Communicating with Senior Stakeholders Guide

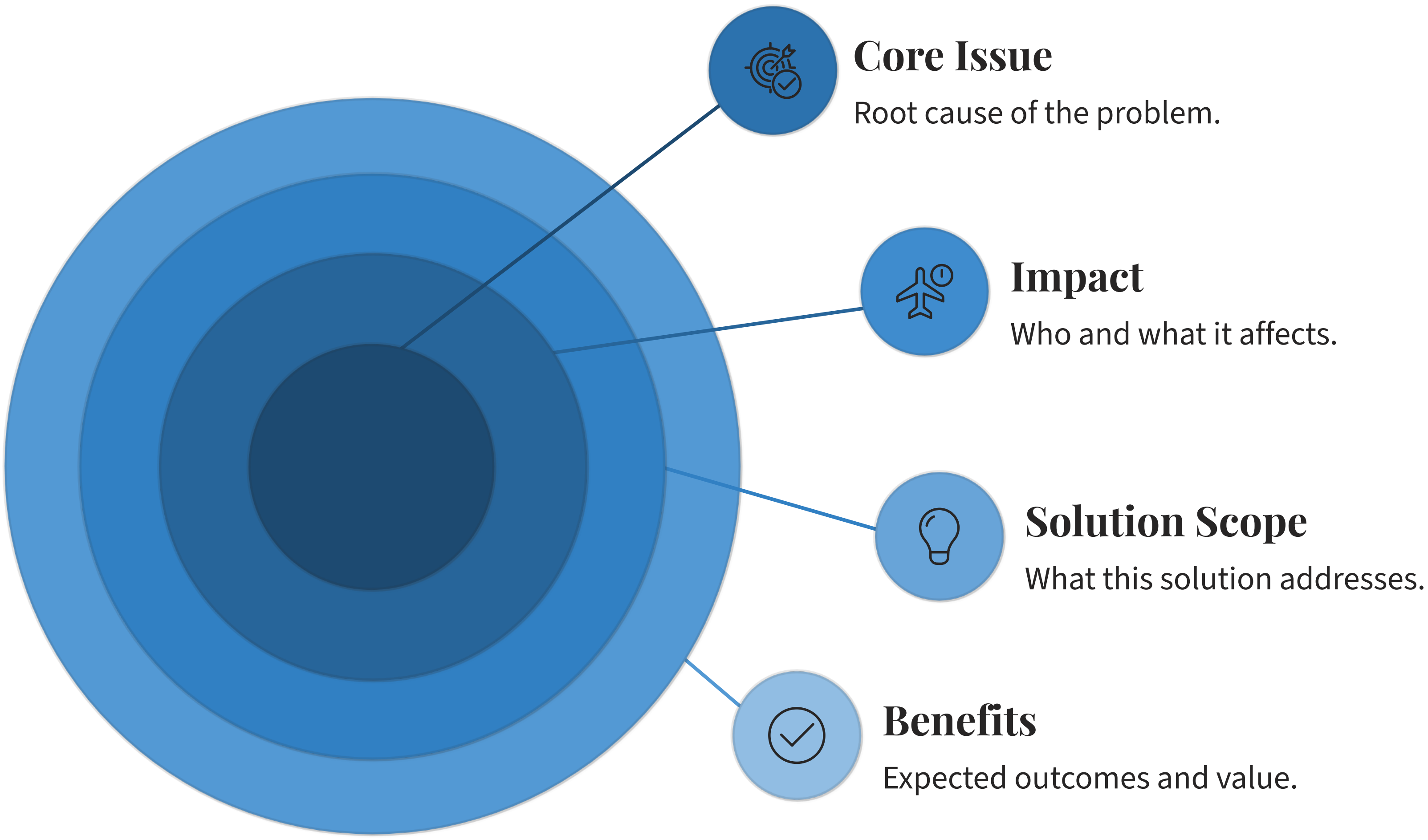
A practical, action-oriented guide for working professionals who want to speak with clarity, confidence, and credibility — at every level of the organisation. Whether you are a career changer stepping into a new arena, an early-career professional navigating your first boardroom, or a manager building executive presence, this guidebook gives you the frameworks, language, and real-world tools to make every stakeholder conversation count.

