

- Sara: Hi, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, ***Talking With the Top, Tips for Building and Using Your Executive Presence***, hosted by HRDQ-U and presented by Suzanne McCall. My name is Sara and I will moderate today's webinar. It will last about an hour. If you have any questions, please type them into the questions area on your GoToWebinar control panel. And then we'll either answer them as they come in, after the session if we have time for Q&A, or afterwards by email. So you should see a little chat questions area, open that up, there's a white box you can type in, type in your question, click submit and that'll come through to us.
- Sara: Today's webinar content is from our assessment and our workshop, What's My Communication Style. If you're interested in delivering this dynamic training within your organization, please contact HRDQ. Our presenter today is Suzanne McCall. Suzanne is a senior consultant with Pinnacle Group, a training and organization development firm that designs and delivers targeted and relevant training programs that increase staff competency and capability. Through a highly interactive learning process and through one on one coaching, Suzanne has contributed to the effectiveness of local, regional, national and global leaders. She's a noted authority in expanding physical and vocal communication effectiveness.
- Sara: Suzanne has managed business development positions as well as leading global programming positions that have provided experiences that translate across all industries. Suzanne has been recognized for her engaging presentation style and her ability to encourage high performance through coaching. Clients consistently describe Suzanne as dynamic, challenging, and always focused on business results. Welcome, Suzanne and thank you so much for joining us today.
- Suzanne: Thank you, Sara. It's great to be here. Hello, everyone. I'm very pleased to be spending some time with you and your busy day. And I just want to get started by telling you a little bit about myself. Although I had been doing this work of training and development for over 20 years, my foundational training was in the theater. And there will be techniques that we have integrated into today's session that relate to what I learned from my background in theater. I do believe that many of these techniques are so useful in almost every business setting, and certainly as we think about presenting to decision makers, to executive audiences. So we'll bring that into our conversation today. And I will hopefully support you in taking those techniques and bring them into your everyday life for some practical application.

Suzanne: Let's consider what we're going to be covering today, the meat of our conversation. We want to help you get results with diverse executive audiences. We want to help you to know the drivers of executive presentations. We're also going to help you with a plan for a well aligned executive level presentation. Throughout our time together today, you will be creating a plan. So you'll have your pen and paper ready, and we're going to give you the opportunity to put some practical application to the work that we'll be doing together.

Suzanne: I would ask you to think right now of an opportunity that you have to present to an executive level audience. And this could be something that's small and scale, it could be a one on one, or it could be a large audience that you need to present to. But start right now to think of that opportunity that you have to present to decision makers, to present to an executive audience. And we'll work on that plan together. And finally, we want to provide you with some skills and abilities to power through it executive presentation challenges, these types of presentations many times present challenges and we want to make sure that we're equipping you well for those challenges at hand.

Suzanne: I want to start by finding out a little bit more about you and where you stand in relationship to this topic of executive presence and executive presentations. And so, I have a question for you. We're going to open up our first poll now. And in this poll, we're asking you why is executive presence important to you? Think about yourself today. Why is it important to you? You have two choices to give me a sense of where you are and for all of us to understand where we're coming from. A, I am an executive or an aspiring executive looking to increase my skills, or B, I speak to executive audiences and wish to get improve results. So, give us some answers here, let us know where you stand. So is it A, I am an executive or aspiring executive, or I speak to executive audiences?

Suzanne: So here's what we're seeing with our results, we're moving through this, you can continue to answer here. And it looks like so far, it's an equal basis. We have an equal amount of you that are coming from that executive standpoint and you are seeking to increase your executive presentations as an executive. And we have a good percentage of you who are coming from that other end of things and you're presenting to executives. So it looks like we are landing on 42% of you are saying that you are an executive or an aspiring executive who are looking to increase your skills. But we have 58% of you, which is the larger majority of you who say I speak to executive audiences and I wish to improve my results.

Suzanne: That's really good to know, it looks like we're going to have to look at both sides of this coin. And as we are moving through our conversation today, we'll make sure that we attend to both. Thank you so much for participating in the poll, I really appreciate that. That gives me a sense of where we stand, and also gives you a sense of who's in the room with us here today.

Suzanne: I want to start things by defining what executive presence actually is. I think sometimes this is an elusive term that gets thrown around. I want to bring some tangibles to it, I want us to really understand what this means. So we're going to look at the keys to executive presence. These are characteristics that are useful if we're seeking to increase our executive presence, if we want to have more of a presence as we present information out to others.

Suzanne: So, what I'd like for you to do, I am going to give you some examples and some ideas around what these eight key to executive presence pieces are. And then as I'm doing that, I'd like for you to think about from your own perspective, as we talk about these, what characteristics do I possess, thinking from your standpoint, which one of these do you possess already. I do this well and I do consistently. And which of these characteristics would you like to develop? And start to take some notes on this because this will give you a sense of where you need to expand your skill and ability in this area.

Suzanne: Let's start by talking about confidence. Confidence is something that many times we show in our body, in our eye contact, in our physical language of gesture. Many times this is something that if we're not feeling confident, we can use our body, we can use our body language and use our eye contact to relay that sense of confidence, even if we're not feeling it in our own selves. So this is something that we can bring into a conversation even when maybe we're not feeling as confident as we should. Confidence is something that allows us to speak with certainty and to get a message across to an audience in a certain way.

