



# Emerging Leaders Insights

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## Three killer ways to build your executive presence

By Joel Garfinkle

Being a highly productive employee, a great communicator, or even a leader of influence is just not enough if you want to keep moving to the top rungs of the corporate ladder. No matter what position you're currently in, you need executive presence to advance. The higher up you go, the more executive presence you need.

Executive presence is not just one particular trait or quality but a personal distinctiveness that leaves a strong, long lasting impression, making people want to listen to you and, more importantly, follow you.

Three great ways to develop executive presence are by identifying your brand, stepping out of your comfort zone, and recruiting influential advocates.

### Build a strong positive brand

Building your brand helps you position yourself for greater visibility in front of your peers and senior management. Branding helps you stand apart from the competition and get noticed. Your aim is to project yourself as being the absolute "best" at what you do. Build your brand by identifying what you're good at and the qualities that set you apart from the rest. This will help you establish "expert" status and prove your worth to your employer.

Start by asking yourself: what are my top skills and talents that I can provide to the organization? Which issues can I confidently handle at board meetings? What tasks do I find relatively easy to do or excel at? These might be your branding characteristics. If you had one sentence to describe yourself, what would it be?

Branding makes you a valuable asset in your organization. For example, one of my clients, a technical engineer, found that he had the unique ability to simplify technical jargon in understandable terms and present it to top management. His peers, although equally skilled, didn't have the aptitude for presenting complex issues in a simple way. He built his brand around this unique skill and gained greater visibility, harvested more opportunities, and improved his executive presence.

### Risk-taking is not just for leaders

Employees who take on tasks that are beyond what they're comfortable doing can actually downsize-proof their careers by gaining more visibility and having a significant impact on their company's bottom line. If you're anxious about the possibility of taking a risk, start small. The first step you can take is to take on added responsibilities and do more than what your job description entails. This will help you stand out in front of senior executives as someone who is willing to take the initiative and go the extra mile. Think outside the box and provide a creative perspective to solve a problem or tackle a situation.

A good example is Ian Clarke, who founded FreeNet before he turned 25. In the book *Geeks and Geezers* he states, "I always place myself in a situation that I'm not quite equipped to deal with, but I learn ... That's how I do it ... I buy one shoe size bigger than I actually need and grow into it."

When you take a risk, you build executive presence by getting others to respect you. As a result, you receive high-profile assignments,

and your capabilities are valued no matter what level you're at in your company.

### Garner influence and support

Having influence is critical to success. Building strategic relationships with people of influence and getting people to advocate for you and support you are critical elements in building executive presence and rising in the ranks. Communicate to your boss and peers that you are open for feedback and encourage them to let you know if you've excelled at a particular task. Contact executives in upper management and ask them if you can contact them periodically to share your progress. Seek meeting opportunities with executives you admire, especially those who project a strong executive presence.

Gaining more recognition in your organization is your responsibility. If you don't indulge in self-promotion and make influential contacts, you will most likely be overshadowed by those that do. Executive presence will allow you to influence positively, drive change, and create innovative solutions.

Are you ready to create massive change within your organization? Executive presence makes it possible.

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## Emerging Leaders notes

- Oct. 8 is the deadline to register for the October luncheons. We'll be in Oklahoma City on Oct. 15 and Tulsa on Oct. 21. Find registration information at [http://www.oba.com/bankers/emerging\\_leaders\\_calendar.php](http://www.oba.com/bankers/emerging_leaders_calendar.php);
- Oct. 16 is Get Smart About Credit Day, a day to provide credit education to your community. Visit [http://www.oba.com/bankers/financial\\_literacy.php?action=story&id=336](http://www.oba.com/bankers/financial_literacy.php?action=story&id=336) to learn how your bank can participate; and
- Start planning for Teach Children to Save Day on April 24, 2015. Find resources at [http://oba.com/bankers/financial\\_literacy.php?action=story&id=318](http://oba.com/bankers/financial_literacy.php?action=story&id=318).

