

# THE EXECUTIVE VOICE: A LEADER'S GUIDE TO ASSERTIVENESS, ADVOCACY AND AUTHENTIC PRESENCE

*The 3 Pillars to Overcome Visibility Fears and Step into Senior Leadership*
*Learn to Speak Up, Stand Out, and Advocate for Your Next Big Role*

**Introduction: The Leadership Communication Gap**

Moving into senior leadership requires a fundamental shift: your value is no longer just about the work you produce, but the vision you communicate and the presence you command.
You've mastered your technical skills, but the rules change at the top. Hard work alone doesn't guarantee the next promotion.
To become a senior leader, you must transition from being a "doer" to having a "voice." This guide will give you the three pillars to build executive presence, advocate for your worth, and command any room.

**Pillar 1: The Inner Game – Overcoming the Fear of Exposure**

Aspiring leaders often fear that speaking up will expose them as frauds (Imposter Syndrome) or invite harsh criticism.

- *Reframe Vulnerability*: Visibility isn't about being perfect; it's about sharing a valuable perspective.
- *The "Cost of Silence"*: Calculate what it costs your team and your career when you don't share your insights.
- *The "One Micro-Risk a Week" strategy* (e.g., asking the first question in a meeting, volunteering for a high-visibility presentation).



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**Pillar 2: Strategic Assertiveness & Self-Advocacy**

Many mid-level managers confuse assertiveness with aggression. This section redefines it as clear, respectful boundaries and value-communication.

- *The "Value Translator" Technique*: Stop listing your tasks and start communicating your impact.
- *Mastering the "Humble Brag"*: Script templates for sharing wins with senior stakeholders without sounding arrogant (e.g., “I’m incredibly proud of the team for hitting X metric, which I spearheaded by doing Y...”).
- *Navigating Pushback*: Use a simple 3-step framework (Acknowledge, Clarify, Stand Firm) for holding your ground when challenged by strong personalities.

**Pillar 3: Executive Public Speaking – Commanding the Room**

Public speaking at the senior level isn't about slide decks; it's about influence and storytelling.

- *The BLUF Framework (Bottom Line Up Front)*: Start with the impact, then provide the context. Executives don't have time for chronological stories.
- *Managing Physical Nerves*: Use two physiological tricks (box breathing and grounding) to lower cortisol before speaking.
- *The Power of the Pause*: Replace filler words ("um," "like") with intentional silence projects authority and confidence.



Speak out loud
BY SOLANGE LIPCIN

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**The Executive Communication Checklist (Daily Cheat Sheet)**

[ ] Did I speak up within the first 10 minutes of today's key meeting?
[ ] Did I frame my updates around business impact rather than just task completion?
[ ] Did I advocate for a resource, boundary, or win today?
[ ] Did I consciously use an intentional pause today instead of rushing to fill the silence or relying on filler words?
[ ] Did I strip minimising language (e.g., "I just," "I might be wrong, but," "Sorry to bother you") from my emails and verbal contributions?
[ ] Did I make a strategic connection or share a quick insight with a senior stakeholder outside of my immediate team?
[ ] Did I say "no" or successfully negotiate a deadline to protect my team's bandwidth and maintain our strategic focus?
[ ] Did I take at least one "micro-risk" to increase my visibility (e.g., asking a challenging question, volunteering to present)?
[ ] Did I actively invite healthy debate or confidently defend my stance when someone pushed back on my idea?
[ ] Did I document today's leadership win or positive feedback in my "Growth File" to use for future self-advocacy and performance reviews?

"Courage in leadership isn't the absence of fear; it's the decision that your message is more important than your comfort zone."

Next Step: An invitation to book a free 15-minute "Voice Audit" to map out your personalised communication strategy.

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Solange Lipcin
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