Suzanne: Connection. There are two aspects to this. One has to do with people connection, one has to do with connection to information. With people, as we think about making a human authentic connection with people, this is certainly a key aspect of executive presence. If we think about information, two things are happening here. We're connecting individuals to our information, to the message we are seeking to relay to an audience. But we're also helping them to make connections between information and ideas that we are sharing. So we're helping them to make that information connection as well.

Suzanne: Moving to the third one here of composure. This is very handy in a moment of pressure. So if the stakes are high, there are people in the room perhaps that make you nervous or you feel a sense of pressure, we need to have that composure. And many times again, this can show up in body language and how we are using our gestures and our eye contact. But having that sense of composure and a sense of centeredness even in a stormy situation. And we'll be talking about some specific skills that you can use to maintain this composure.

Suzanne: Next, we go to passion. If you think about the kinds of conversations and presentations that we're having with executive level audiences, many times it's important information that's happening. We're making big decisions. We're

talking about things that have larger implications for an organization or for stakeholders that we are considering. So, passion is absolutely necessary in these high stakes situation. And we're also going to talk today about ways that we can show our passion. Many times, people think that this runs counter, I need to be serious, I need to be formal, I need to be buttoned up. But as we think about important conversations, there needs to be some passion in there, especially if you're seeking to influence or persuade members of your audience.

Suzanne: Let's move to credibility. This is something that we shouldn't be afraid to show. Do you have expertise? Do you have understanding that's deeper maybe than even your audience has? Where can you bring that credibility, demonstrate that credibility and share it with your audience so that they can gain from the conversation?

Suzanne: Clarity. This is something that we can think about as we prepare for our presentation. We want to make sure that our message is clear. If it's not clear to us, then it's probably not going to be clear to the audience. So making sure that we have clarity of thought, clarity of design as we are crafting our message, and clarity in our delivery.

Suzanne: The next one, conciseness. And this is certainly important for busy fast-thinking audiences. They want you to get to the point and they want you to deliver that message in a way that is concise, that is easy to grab and run with. So thinking about how you boil down major points into something very concise.

Suzanne: The last one I want to talk about is openness. And this is that ability to be open to anything that happens in the room. This could be a person that shows up into a conversation or a presentation that you didn't expect. Someone who makes you nervous, someone who you are concerned about maybe derailing the conversation, that openness to that person, openness to different points of view, maybe someone has a differing opinion, being open to that. As you think about those people that you respect, think about people that you believe have executive presence and you've seen them demonstrate it over and over again, they probably have a sense of openness. They're open to other people, to differing opinions, but also to differing styles of communication and thought. Openness is certainly important with executive presence.

Suzanne: So I'm hoping that as we went through those, you're starting to get some picture here of what you need to develop. And as we move through our conversation today, you can look at those notes. So, what are these characteristics that you possess, that you would like to expand more, use more, leverage more? And what are those characteristics that you would like to develop? And hopefully, we'll give you some tips and ideas around that.

Suzanne: Today, we are going to explore executive presence through thinking about presentations. This is a great way to focus our thinking around executive

presence. Specifically, we're going to think about how do you use executive presence in a presentation moment, a moment when you're presenting information to key decision makers, to an executive audience.

Suzanne: To get the most out of this experience, I would like to challenge you to expand your definition of what a presentation is. Many people think a presentation has to have PowerPoint, lots of people in the room, it's very formal, everybody's dressed up. But a presentation could also be a one on one conversation that really matters about an important topic where you need to persuade somebody, gain their buy in, get their input. That's also a presentation. And the more we plan for that and think strategically toward that conversation, the better our results. So thinking about expanding your definition of what a presentation is, it really has four ingredients and we're going to explore that right now.

Suzanne: Presentations are an interaction that's containing a messenger. In this case, it's you. You have a message to bring, you are the messenger, the person who is relaying the message to your audience. Then we have those receivers, this could be one person again or it could be a larger group of individuals. So we have the receiver for our message, this is an important component as well in this situation where you have this interaction.

Suzanne: The next component, a message. And this message could be very simple and straightforward with just a couple of key points. Or it could be a larger message, lots of detail, lots of background and context, lots of data that needs to be brought to bear. So the message could expand and contract according to the need and according to the messenger and the receiver.

Suzanne: The final component here is desired outcome. And what I will tell you now is that in my years of doing this work, many times I find that this is the missing ingredient. There's an individual who has a message, they have receivers, they've got to get out there and they've got to get that message across, but they don't think about their desired outcome. This is something that we need to think about ahead of time.

Suzanne: If you've ever been in a presentation or in a conversation and it felt pointless, the person never got to their point and it didn't really accomplish much, sometimes a meeting can have this feeling, probably what's happening there is we're missing our desired outcome. You know from the onset as you're preparing for this conversation and this interaction, you want to have happen as a result of this conversation. This gives you strength, it gives you focus, it gives you direction and it really gives you that initial inspiration for getting this crafted and then delivering. So it's an important component, certainly, in preparing for and delivering a message.

