

Power Up Your Presence

A LEADERSHIP MASTERCLASS:
Expertise to Authority

 **SISO**

CEO SUMMIT

EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S FORUM

ANGELA SCALPELLO | MARCH 9, 2026



What Must Change: The Authority Shift

- Stop seeking permission.
- Stop defaulting to competence.
- Signal authority.



Let's Start with a Question



What if you knew that one factor accounted for 26% of what it takes to move into the most executive leadership and Board roles?

Executive Presence Drives 26% of Promotion Decisions

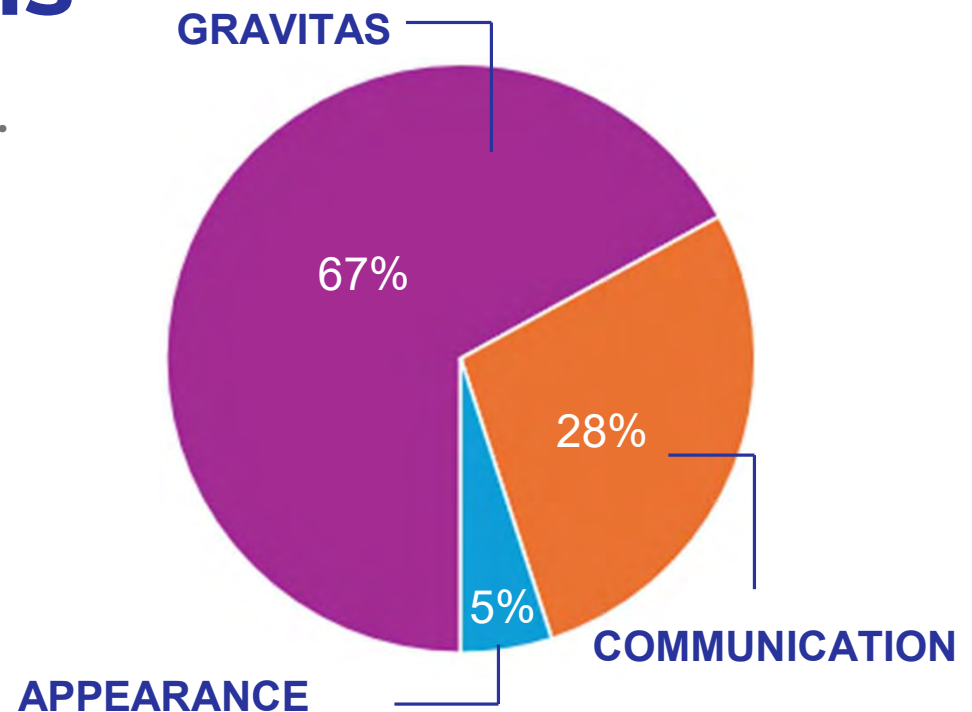
CENTER FOR TALENT INNOVATION RESEARCH.

- Executive presence accounts for 26% of promotion decisions.
- Within that 26%:

Gravitas (67%)

Communication (28%)

Appearance (5%)



The Journey Today

Understand how authority is evaluated at executive levels.



Identify
where authority
gets diluted.



Deepen
gravitas under
pressure.



Audit
your default
patterns.



Practice
authority shifts
in real time.

Executive Presence

- This is not an emerging leader conversation.
- At senior levels, performance and judgment are assumed.
- Signal determines advancement.

Executive presence determines who is seen as ready to lead beyond their function.

For Senior and Board-ready Women...



How decisively do you convey judgment and perspective?



How do you hold authority in rooms with power asymmetry?




How do others assess your readiness to represent the enterprise – not just your role?.

At this level, executive presence is about strategic credibility and gravitas under pressure.

Where Executive Presence Is Evaluated

- C-suite or enterprise roles.
- Board seats.
- Crisis or high-stakes decision-making.
- External representation (investors, regulators, partners).



"Can this person carry the weight of the organization?"

The Executive Presence Model

**STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION**



SELF-GOVERNANCE



**GRAVITAS UNDER
PRESSURE**



**AUTHORITY
SIGNALING**



The Executive Presence Model

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

- Clarity & Vision
- Storytelling & Messaging
- Two-Way influence

SELF-GOVERNANCE

- Emotional Intelligence
- Integrity & Accountability
- Intentional Discipline

GRAVITAS UNDER PRESSURE

- Composure & Resilience
- Decisiveness in Uncertainty
- Leading Through Crisis

AUTHORITY SIGNALING

- Presence & Confidence
- Setting the Tone
- Role Modeling Standards



Strategic Communication



**Leads with
judgment,
not data.**



**Distills
complexity into
direction.**



**Frames
decisions in
enterprise terms.**

Shift from explaining to advising.