INTRODUCTION

Why This Guide Exists — and Why It Matters Now

Most professionals are never formally taught how to communicate upward. You learn to write reports, craft presentations, and manage teams — but the nuanced skill of speaking with senior stakeholders, executives, and board members? That is largely left to trial, error, and uncomfortable post-meeting silences. This guide exists to close that gap, giving you a structured, practical, immediately applicable system for every interaction you have with people above you in the hierarchy.

The Problem This Solves



Senior stakeholders operate at a different altitude. They think in outcomes, risks, and strategic direction — not task lists or process details. When you walk into a conversation without calibrating to their lens, you risk being perceived as unprepared, unclear, or lacking business acumen. Worse, great ideas get dismissed simply because they were not framed in the right language. This guidebook gives you the translation layer between your expertise and their decision-making world.

The stakes are real. Research consistently shows that professionals who communicate effectively with senior leaders advance faster, gain more visibility, and build stronger sponsorship networks. Communication is not a "soft skill" add-on — it is the primary vehicle through which your competence becomes visible.

How to Use This Guide

- **First read:** Go cover to cover to build the full mental model
- **Reference mode:** Jump to any section before a key meeting
- **Worksheet use:** Fill in templates before every important stakeholder interaction
- **Team use:** Share with direct reports preparing for leadership exposure

CHAPTER 1

Understanding the Senior Stakeholder Mindset

Before you can communicate effectively with senior leaders, you need to understand how they think. Senior stakeholders are not just more experienced versions of you — they have fundamentally different cognitive filters shaped by accountability, time scarcity, and strategic responsibility. The moment you internalise this, your entire approach to preparation, framing, and conversation structure shifts.

Senior leaders process information through three primary lenses: **What is the impact? What is the risk?** and **What decision needs to be made?** Every piece of information you bring to them gets unconsciously filtered through these three questions. If your communication does not answer at least one of these quickly, attention drifts. This is not rudeness — it is the inevitable result of managing large, complex organisations where every meeting competes with dozens of others for cognitive bandwidth.

1

🎯 Outcome Orientation

They care about **results, not activity.** Always lead with what was achieved or what you are recommending, not what steps you took to get there. "We increased retention by 18%" beats "We ran three focus groups, analysed the data, and identified patterns."

2

⚡ Time Scarcity

Assume you have **less time than scheduled.** Senior leaders often have back-to-back commitments. The first two minutes of any interaction set the frame. Invest heavily in your opening — it determines whether the conversation continues on your terms.

