantastic watch. Invest in a great pen and use a leather folio. You'll command respect from colleagues and clients alike. And chances are, you'll stand taller and exude confidence when you show up looking like a million bucks.

**2. Speak the part.** This is about substance **and** style. Of course, you need to demonstrate your competence, intelligence and knowledge when you speak to clients and colleagues. You should be able to converse at a strategic level and also connect the dots from strategy to

***executives, Liz developed an outstanding reputation among our Officers and Directors.***

***She is well liked, trusted and highly respected throughout the organization."***

**- Joseph A. Trunfio, Retired President and CEO, Atlantic Health Systems**

### **Leadership Insights:**

Check out Liz's leadership **videos**.

Targeted advice for exceptional leadership.

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implementation. You should use targeted, sophisticated language-without alienating people with unduly obscure or inaccessible wording. And you should always strive to be clear, concise and unhurried in your comments.

Before your next important meeting or presentation, take a few minutes to center yourself, focus on your key points, and practice speaking slowly and deliberately-or passionately and with conviction if that's what's needed. When you're up at bat, state your case with confidence and poise. Build in some strategic pauses for impact. And always allow others the opportunity to ask questions, interject and provide their ideas and point of view.

**3. Turn on the charm.** Regardless of your political leanings, there are few people who can deny that certain leaders (think Bill Clinton) are remarkably charismatic. They know how to make others feel valued, important and liked. They are masters at building support through their positive interactions with the people around them. They inspire others with their words, expressions and body language.

Of course, I would never advise my clients to be false-and I don't encourage you to blindly copy a style that isn't genuinely you. However, if you're not naturally a charmer-and few people are-here are a two quick tricks for immediately upping the charm level.

**Smile more.** Before your next meeting, teleconference or formal presentation, take a moment to think about something that makes you feel good. Look at a photo of your last

vacation. Listen to your favorite song. Breathe. Whatever works for you. As the old tune goes, smile and the world smiles with you.

**Make great eye contact.** Whether you're speaking with one person or sitting among a group, resist the temptation to check your email or type notes into your laptop. Look up, catch someone's eye, stay there for a second or two. A bit of well-timed eye contact will help you make an emotional connection with the person across from you. And that can only help you exert influence and show up as a confident, poised, credible executive.

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## **How to Conduct a Truly High Impact Offsite**

If you're like most of the Fortune 500 executives I work with, you've attended more than your share of offsites. With hope, some of these sessions have been highly productive - and well worth the time, energy and budget that went into them.

In all likelihood, however, some have felt insubstantial, disorganized or just plain bland. Such meetings are all too common in corporate life - and a missed opportunity for real strategic impact.

To help you make the most of your next team session, here are several best practices from a team offsite I recently conducted.

### **The What:**

The team was brought together for a 2-day meeting - the

second in a series of quarterly offsites. Although this group has a demanding daily grind, their offsites are prioritized as an invaluable tool for driving rapid progress.

### The Why:

To carve out time for the team to take a *meaningful pause* in the action - to have them *slow down* long enough to think, plan, set or change direction - and then hit the accelerator hard. I call this type of session a **Strategic Pause**.

### The How:

This team focused on clarifying vision, communicating brand, and aligning on priorities, opportunities and challenges.

They identified ways to improve communication and collaboration - allowing the group to fully capitalize on strengths that might otherwise go unrecognized.

They spoke frankly about what each team member *brings* to the table - and what each *needs* from the group.

And the entire team made a commitment to help each other in new and creative ways.

### Why It Worked:

Among other things, here's what the leader did right.

She encouraged and modeled openness and candor.

She asked questions and invited honest replies.

She listened without interrupting, disputing or dominating the conversation.

She dug deep to get at the root of the team's greatest challenges and concerns.

She was genuinely interested in hearing what people had to say.

She recognized individual and group successes - and she encouraged the team to replicate best practices.

## What Could Have Gone Wrong:

Here's a partial list of typical derailers.

The team could have been distracted by nonstop email, text, and other electronic hijackers. (They weren't)

People could have been unduly critical or dismissive of one another's ideas. (They weren't)

People could have remained silent - in anticipation of being struck down or overrun. (They didn't)

The team could have dwelled on failures and obstacles. (Instead, they looked honestly at what's gone wrong in the past. And they developed viable solutions for current and anticipated challenges.)

So now it's your turn. Take time to pause and reflect on *your* last offsite.

What went especially well - and where did the meeting fall short of expectations?