Gravitas Under Pressure

**Calm
authority in
uncertainty.**

**Comfort with
silence and
dissent.**

**Unrushed,
deliberate
presence.**

Shift from responsiveness to readiness.

Self-governance



**Emotional
regulation
under scrutiny.**



**Ability to stay
centered when
challenged.**



**Conscious
control of what
you amplify vs
absorb.**

**Gravitas is not certainty.
It is confidence in your judgment.**

Under Pressure, Leaders Default to One of Three Signals:



Apologist (Signals Your Deference)

- Over-contextualizes.
- Softens recommendations.
- Leads with explanation.
- Prioritizes consensus over clarity.
- Absorbs emotional labor.

“I may be wrong but...”

“Just to add to what’s already been said...”

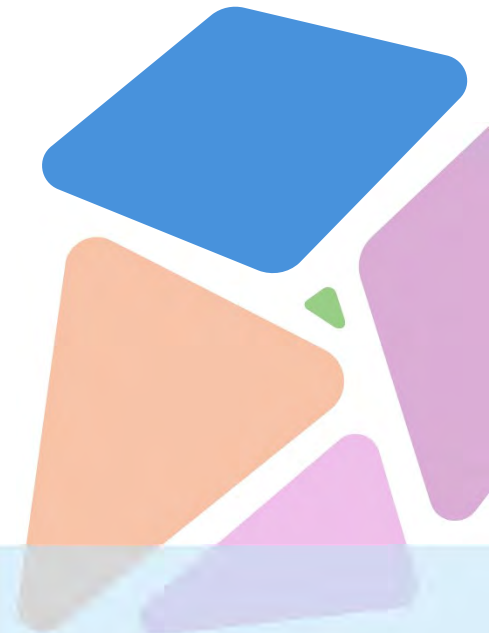


Expert (Signals Your Competence)

- Leads with data.
- Thoroughly prepared.
- Explains clearly.
- Earns credibility through mastery.
- Responsive under questioning.

“Here’s what the data shows...”

“There are three factors to consider...”



Authority (Signals You Can Carry Risk)

- Leads with a recommendation.
- Frames in enterprise impact.
- Speaks in trade-offs.
- Uses silence deliberately.
- Engages disagreement without defensiveness.

“The enterprise risk here is...”
“If we prioritize X, we must defer Y...”



Why High-Performing Women Often Default to Expert

Expertise feels safer than authority.

- Explanation reduces backlash risk.
- Over-preparation protects against criticism.
- Softening preserves likability.



The Enterprise Shift: **Expert** → **Authority**

Explanation → Recommendation

Detail → Trade-off Framing

Functional Lens → Enterprise Lens

Reactivity → Gravitas

Unlearning Patterns That Undermine Authority



Over-contextualizing to ensure buy-in.



Softening conclusions to ensure consensus.



Over-preparing to avoid scrutiny.



Absorbing emotional labor in the room.

Executive Presence Diagnostic

1

Rate each statement from 1 (Rarely) to 5 (Consistently)

2

Add up your responses and look at the scorecard.

3

Where do you need to direct your focus and actions?

Interpreting Your Results



65-80

You are operating at a Board-ready authority level. Focus on consistency and refinement.



50-65

Your expertise exceeds how consistently it's perceived.
Presence adjustments will yield an **outsized impact**.



Below
50

This is not a capability gap – it's a **signal gap**.
Executive presence will materially shift how you're assessed.

Working in Small Groups – Discussion Prompts

REFLECTION:

- Where do I default to Expert when the room requires Authority?
- What signals do I send under challenge?
- In high-stakes rooms, do I lead with data or direction?
- What is one shift from explanation → recommendation I can practice immediately?



Small group share

- One insight
- One presence adjustment with strategic impact

In Closing...

Executive presence is not about proving you belong.

It is about occupying the authority your track record already justifies.



Angela Scalpello

**UNLOCKING THE
POWER OF PEOPLE TO
DRIVE CHANGE AND
TRANSFORMATION**

www.TheScalpelloGroup.com