Suzanne: As we work together today, we are going to be working on this plan, as I mentioned earlier, and I want to start, I want to start now. So grab your paper,

grab a pen or a pencil. And I want you to write out the first two components of your plan. And this is your audience and your situation. Hopefully, you've been able to think about this already, you've thought about who your audience is for this plan, this interaction opportunity that you have with an executive audience and you've thought about this situation. Throughout the time of our working together, we're going to create this presentation plan and I'm going to provide you with an example, my example of my preparation. So in my plan, my audience is the executive team. And my situation is a project update meeting. And that's what I'm working on.

Suzanne: So, I want to give you a beat just a moment here for you to map out who is your audience and what is your situation. And we're going to open up a poll question here again around this, actually, we're going to open up a chat, a question here, a chat screen for you. And we're going to have you give us some idea of what your audience, who your audience is and what the situation is. So if you can just chat with us just a very brief description because this will be instrumental. And certainly me understanding where you're coming from and what you're planning toward. And also, we can find out if we have some common things that we're sharing today.

Suzanne: So, if you would go ahead, as you're writing down on your plan, you can go ahead and chat with us on what is your situation and who is your audience. So, giving you a moment to consider this and to write some things down in your plan.

Suzanne: All right, as people are working through this, and again, as we're moving through this presentation plan, I'm going to give you some time. We want to make the time that we're spending together highly practical. We want you to think about how you're going to apply the learning immediately. So we're going to give you some time in between to write these down. All right. So, thinking about this ...

Sara: Do you see those coming in Suzanne?

Suzanne: I'm looking here. Okay, I see a couple here. One meeting with the CIO.

Sara: Yes.

Suzanne: For a new customer service training for all staff. All right, so yes, this is and executive in your organization, and we've got a new customer, we've got a new horizon here. And we want to make sure that things go well. So that's great. Thank you. That gives me a sense of where you are planning toward and I'm trying to see if I see anything else. All right. Okay. And then we've got an SVP that is our audience here as well. So senior vice president that we're presenting to. So that gives us a sense of things as well. All right, great, thank you. I appreciate those responses. This gives me a sense of where you are and what you're planning toward and we can certainly cater our conversation toward that.

Suzanne: All right. So we have, we have a beginning of a plan. We know who our audience is and who our situation is. This is important. This is important to start with, to understand this. And this begins to help us understand how we're going to craft our message, how we will start to design our message. When we are presenting to decision makers, there are some specific components that will drive consistency, that will drive consistently positive results. And we're going to take a look at those now. And this will guide us through our conversation today.

Suzanne: So there are five drivers of executive presentation results. First, audience alignment. Second, message integration. Third, preparation. Fourth, we have strong delivery. And finally, we have follow through. As you are thinking toward a presentation, you're thinking about the presentation that you've all identified at this point, these are five components you want to make sure that you have in hand that you are attending to all of these well, that you are planning toward all of this. And these will drive the results that you're looking for. And again, here's the idea as well. We don't want to deliver well once or twice or not even understand why things went well or why they didn't go well. We want to get consistent results. If you are using these drivers every single time and feeding them well, you're going to get more positive results and you're going to get more consistent results.

Suzanne: We're going to start with this audience alignment. And this is important, this begins the process of design. We must know the audience. If you think about it, if you had the same message and you were delivering it to four different audiences, that same message would feel different, look different, be delivered in a different way for different times. So, this is important as well. As you are thinking about your audience in the situation, we want to make sure that we're aligning our approach and our message to that audience.

Suzanne: So, as we think about this, the first thing we're going to consider is their communication style, how do they communicate. And we're going to be looking at a tool that comes from an HRDQ assessment approach. And this is What's My Community Style. And you might recognize this particular model from that tool, but this is a tool that allows us to assess what our communication style is. And as you think about your audience, we're going to go through and describe each of these four styles and start to think about your audience. Where do they sit as far as communication style.

Suzanne: Let's start in the upper right hand quadrant. We have direct. And as the title implies, this person is very direct, they want to get to the point, they want to make sure that time is used efficiently. These individuals are focused on results. And as we think about the considerations that sit around this model, we've got assertiveness and expressiveness. With our direct leaders, our direct individuals, they are low on expressiveness but high on assertiveness. Expressiveness has to do with how much that person is willing to share their innermost thoughts, their

feelings. Direct is low on that, not necessarily interested in that or seeing the value of that. But they're high assertive. They're willing to tell you what they need, tell you what needs to happen, tell you how it's best done, and they're willing to do that for you.

Suzanne: So thinking about your audience, are there any directs that sit in that audience that you want to attend to, that you want to make sure that you're supporting and bringing the best result for? Let's move to the upper right hand quadrant and this is spirited, the spirited style. You might have someone in your audience that is spirited. This person is high assertive and also high expressive. They're willing to share their thoughts and their feelings with others. And they also love to get your thoughts and feelings as well. This person is focused on energy. They have a lot of energy to give and they want to get energy from others as well. They are also high in assertiveness, they're willing to tell you, tell you what they think, tell you how it should be, tell you what the best approach is.