# Industry updates

The banking industry is always changing, here are some brief updates for you:

- Esther George, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City president, recently gave a speech regarding how the Dodd-Frank Act, Basel III and other regulatory efforts have “impinged” on community banks. Read her speech at <http://www.kc.frb.org/publicat/speeches/2014-George-StLouis-CSBS-09-23.pdf>;
- ABA President and CEO Frank Keating recently sent a comment letter to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau regarding its plan to include customers’ unauthenticated stories in its complaint database. Read his letter at <http://www.aba.com/Advocacy/commentletters/Documents/clComplaintNarrative2014Sept.pdf>; and
- With the release of the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus in September, Apple also released Apple Pay. Find answers to frequently asked questions, particularly from bankers, at <http://www.aba.com/Tools/Function/Payments/Documents/ApplePayFAQ091914.pdf>.

## Own your right to vote

In the next few days, your Oklahoma Bankers Association will be launching a campaign to assist your efforts to encourage your customers to vote in the upcoming election.

The theme of the campaign is for Oklahomans to own their right to vote. Having the ability to vote is a right and one that everyone should take full advantage of. Whether it is at the local, state or national level, as cliché as it may be, each vote counts.

A common reason for not voting is residents are not aware of registration deadlines or of early voting periods. That is where your bank can come into play. With minimal effort, your bank can become a valuable resource regarding election information in your community.

Visit the OBA’s voting campaign webpage at [http://www.aba.com/bankers/news\\_archive.php?action=story&story\\_id=3341](http://www.aba.com/bankers/news_archive.php?action=story&story_id=3341) to view the resources available. Included in the resources are a news release to send to your local media, a campaign timeline, sample social media posts and voting reminder cards to share with your customers.

If you have questions about this campaign or need help developing additional tools to use, contact the OBA office at (405) 424-5252.

Encourage your community to own their right to vote but even more importantly, go vote yourself!

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Laura Hayes

If you ever find yourself in the area of Woodward, make sure to stop by Central National Bank of Enid and introduce yourself to Laura Hayes, AVP/retail branch manager.

As the holiday season nears, you may see a twinkle in her eye as Christmas is her favorite holiday and she admits deep down she is still a little kid on Christmas mornings.

She and her husband, Ryan, stay busy year round with activities such as wakeboarding, golfing and hunting. Their falls are filled with high school and college football. Year-round though, she and Ryan take their dogs, Bailey and Bo, on nightly runs.

*Each month in this section we'll highlight a member of Emerging Leaders. Would you like to be spotlighted? Do you know someone that should be spotlighted? Let us know at [kristin@oba.com](mailto:kristin@oba.com).*

## Power from empowerment

By Denis Waitley

A good way to think of leadership is the process of *freeing* your team members to do the best work they possibly can. I have followed NBA basketball coach Phil Jackson’s career.

Like Phil Jackson who moved from the record setting Chicago Bulls to the Los Angeles Lakers. Jackson says his principal task is creating an environment in which his players can flourish. In communicating with his championship teams, Jackson convinced them that they had the talent to win championships, and that the main goal of the coach was going to be freeing them to use that talent.

Today’s business team members, say they want, more than anything else, the autonomy to do their jobs without the boss’s interference. In the new century, it’s already clear that the CEOs of our best-run companies believe that the more power leaders have, the less they should use.

The job of the team leader is to set a mission, decide upon a strategic direction, achieve the necessary cooperation, delegate authority — and then let people innovate. To do that we all could take a hint from the late football coach, Paul “Bear” Bryant. Before his retirement as one of the leading coaches in college football history at Alabama, Bryant observed:

*I’m just a plow hand from Arkansas, but I’ve learned how to put and hold a team together. I’ve learned how to lift some individuals up and how to calm others down, until finally they’ve got one heartbeat together, as a team. To do that, there’s just three things I’d ever have to say: If anything went wrong, I did it. If it went semi-good, then we did it. If anything went real good, then you did it! That’s really all it takes to get other people to win for you.*

The key to authentic leadership is to listen to your followers, and then open the door for them to lead themselves. The secret is empowerment. The main incentive is genuine caring and recognition.

The five most important words a leader can speak are: “I am proud of you.”

The four most important are: “What is your opinion??”

The three most important are: “If you please.”

The two most important are: “Thank You.”

And the most important single word of all is: “You!”

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