

10 ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR PERSONAL IMPACT AND PRESENCE FOR LEADERS



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If you're a leader and manager, you need to look, sound and act like one if you're to command authority and be taken seriously. [Steve Bavister](#), Director of Speak First, provides timely advice on what to do and how to do it.

1. BE CLEAR ABOUT THE IMPACT YOU WANT TO MAKE

Start with the end in mind. What impact do you want to make? How do you want others to experience you? Think of yourself as a product you need to market effectively and be clear what your 'brand' is.

2. BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

Don't be fake. People won't trust you – and won't follow you. Authenticity is essential. If you're a shrinking violet don't try to be the life and soul. You'll have maximum impact and presence when you're true to yourself.

3. ACTIVELY MANAGE THE PERCEPTION OTHERS HAVE OF YOU

Don't leave things to chance. People will form an impression of you whether you like it or not – and that impression greatly affects what you are able to achieve personally and professionally. Actively managing the perception others have of you means that more people will understand clearly who you are and what you stand for.

4. LOOK, SOUND AND ACT LIKE A LEADER

To be taken seriously as a leader you need to look, sound and act like one. This is not only to your direct reports but also to your colleagues and superiors. Those who don't look, sound and act like a leader sometimes find their career stalling despite strong technical skills. So this is not optional.

5. DEVELOP YOUR NON-VERBAL INTELLIGENCE

Much of the impact you make comes from the non-verbal elements of your communication – your body language and voice. What you say is important, of course, but if your content is strong but your body language and voice are weak, you'll lack presence.

6. UNDERSTAND YOURSELF AND OTHERS

People are different. Everybody knows that. But not everybody realises the degree to which you need to adapt your behaviour if you want to maximise your impact. You need to understand yourself – your personality and your preferences – and be able to recognise difference in other people.

7. SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE, CERTAINTY AND CONVICTION

If you want to look and sound like a leader you need to speak with confidence, certainty and conviction. Doing so gives the voice a powerful and compelling quality that sounds authoritative, commands a room and gains buy-in and commitment. Hesitation suggests uncertainty or discomfort, and should be avoided at all costs.

8. SHOW VULNERABILITY

Too much confidence, though, can have a negative impact. People sometimes perceive it as arrogance. The best leaders, therefore, take opportunities to show vulnerability – which gives them a softer, more human profile.

9. ARTICULATE THE VISION AND VALUES

The prime responsibility of a leader is to articulate the vision and values. Many only do this on formal 'set piece' situations. But if you want to look and sound like a leader you need to find as many opportunities as possible to share your thoughts informally.

10. BE CONSISTENT IN YOUR IMPACT

The most important thing is to be consistent in your impact. If you're one person on Monday and a different person on Tuesday, people will get confused. Once you're clear about your 'brand', and the perception you want others to have of you, it's essential your impact and presence are the same with different people and across situations.