3

🔭 Strategic Lens

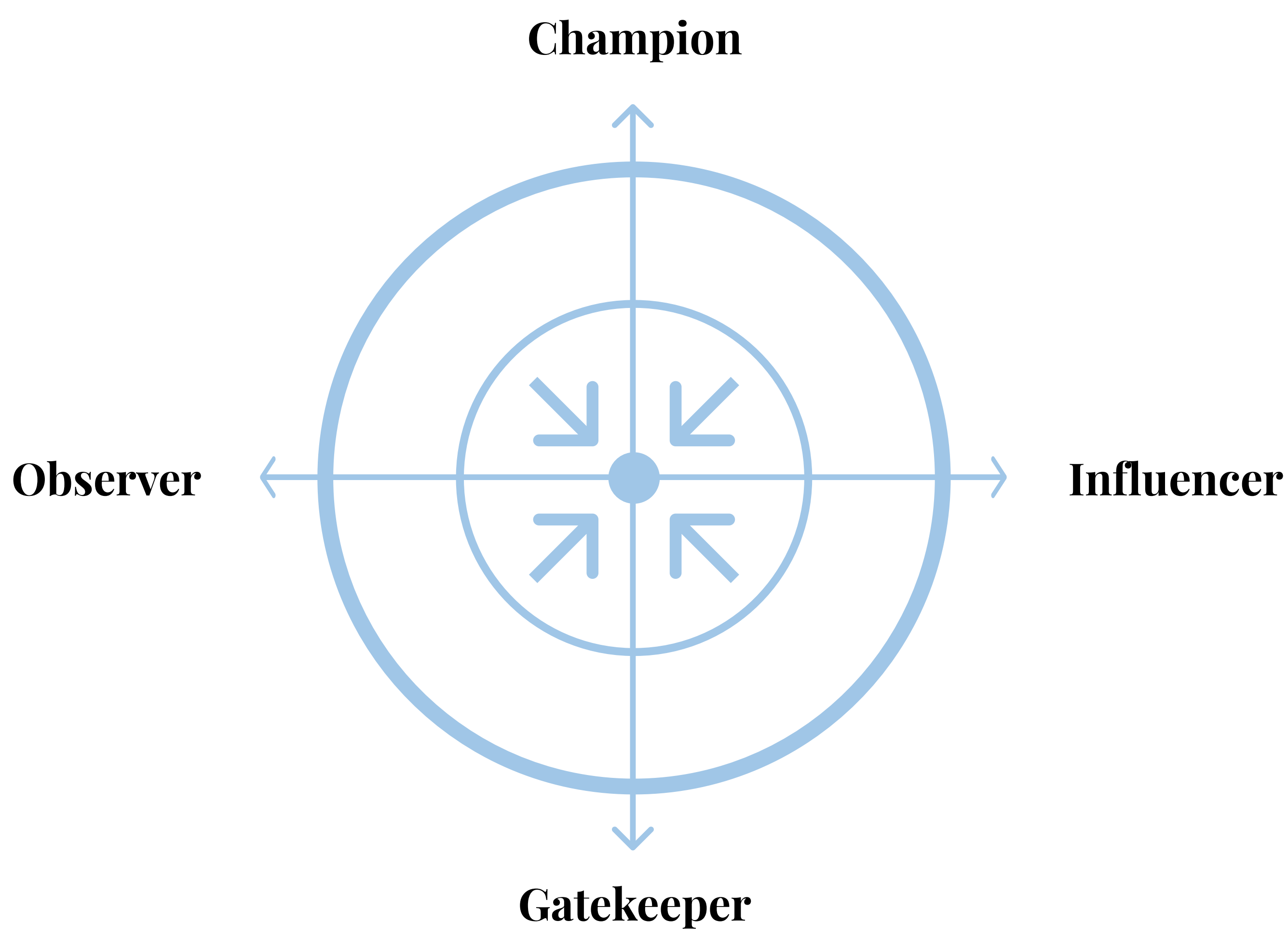
They think in **quarters and years,** not days and weeks. Connect your request, update, or idea to a strategic priority. If you cannot articulate how your topic links to an organisational goal, spend more time on preparation before the meeting.