Suzanne: As we move down to considerate, this is the lower right hand quadrant, this is another style of communication. And by the way, no style is more important or better than others. These are just different ways to approach communication. And the better we understand our audience and the individuals in it, the better we can communicate and get results with them. With considerate lower right hand quadrant, high expressiveness but low assertiveness. So this person is willing to tell you what they're thinking deeply and what they're feeling, and they really also want to know from you, they are more about asking than telling. They are focused on harmony and connection with people. So they're willing to listen to you and take information from you.

Suzanne: As we move to systematics, see if this might describe some people in your audience. They are low expressive, low assertive. This individual is focused on logic, things need to be logical, they need lots of data if they're making a decision. They are low on expressiveness, not necessarily interested in telling you their deep, dark thoughts or feelings, and they're low on assertiveness. They're less about telling you and more about asking you. Usually asking you about things that have to do with data or information. Where did you get your information? Where did you get this data? Tell me more about this, let's dig deeper on this. That's your systematic.

Suzanne: So as you think about your audience, I'd love for you to start to add this to your plan here and think about where they are on this scale. Are they direct, spirited, considerate, systematic. You might find that you have a combination of both of these. And as a matter of fact, I did a few of these. I have a combination and I'm showing you my plan here. I have a combination of direct and systematic. So as I think about my audience's style, my executive team, they're a combination of direct and systematic. So, as I'm planning for and delivering, I want to make sure that I am attending to both. There are some differences in these two styles of communication. So, I might need to get directly to the point but then provide

data for my systematics.

Suzanne: So take a moment to jot this down on your plan to continue to produce this plan. And then we're going to go to another piece of your audience's style. But giving you a moment here to write that down. And I will go back to the previous screen to give you those four styles just so you can take a look at it. Again, direct, spirited, systematic and considerate. Think about your audience, where do they fall in these styles?

Suzanne: All right. So the next thing that we are going to consider is how do they receive information. Our best clues for communication style come from how they communicate out to others, their style, how they bring information, how they make decisions, that gives is a clue on how they might be communicating, what their communication style is. Thinking about how they listen, sometimes it's harder to get to how do they process information, it's a little more internal. So let's consider this, let's think about how they listen.

Suzanne: There are really two different viewpoints on this, or two different ways of thinking and reasoning and processing information. First, inductive. Second, deductive. With inductive reasoning, they really want more upfront, they want more detail, more data, more context, more background, then get to the point. And you can start to think about how style and listening style, how communication style and listening style intersect. Our systematics would probably fall in this inductive, perhaps. So they like to have a lot of data, then they can make a decision for instance.

Suzanne: With deductive, they like for us to get to that point right away and then bring that backup information after. Sometimes even better yet, deliver the the impact, let them know how much it's going to cost, when it's due, what's going on, and then ask them what questions they have for clarification. So, inductive and deductive. Where does your audience fall as we think about how they listen and what their reasoning style is?

Suzanne: I will share with you mine as I think about my audience, really, for the most part, they're deductive. I've got some directs and I've got some systematics, but for the most part, they're highly deductive. In other words, they want me to get to the point and then bring some backup information after that. So I want to give you a moment to consider this. And we also want to give you a polling question on this. Love to find out from you how your audience falls with this. Are they more deductive or more inductive? A is that inductive, B is deductive. Let us know where they stand. So I'm giving you a few minutes to answer this.

Suzanne: I find that many times an executive audience has a lot of deductives, even if there're inductive thinkers in the group, they like for the style of presentation to be deductive, concise, if we go back to those characteristics of executive presence, concise, to the point. They appreciate that. But at the same time, they

might need more data in order to make an important decision. So, looking at where we're falling, it looks like that many of you agree with me that your style of listening for the most part is deductive. So we're seeing here 32% of you are saying inductive. And that's certainly something to cater to as you think about that. You might need to provide some more data, some more background.

Suzanne: So it's almost, you could have a sandwich approach, you could let them know the point at the beginning, give them lots of details and data that they may need to bring them forward into a decision or into providing you with information and giving their input and then closing it off with a point. 68% of you, though, are saying deductive. And if you have a mixture in the crowd, if you have both, you really want to attend to those deductives first and get to that point because they're the first ones you'll lose. So you want to get to that point first.

Suzanne: All right, thank you, I really appreciate you sharing, this does help me it, it helps me to understand where you are and where your audience is. And also for each other, you can get a sense of some common understanding about your audiences, which is really helpful. So thank you so much for that.

Suzanne: All right, so that's the listening style there. And now that we know a little bit more about our audience, we want to start to connect them with our message. How do we do that? How do we ensure that our really important message that we care so much about, how do we ensure that it moves across, that it really is something that grabs them and allows them to take any action that's needed around it? So let's take a look at some of those components of that.

Suzanne: So message connection, the essentials of message connection. We want to consider the audience's preferences. We want to analyze relevant strategic factors. We want to state desired outcome. And we want to determine core message components and structure. So we'll talk about these a little bit one at a time just to flesh this out a little bit and to help you to add to your plan. First of all, an important aspect of the message is considering the audience's preferences. We just did a little bit of that work, you did a mini audience analysis, you thought about their communication style, you thought about their listening style. This is important to understand as we think about designing our message and catering our conversation for them.