For your next offsite: build upon past successes, foster an atmosphere of openness, invite dialogue and debate, be genuine, focus on priorities, and set the stage to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

And don't forget to ask your team what they'd like to address. By considering everyone's most pressing concerns, you ensure a strategic team offsite that is truly worth everyone's time.

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## **How to Increase Your Influence Immediately: Four Leadership Tips**

I recently began working with Jack, a high-level executive for a large multi-national company. Jack is extremely bright, full of great ideas, and eager to put those ideas into motion.

But Jack has a real problem. He's having one heck of a time getting support from others in the organization. His ideas are slow to gain traction - if they gain traction at all. In fact, his proposed initiatives are often met with covert or outright resistance from his key stakeholders.

**Jack lacks influence. And if he can't influence, he can't lead.**

If you're like Jack, you've got a job to do. You're a leader and you need to win the hearts, minds, and commitment of others if you are to get things done. Here are four ways to build relationships, improve communication, and increase influence right away.

### **1. Stop leaving others out of the conversation**

Busy executives are just that - busy. And often overwhelming so. The demands don't stop and the pace never slows. So you may believe it's a waste of time to pause in your activity long enough to sit down with an important stakeholder - to fill him in on your plans or to seek input or agreement before taking action.

But the fact is, when you pause - to align with colleagues, gain support, or collect additional insights - you develop trust, build helpful coalitions, and avoid alienating people who might otherwise slow or completely derail your efforts. In other words, you create influence.

## 2. Answer your emails

I get it. You're swamped with hundreds of emails every day. If you're like many of my clients, you are so bombarded that you can't get through daily email in less than an hour or two, sometimes more. The idea isn't to add to your burden or busyness.

Here's what I tell my clients to do.

Don't reply to your email scattershot throughout the day. Instead, block out 15 minutes 2-3 times a day to review your inbox and identify where a prompt reply is needed. Your response may be as simple as acknowledging receipt of important information, "Got your note, will review and get back to you by Thursday afternoon. If you need me sooner, please call me on mobile. Thanks!"

And that's it. In 30 seconds' time, you've shown that you heard the other person (or people), that you're going to respond in greater detail, and that you're available if needed - without creating further email clutter.

The result? When people feel recognized and heard, they are more likely to listen to you, consider your ideas, and provide support for your initiatives. How's that for influence?

## 3. Listen to someone else's POV

You already know how **you** feel and think about a new product, project or idea. Now it's time to see it through others' eyes. If you are Head of R&D, for example, ask your colleagues in Sales and Marketing what this new idea or product means to them. Does it create opportunities? Will it

cause headaches? Is it even feasible? Perhaps they have insights into the customer experience that you should take into account.

Listening to others - and pausing to reflect on different points of view - will create stronger alliances, drive better decisions and produce far greater influence and impact.

#### **4. Pay attention**

When someone steps into your office or calls you on the phone, give her your full and undivided attention. Don't surreptitiously glance at your computer screen. Trust me, you're not fooling anyone. Don't tap away at your keyboard, even if you are taking notes on the discussion. Don't let your devices interrupt the conversation with pings and vibrations.

Be in the moment, fully attentive to the other person (or people). Listen without comment until it's your turn to ask a clarifying question or offer an opinion. You'll be amazed how much more effective these conversations will be - and how much stronger your relationships will become.

Good communication coupled with excellent relationships translates to increased credibility and far greater influence.

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### **Exceptional Leadership Tip #10**

Accelerated and sustainable progress can't be rushed.  
It requires deliberate pauses to reflect, review and redirect.

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#### **About Liz Bywater:**

For over a decade, top global organizations have requested Liz's help in resolving issues such as creating extraordinary client relationships, increasing market persuasion, and driving productive collaborations in an increasingly complex

world.

Liz advises senior leaders at some of the world's most successful companies, such as Johnson & Johnson, Thomson Reuters, Bristol-Myers Squibb and AmerisourceBergen Corporation, among others. She uses her expertise in human behavior to drive commercial success. She helps her clients drive innovation, exert influence and lead their organizations through change.

A thought leader in organizational excellence, Liz provides expert commentary for such publications as the Wall Street Journal, NY Times and USA Today. She earned her PhD in Psychology at the Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies. Her undergraduate degree is from Cornell University. Liz graduated Cornell Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude.

She is a member of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting and author of the eagerly awaited forthcoming book, ***Slow Down to Speed Up: Harnessing the Power of Pausing to Improve Leadership, Advance Your Career and Get Things Done!***

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**Testimonials**

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## Contact

For information on how we help top executives, **send us an email** or give us a call at 800.846.4546.

## Us:

We look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, please **visit us** any time!