4

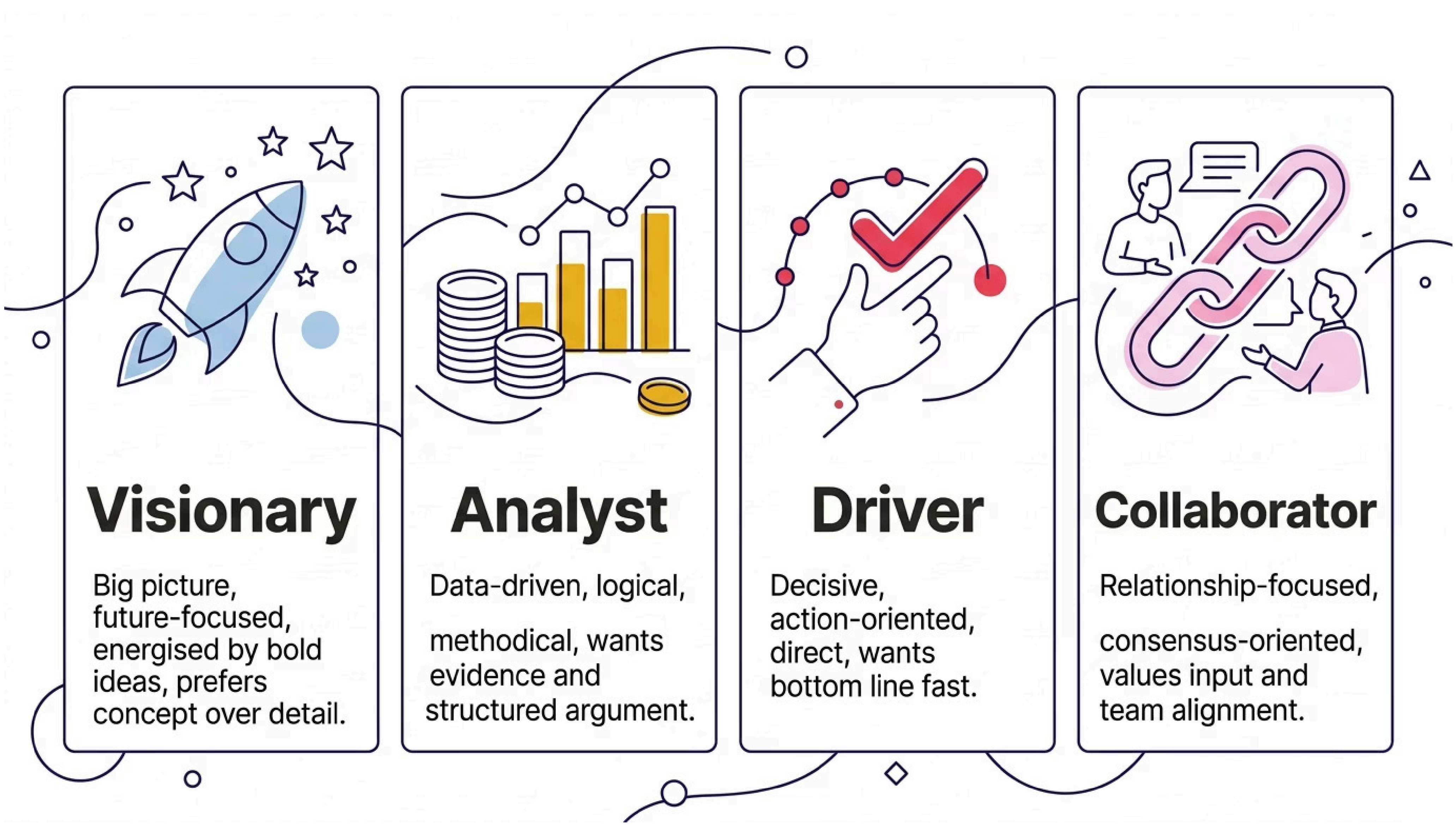
⚠️ Risk Radar

Senior leaders are **paid to identify risk.** Do not bury bad news or complicate risk disclosure. When you proactively surface a problem with a suggested path forward, you signal maturity, trustworthiness, and leadership capability.

The Four Stakeholder Archetypes



Not all senior stakeholders are the same. Blanket communication strategies fail because they do not account for the variation in how different leaders process information, make decisions, and prefer to be engaged. Recognising the archetype you are dealing with — and adapting accordingly — is one of the highest-leverage skills in executive communication.