Suzanne: Consider maybe is there a certain time of day that would work better for them. I was having a conversation with somebody the other day and they said they were having meetings at the beginning of the day and they found that their audience was a little distracted because they were thinking about the day ahead. So they started to move update meetings to the end of the day because people could focus. They had moved through their day, they had that moment at the end to take a breather and to really listen and absorb the message. So thinking about the preferences there. Do they like to have a lot of interaction? If you have a spirited group or someone in the group that is spirited, they probably

want to have a lot of interaction and a lot of energy.

Suzanne: The next point here in message essentials, analyze relevant strategic factors. I will also say that many times, this is what gets left out of the planning for an executive level presentations. Many times people do not think strategically. They think about their message, they think about what they're trying to make happen. They want to just shove this information at their audience and hope that they take it in, that they absorb it and run with it. But they're not thinking strategically. Some strategic factors might be, are there competing priorities that run up against my message and what I'm seeking to influence? Are their strategic priorities that are in some way connected to my message? I need to make those connections for my audience and then deliver that as part of my message.

Suzanne: Thinking about the organization as a whole, are there changes that we're moving through that I can consider and that I can deliver as part of my message? These are some of those things that we can do beforehand in our planning and in our delivery as well. And this will allow the conversation to go a lot more smoothly. Many times, I find that people who have surprise questions or something thrown at them that they're not ready for, or they get derailed in an executive presentation, many times it's because they did not analyze relevant strategic factors. Think about everything that revolves around it. Are there regulatory things that you need to consider? Are there changes in your industry that you need to consider? Be strategic as you plan and deliver.

Suzanne: The next piece of this is that desired outcome. We mentioned this earlier. This is my rudder, it's the thing that I'm going to drive through and use throughout my planning and delivery. It is that thing that I am determined to accomplish as a result of this conversation. And everything that I do is informed by that. So, as you look at your slide deck and you think should I deliver this data and this information, well, does it feed my desired outcome? If the answer is maybe or no, that gets thrown out. Any decision you make in your planning and your delivery has to be around the desired outcome, we continue to push toward that.

Suzanne: Determined core message components and structure. So, this is a very essential aspect of planning and delivery. What are my message components? What do I need to leave out? What is absolutely essential for me to mention? And I think about my audience that is deductive, they want me to get to the point. I want to boil things down to the most essential components and I need to think about a structure, that needs to be strategic. What do I start with and then what comes in next, what do I lead to? Think about the components and how they are best structured. This is also part of your strategic thought around this.

Suzanne: I want to give you an opportunity to do a couple of these, to bring a couple of these into your plan. So let's think about that. First, desired outcome, and I'm

sharing with you what mine is. I want to get the green light for additional resources. We've got this project, it's moving along, I need additional resources. I need to influence my executive team to give us the green light for those additional resources. And I'm determined, I stay focused on that. I want you right now to write down for yourself your desired outcome.

Suzanne: Again, this is that rudder, this is that thing that allows you to stay focused as you plan and deliver. So it's very important, make it succinct. This is not a paragraph, it's not an essay, it is just one simple statement. What is your desired outcome? What do are you determined to make happen as a result of this conversation? Making it worth their while and yours. So I'm giving you just a moment to jot that down.

Suzanne: And while you're continuing to work on that, I'm just going to show you my core message components. The core message components, of course, come out of and are informed by my desired outcome. So these are mine, again, just giving you an example of what I'm doing so that it can maybe spark your thinking around your plan. Here are my components. Proposed resource increase, I also want to include in my presentation, current project production data, I want to include the project vision, and I also want to have a call for action. And this as a matter of fact is the order of things.

Suzanne: I want to start with the proposed resource increase because if I think about my highly deductive audience, this executive team, this direct and systematic group, they are going to be wondering that if I don't deliver it from the beginning, and they won't be listening. So I deliver that from the beginning, here's what we need, here's how much it's going to cost.

Suzanne: Then I go into some data, that's especially supportive for my systematics in the audience. And then my project vision, if I have any spirited in the audience, they need to understand this is the vision, this is where we're going, this is where we're headed with this, this is why we're doing it. That is the why in my presentation. And then there's the call to action. I don't want to be shy, I want to call them to action. We need the green light, we need the thumbs up, we need your stamp of approval. And I'm going to get that before I leave.

Suzanne: So jotting down for yourself some key components that you want to make sure you get to and start to think about the structure of that. So, I want to give you just a moment to jot those down and thinking about that and you're pretty well fleshing out your plan at this point. So, let's just take a moment for you to jot that down, jot down your components. I'm encouraging you not to have much more than four, I would say three to four, perfect, you've hit a sweet spot there. If you need five, great. Once we get beyond that, many times it becomes cumbersome and unfocused.

Suzanne: So giving you a few moments to ensure that you have your plan together, you've

got your audience, your situation, you've considered the style of communication and listening. You've thought about your desired outcome, you've declared it clearly and concisely. And you know what your core message components are and how you'd like to order them.