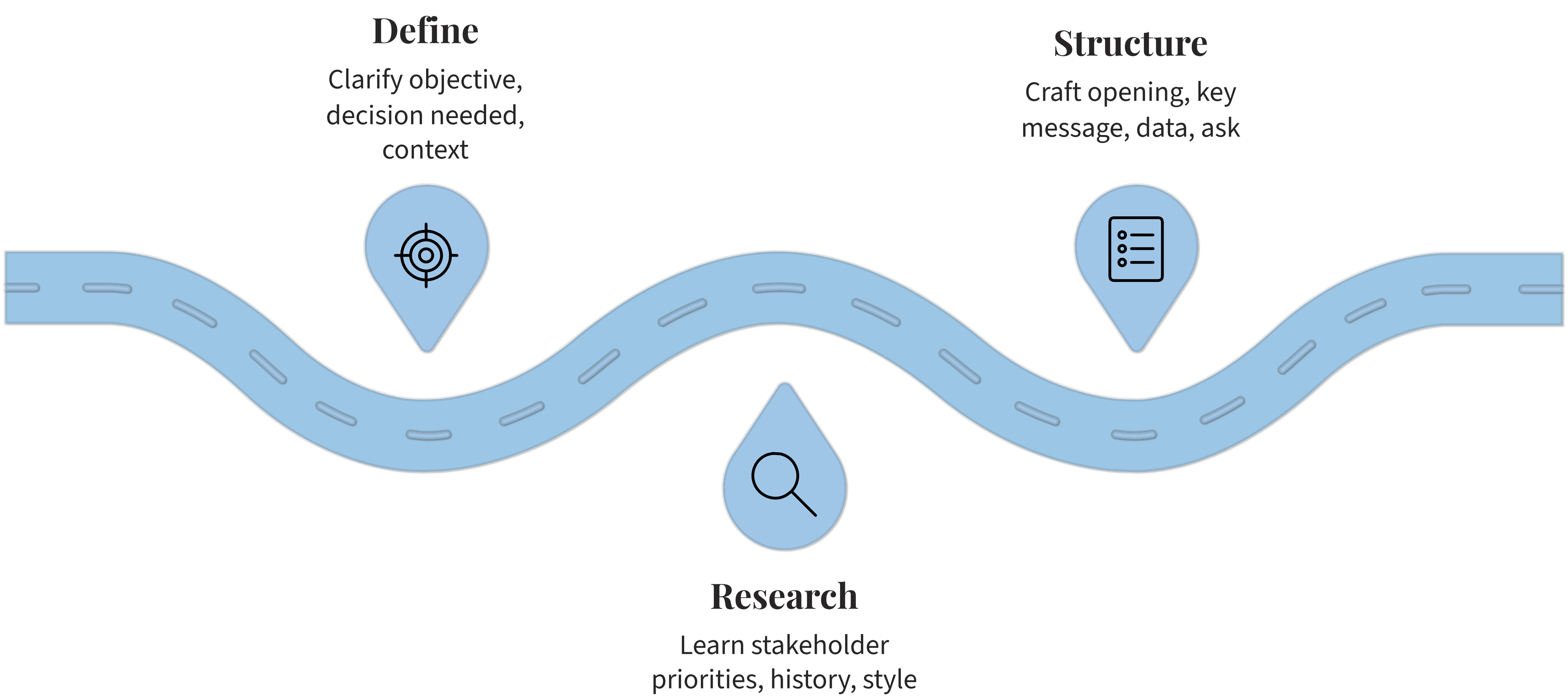


The key is to **read the room early and adapt mid-conversation if needed.** You will rarely have perfect information about someone's archetype before meeting them. Use the first two minutes to observe: Are they asking for data points or big-picture context? Are they leaning forward impatiently or sitting back to listen? These cues tell you how to recalibrate in real time. The most effective executive communicators are not rigid — they are fluent across all four styles.

Before the Meeting — Preparation is 80% of the Work

The professionals who consistently impress senior stakeholders do not walk in hoping for the best. They invest significant preparation time before the room even convenes. In fact, in executive communication, preparation is not a nice-to-have — it is the single most important variable between a conversation that moves things forward and one that creates confusion or erodes confidence.

Great preparation has three components: **knowing your objective**, **understanding your audience**, and **crafting your narrative arc**. Most professionals invest only in the first — they know what they want to say. Fewer invest in the second. Almost none invest sufficiently in the third. This is why so many technically sound professionals still leave senior meetings without the outcome they were seeking.