Suzanne: So I'm going to give you about a minute to move through this to really check your plan and then we'll move on, there are a few more things that we want to get to that will help augment and support your plan and the delivery of it.

Suzanne: All right, welcome back, everybody. So hopefully you feel like you have a good solid plan. And that was my goal from the beginning. I wanted to ensure that we gave you some practical information, but that you started to apply it. And you're starting the application right now, the planning right now. And you will move forward and implement it.

Suzanne: So, the next piece that we're going to talk about and as we go back to those drivers of executive presentation results, we have preparation. This is what happens before the delivery. As you can see, the order of things, we have preparation, strong delivery, follow through. I want to point this out because really many times people think it's what happens in that strong delivery and the delivery that makes the difference. But what I have found as I have coached people, supported people in delivering presentations, is that it's what you do before and even after that really determines your success. And many times in that preparation, you are gaining your confidence, you are using and thinking about your credibility. Many of those characteristics start to come into play as you prepare and then you're able to bring them into that conversation with your strong delivery.

Suzanne: So let's talk about preparation because this is where your success really starts. We're going to look at some preparation essentials. So, thinking strategically, number one, we've talked about this already, so we want to make sure that we are thinking strategically as we plan, and pulling in some of those components that we talked about earlier. What are those things that we need to consider, thinking broad, thinking wide?

Suzanne: One of the things that you can do as you're thinking strategically and planning, ask yourself some questions. What are they most worried about? Thinking about your audience. That's a tough question sometimes to ask, and sometimes you don't like the answer. But that's important to understand so that you can tailor your message around those needs. What are they thinking most about? What do they care about? Where are they heading? What is maybe right now on their plate that they're most interested in focusing on? And is there a way for me to connect my message to what they find to be important? That's where we get into really some strong influence as we present.

Suzanne: Test run your message, this is number two here. And I would say that it really

doesn't count if you have not really tested this thing out out loud. We need to say it out loud, we need to maybe present it to a couple of people whose opinions you value. And find out if the message is really holding up. You might even test it briefly with one of your audience members. Asking them, maybe giving them a brief synopsis of what your message is about, what your presentation is about, to see if it's going to hit the target. But test running your message can be such a powerful confidence builder and can certainly lend itself to your success.

Suzanne: Remain aware of game day factors. So what's happening on the day of this delivery? It might be time of day, it might be the space, we've had to move into a certain room. It might be that there's going to be an announcement earlier that day that might impact how well people can focus as we are having this conversation. Is it in the afternoon on a Friday in the summer? That's a tough spot to get people to listen and to be a part of the conversation. What are those game day factors that I need to consider?

Suzanne: And this brings us to the next point, account for contingencies and be flexible. Think about what could happen. Could my time be crunched? There are several other people who are presenting to the executive team on this day, and what if my time gets crunched and I have 45 minutes that's slotted for me that I have prepared. But what if it gets cut down to 10 minutes? Do I have that two set of slides there that I can go to, I can bring my point home, I can gain the input I need from them? Have that contingency and be flexible in using it.

Suzanne: The next thing, stay focused on getting results. This again, if you think about your desired outcome, you stay focused on getting that desired outcome no matter what happens around you. If the conversation goes off on something tangential, somebody takes it off to something that's not related, you are focused on pulling it back and keeping it moving forward. Here's what I believe about an executive level audience, they want to get results. They want the time to count. So if you have them in a room for an hour, 45 minutes, 30 minutes, they want that time to be well spent. And if you are the person delivering the message, you're in charge, you are the bus driver in that moment. No matter how outranked you are in the room, they are looking to you to drive things forward.

Suzanne: So staying focused on results. If someone's talking about something that is tangential, that's not related, even if that person outranks you, everybody in the room is looking to you to pull it back and to keep it going toward that result that you're looking for.

Suzanne: Establish your internal commitment. And we're going to talk about that for a few moments here. This is that thing that can anchor you in a storm. If things should go awry, if things should get a little dicey in the room or there should be some stress or maybe even conflict in the room, this is something that will allow

you to stay focused. So let's talk about what that is. What is that internal commitment? It is an unwavering dedication to what you believe is right, even when the going gets tough. Many times in these kinds of conversations, the stakes are high, there are emotions involved, they are what some call a crucial conversation. As I'm presenting to decision makers, as I'm presenting to those who have a stake in things, I want to make sure that I have something to hold on to.

Suzanne: So, I want to share with you mine and you can create yours as well. So, this is my example for my situation. The successful completion of this project will give employees increased confidence to better serve our customers. That's important. That matters to many of us. So certainly as I think about things, if somebody asked me a tough question or things seem to go awry or somebody contradicts me in the room, I can come back to this. This is my anchor in the storm that I hold on to, that I come back to that provides me with that confidence, that shows up in my body, my voice, my eye contact, my openness to others. So take just a second to write yours down.

Suzanne: As we talked about at the beginning, we talked about having an ingredient or having something that can help you power through the challenges of an executive audience, the challenges of an executive presentation, having that executive presence. This is something that can provide you with that. It's an internal knowing, it is something that allows you to stay centered, and having this internal commitment can be a very powerful thing to take with you into a presentation.