A preparation session does not need to be hours long. A focused 20-minute pre-meeting ritual using the worksheet in this guide (see Chapter 6) can transform your presence and outcomes. The discipline of writing down your objective, your stakeholder's top priorities, and your single most important message forces the cognitive clarity that improvisation never achieves.

CHAPTER 2 · CONTINUED

The Stakeholder Pre-Meeting Worksheet

Use this worksheet before every significant senior stakeholder interaction. Fill it in the day before, or at minimum 30 minutes before the meeting. Keeping a record of completed worksheets creates a valuable log of your stakeholder relationships over time.

1. Meeting Objective

What is the single outcome you need from this meeting? (Be specific — one sentence.)

My objective is:

____

2. Stakeholder Context

What are their top 2–3 current priorities? What pressures are they under right now?

Their priorities:

____

Current pressures:

____

3. My Core Message

If they remember ONE thing from this meeting, what should it be?

My headline message:

____

4. Supporting Evidence

What are the 2–3 strongest data points, facts, or examples that back my message?

Evidence 1:

____

Evidence 2:

____

Evidence 3:

____

5. Anticipated Objections

What are they likely to push back on? How will you respond?

Objection:

____

_

My response:

____

6. My Clear Ask

What specific action, decision, or commitment do you need from them?

I am asking for:

____

CHAPTER 3

During the Meeting — Structure, Presence, and Adaptability

Preparation gives you the foundation. What you do in the room determines the outcome. Executive communication during a meeting is a dynamic, responsive act — not a scripted performance. The most effective professionals hold a clear structure in mind while remaining fluid enough to adapt when the conversation shifts direction, when time gets cut, or when a senior leader takes the discussion somewhere unexpected.

The BLUF Principle

Bottom Line Up Front. This is the single most powerful structural shift you can make in senior communication. Borrowed from military briefing protocols, BLUF means you lead with your conclusion, recommendation, or decision request — and then provide the supporting context.

Most professionals do the reverse: they build context, walk through the journey, and reveal the conclusion at the end. Senior leaders interrupt this pattern because they have already jumped to "so what?" in their heads. BLUF meets them where they are, signals confidence, and makes you easy to sponsor.

BLUF in Practice

Without BLUF: "So we started looking at the retention data in Q2, and we noticed some patterns in the mid-level cohort. We then ran three interviews and a survey... and what we found was that we should probably increase the L&D budget."

With BLUF: "I'm recommending we increase the L&D budget by 12% in Q3. Retention data shows mid-level attrition is driven by development gaps. I have three specific interventions that will pay back within six months. Shall I walk you through them?"

Beyond structure, **physical presence and vocal delivery** signal confidence to senior stakeholders. Sit forward in your seat. Maintain eye contact without staring. Speak at a measured pace — rushing signals anxiety. Pause after key points to let them land. These are not superficial performance tips; they are the physical expression of the preparation and conviction you have already built.

The 5-Part Executive Communication Framework

Use this framework to structure any senior stakeholder interaction — whether it is a formal presentation, a corridor conversation, a status update email, or a one-on-one. It is flexible enough to work in two minutes or twenty, and it keeps your communication tightly aligned to what senior leaders actually want to hear.

Step 1 · Context (10 seconds)

One sentence establishing why you are having this conversation. Ground the listener. *"As part of our Q3 growth review, I want to share an update on customer acquisition."*

Step 2 · Headline Message (20 seconds)

Your single most important point, delivered upfront. This is your BLUF moment. *"We are on track to hit target, but one channel is underperforming and needs a decision today."*

Step 3 · Supporting Evidence (1–2 minutes)

Two or three data points, examples, or facts that substantiate your headline. Resist the urge to share everything you know — choose what is most relevant to *their* priorities.

Step 4 · Recommendation (30 seconds)

Your proposed path forward, stated clearly and confidently. Even if the decision is theirs, you should have a point of view. Stakeholders trust people who have recommendations, not just reports.

Step 5 · Clear Ask (10 seconds)

Name exactly what you need: a decision, a resource commitment, a connection, or simply alignment. An unspecified ask leads to an unspecified outcome. *"I need your go-ahead to reallocate ₹5L from the paid channel to content."*

Handling Tough Questions and Pushback

One of the highest-pressure moments in senior stakeholder communication is receiving a challenging question, a pointed critique, or outright disagreement — especially in front of others. How you respond in these moments does more for your reputation than almost anything else. Composure under pressure is the hallmark of executive presence, and it can absolutely be learned and practised.

Pause Before Responding

A two-second pause before answering signals that you are thoughtful, not reactive. It also gives you time to choose your words intentionally. Most people rush to fill silence — resisting this impulse immediately differentiates you.

Acknowledge, Then Address

Start by validating the question or concern: *"That is an important point."* or *"I understand the concern here."* This is not capitulation — it is emotional intelligence. It de-escalates tension and creates space for a rational exchange.

Separate What You Know from What You Don't

Senior stakeholders respect honesty about the boundaries of your knowledge. *"I can speak to X with confidence. On Y, I would want to verify before committing to a number — I'll confirm by end of day."* This builds more trust than a guess that gets challenged.

Disagree Constructively

When you hold a different view, say so — respectfully and with evidence. *"I see this differently, and here is why..."* followed by a clear rationale. Senior leaders often test for conviction. Caving without good reason signals a lack of it.

⚡ **Power Phrase Bank:** "Let me make sure I understand what you're asking..." · "The data I have suggests..." · "I'd like to come back to you on that with full confidence." · "My recommendation stands, and here is my reasoning..." · "That is a fair challenge — here is how I would address it."

CHAPTER 4

After the Meeting — Follow-Through That Builds Trust

Most communication guides stop at the meeting itself. This one does not — because the period immediately after a senior stakeholder interaction is where relationships are built or eroded. What you do in the 24–48 hours following a significant conversation sends a powerful signal about your reliability, your professionalism, and your follow-through. In a world where most people have good intentions but inconsistent execution, being the person who always closes the loop is a significant competitive advantage.

Summary Email

Complete Commitments

Share Results

Request Feedback

The Follow-Up Email Template

A clean, professional follow-up email is one of the most underutilised tools in stakeholder communication. It serves four purposes simultaneously: it documents agreements, demonstrates professionalism, creates accountability, and keeps you visible in a positive way. It should be short, specific, and structured. Here is a template you can adapt immediately:

Subject: Follow-up — [Meeting Topic] — [Date]

Hi [Name], Thank you for your time today. Here is a brief summary of what we discussed and the next steps we agreed on.

Key discussion points: [2–3 bullets] **Decisions made:** [What was agreed] **Next steps:** [Who is doing what, by when]

Please let me know if I have missed anything or if there are corrections. I will be in touch by [date] with an update on [specific item].

Best regards, [Your name]

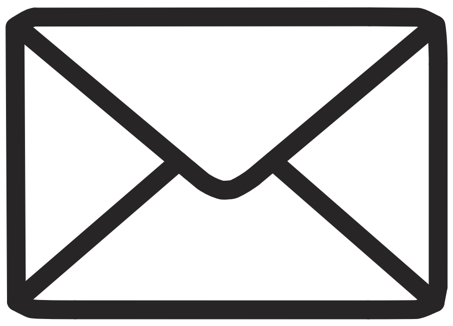
Follow-Up Checklist

- Email sent within 24 hours
- All action items logged
- Deadlines confirmed in calendar
- Any "I'll get back to you" items actioned
- Shared materials or resources as promised
- Flagged any blockers proactively
- Scheduled next touchpoint if needed

CHAPTER 5

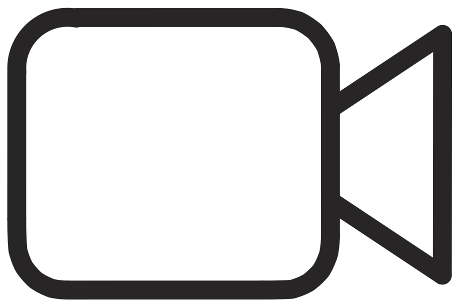
Communication Channels — Choosing the Right Medium

Not all stakeholder communication happens in formal meetings. Senior leaders receive information through a constant flow of emails, Slack messages, deck reviews, one-on-ones, corridor conversations, and virtual calls. Choosing the right channel for the right message is itself a critical communication skill — one that many professionals overlook entirely. A message that is perfect in content can still fail if delivered through the wrong medium at the wrong moment.