Suzanne: There are two final drivers that we are going to talk about. And those are strong delivery and follow through. I'll talk a little bit about follow through and then we'll jump into strong delivery. Follow through is really the return on investment of your time and their time. And it is important that if there are decisions that have been made in the room and your presentation, if there are ideas that were shared that need to be implemented, if people have taken responsibility for something and they now own a task, there's some ownership of something, it is really on you, this is not something that you can waver about. You are accountable to ensure that everything that happened in that room as the presenter gets followed through on afterwards. Again, this is the return on that investment.

Suzanne: If we added up and got \$1 value on an hour meeting with a group of executives, everybody in the room including you, that's a lot of money money that's being spent to have those individuals in that room having that conversation. So we want to make sure that we get a return on that investment of time and money. The follow through is important for that.

Suzanne: Let's come back to the strong delivery and what's needed for that. And I have a question here that I want to ask you as we get into that. So we're going to open

up another poll question here. And in this poll question, what we're asking is, what is your biggest challenge in that moment of delivery? You're in the moment, you're in that conversation, you're presenting to executives, you're an executive yourself and you're presenting to other executives. Or you are somebody who is presenting up. You're in that moment. What is it that is the biggest challenge for you?

Suzanne: And we've got some choices here. Controlling my mental distractions, my mind goes all over the place. Physical manifestation of nerves, this could be breaking out in hives, it could be rapid breathing, it could be my hands are shaking, my knees are shaking. Vocal issues, maybe you get very quiet when you get nervous or feel in some way put on the spot. Keeping my listeners engaged. Boy, that really is something that I struggle with. Or maybe it's something else.

Suzanne: So, we have this poll open. We're seeing lots of results here. And we'll take a look at it what you're saying here. This is helpful because this will gauge the last portion here of our conversation.

Suzanne: All right, so here we see, 28% of you are saying controlling my mental distractions. I can relate to that. You're in the moment, the stakes are high. Maybe somebody in the room who you know is going to jump in any minute now and ask a tough question. So it's controlling my mental distractions and staying focused. Physical manifestation of nerves. And again, this could be everything from how you're breathing to shaking to maybe even how you are moving throughout the space if you're standing. 11% of you are saying vocal issues are something that is a challenge for you. Keeping my listeners engaged, 22% of you are saying that that's a problem for me, that's a challenge for me. And 6% of you are saying it's something else. There are other challenges that you face. This is very helpful, thank you so much for responding, it really helps to cater our conversation.

Suzanne: I want to take a look at some things that you can do, we are going to take a look at some essentials of delivery. This is what we're doing in the moment. First, set expectations with the receiver. So in that moment, set those expectations, here's how much time we're spending, here's what we need to get to, here's what we need to accomplish. So setting those expectations at the beginning can be very powerful.

Suzanne: Use speakers neutral. This is a neutral way of standing or sitting as you are talking to your audience. Making sure that you stay open. The way that speakers neutral is used is that my spine is nice and lifted, I am using it right now. It allows me to have deep breaths, it allows me to have a strong voice. Even though I'm seated right now, my spine is lifted, my shoulders are down and relaxed so I don't have any tension in my shoulders. And my arms are open. I'm actually gesturing, you can't see me but I'm gesturing away over here. And I'm using open gestures, not closed clinched gestures. So this is that neutral position, that

open position. Even if you are extremely nervous, this provides the audience with a picture of openness, of composure.

Suzanne: Speak with an engaging voice. If you think about your voice as an orchestra, you want to use the lower notes as well as the upper notes and all the notes in between. Monotone is not your friend when you're seeking to persuade or bring people on board or gain their insight or input, we want to have an engaging voice. The way that the voice shows up is you've got to be breathing deeply so that lifted spine is useful there.

Suzanne: So we want to make sure that we're breathing deeply, we're taking some moments of pause. We take a deep breath and we continue to move forward. The sound of our voice, we want to make sure that the tone is there, the pitch, we're using upper and lower notes, and that we have a volume that reaches every member of our audience. So these are some things to have to do with the voice for those of you who say that is an issue for you.

Suzanne: Using narrative techniques. This is where we bring in storytelling. This is where we bring in examples. Maybe we can give some context to the conversation. I 1972, when this organization was founded, many of us found that we only had seven clients, and here we are today with 125. Bringing that context and bringing that story, if that supports your desired outcome, use of narrative techniques are so powerful.

Suzanne: Many people will say, well, I'm not sure that my executive audience wants to have stories told to them. Trust me, believe me, they do. And they love analogies, if you're taking something complex, and you can explain it in a concise analogy, they love it, it's a time saver. So think of creative ways that you can use narrative techniques.

Suzanne: Stick to your core message components. I determined in my plan that I have four things I'm going to get to and I'm going to move through them in this fashion one by one by one. Make sure you stick to that as much as possible. Maintain your internal commitment. You set it. That is your anchor in the storm. Remember it, keep it with you even when things go awry in the room. That can be that thing that can anchor you, keep you composed.

Suzanne: And then of course the follow through, you might even talk in the room about how you're going to follow through so they can be expecting it. And as always, we want to get to results. We want to make sure that we are constantly driving results that never leaves our mind as we present to an executive audience. We're all about the results.

Suzanne: So this brings us to the end of this conversation of the content piece of it. We're going to move into Q&A in just a moment. Love to hear from you questions that you may have around this topic. I want to say in closing, as you're thinking about

any questions you might have, I want to thank you first of all for spending some time on this and I want to encourage you to use your plan and put it into action. You've created a plan, you just spent some time developing it, put it into action and measure your results. Look for opportunities to practice presenting meaningful information to executive audiences. Like anything else that we do, the more we do it, the more comfortable we are with it and the better we are at doing it. So continue to look for opportunities to present.

Suzanne: And I would also say enjoy the exhilaration of being in the room where big decisions are being made, where the larger picture is being considered. Enjoy those opportunities that you have as an executive presenting out and also as an individual presenting to an executive audience. Enjoy the exhilaration of that.

Suzanne: I want to introduce you briefly to my colleague, Carrie [Merren 00:55:01] who is here with me and I just want you to hear her voice because she's a person that you can connect with after our presentation here today. Carrie.

Carrie: Good afternoon. Thank you Suzanne. Carrie Merren here. As Suzanne mentioned, I am part of the Pinnacle Group team. At the end of the presentation today, you will see our contact information. So I invite you to please reach out and connect with Suzanne and I. We would love to hear from you and continue to support you in your talent and development needs.

Suzanne: All right. Thank you so much, Carrie. And now we'll open it up for questions. And if you have any questions, just let us know. We would love to see what you have to offer here.

Sara: Absolutely good. So, thank you so much, Suzanne. We have some questions here that have come in. So we'll go ahead and get started. For those who are looking, look for that questions chat box area, you can type in your question there and send those right over, make sure you hit submit. So our first question here is from Janet. And she asks, what can I do if someone with more authority derails my presentation?

Suzanne: That's a really good one. And thank you, Sara. Who was it that that brought that, it was Janet?

Sara: Yup.

Suzanne: Yeah, Janet. So with that one, if you are presenting and you are outranked in the room and somebody in the room who outranks you who is of a higher level, you know, just in the title there than you start to derail the conversation, again, I'll go back to it is something that is really on you, you are the driver of the bus at this point. And really all eyes, if you think about it, everybody in the room wants to be efficient with their time. So you really need to take the floor to take the stage.

Suzanne: Here's the clue, here's a hint I will give you. If you are presenting and sometimes we're remote, but sometimes we're in the same space, if you have the opportunity to stand, you have more focus than you will being seated. If I'm standing what I can do, here's a trick, I can step away from a center place where I am presenting, if someone starts to speak and they're derailing things, I can step away from that center point of focus, and then as I feel that it's time to take the floor again, I can step back into that center place and all eyes in the room will start to shift toward me. There's a moment where things will be broken with that individual who's speaking, maybe they'll get the hint, they'll get the clue that it's time to continue.

Suzanne: And I also would say, if all else fails, you could go back to our desired result. If you had delivered that desired result at the beginning of the presentation, we want to make sure we get to a decision let's say. You can come back to that by interrupting the individual and say, hold on just a moment, I just want to open this up to the rest the room, I know we only have 10 minutes left, we want to make sure that we get to our decision. Would everyone in the room agree that we need to move forward and maybe table this conversation for another time? You probably are going to get the buy in from all those in the room. They're probably thinking the same thing you are, that we need to move forward.

Sara: Good. Good answer. Yeah. And looks like we've got one more time, one more minute here to do one more question. So go ahead, if there's anyone else that has questions, send those in. I do have one other here already. So we'll go ahead and get to that. This is from Steve. He says, what happens when I have a mixture of styles in the room?

Suzanne: And Steve, this happens. What I can tell you is this is a FAQ, this is a frequently asked question. Many people ask this, if I have a mixed audience, and many times that happens. I would say that you appeal to the deductive, you appeal to the direct if you do have those people in the room. So you might want to start your conversation with a very specific point. Here is the bottom line, here is what we need here is the action that's needed. Start with that as you deliver and then you think about your order of things. After that, you might bring some data and some information to those systematics. And then maybe some spirit to your spirited.

Suzanne: But I would say that you want to appeal to those highly deductive, highly direct individuals in the room first, and then you appeal to the others after that. And I would say too, you might make sure that you have spoken with your audience ahead of time to see what they're really focused on, if that's a possibility of gaining their thoughts and their ideas ahead of time, that can also help you to guide your conversation.

Sara: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Suzanne. This was a great webinar today. Thank

you.

Suzanne: All right, thank you so much, Sara.

Sara: And just for those who are new on the line, I want to give you some information about HRDQ. We publish research based experiential learning products that you can deliver in your organization. So check out our online our print self assessments and workshops like our What's My Communication Style, the foundation of today's webinar. We also have up out of your seat games and reproducible workshops you can customize. So feel free to reach out to our customer service team. We can help you find the right training program or some expert trainers to deliver it for you.

Sara: And again, Suzanne, wonderful job today. Thank you so much and thank you everyone for your participation in today's webinar and happy training.

Suzanne: Thank you, everybody.