Email

Best for: formal updates, documented decisions, sharing detailed analysis, follow-ups. Keep subject lines specific and informative. Lead with the most important point. Use bullet points for scannability. Avoid long paragraphs — they signal poor prioritisation.



Live / Video Meetings

Best for: decisions requiring discussion, sensitive topics, relationship building, complex proposals. Always have a clear agenda sent in advance. Respect time boundaries strictly. End with confirmed next steps.

Instant Messaging

Best for: quick clarifications, informal updates, time-sensitive nudges. Keep messages short. Never use for sensitive or complex topics. State the purpose in the first line — do not send a lone "Hi" and wait.

Decks / Reports

Best for: structured proposals, data-heavy analysis, quarterly reviews. Lead with an executive summary. Every slide should have one clear message in the title. Assume they will read only the titles if time-pressed — make those count.

> 🔑 **Channel Selection Rule:** If the message requires a decision or has emotional weight, always default to a live conversation — not email or message. Nuance, tone, and relationship are built in real-time exchanges, not written ones.

CHAPTER 6

Writing for Senior Stakeholders — Emails, Decks, and Briefs

Written communication with senior stakeholders is a distinct skill from verbal communication — and equally important. In many organisations, a significant proportion of stakeholder influence happens through written channels: email updates, one-page briefs, executive summaries, and deck narratives. Getting this right means the difference between being seen as a clear strategic thinker and being someone who buries the lead.

The Pyramid Principle in Writing

Developed by Barbara Minto at McKinsey, the Pyramid Principle is the gold standard for senior communication writing. The core idea: **start with the conclusion, support it with key arguments, back each argument with data or examples.** This inverted pyramid mirrors how senior leaders process information — they want the answer first and the justification second.

Apply this to every written communication: your email first paragraph is your conclusion. Your deck title slide states the strategic recommendation. Your brief's opening line states the decision needed. Everything that follows is evidence. This discipline alone transforms the perceived quality of your communication.

Executive Email Checklist

- Subject line is specific and action-oriented
- First sentence states the purpose or conclusion
- Body is under 150 words if possible
- Uses bullets rather than dense paragraphs
- One clear ask or next step at the end
- No unexplained jargon or acronyms
- Tone is confident, not apologetic
- Attachments are named clearly

A common mistake is hedging language in written communication — phrases like "I just wanted to check...", "Sorry to bother you, but...", "This might not be the right approach, but..." These undermine your authority before the reader even reaches your content. Replace hedges with direct, confident language: **"I am writing to recommend..."**, **"I need your input on..."**, **"The data suggests we should..."** The shift is subtle but its impact on perception is significant.

CHAPTER 7

Building Stakeholder Relationships — Not Just Meetings

Effective communication with senior stakeholders is not a series of isolated interactions — it is an ongoing relationship. The professionals who consistently receive support, resources, and sponsorship from senior leaders are those who invest in the relationship between formal touchpoints, not just during them. Relationship equity is the invisible currency of organisational influence, and it is built through consistent, thoughtful engagement over time.

🗺️ Map Your Stakeholders

Identify the 5–8 senior stakeholders most critical to your current goals. For each, note their priorities, communication preferences, and the nature of your current relationship.

💡 Add Value Between Meetings

Share a relevant article. Flag an opportunity related to their priorities. Introduce a useful connection. These micro-touchpoints build goodwill far beyond what formal meetings can achieve.

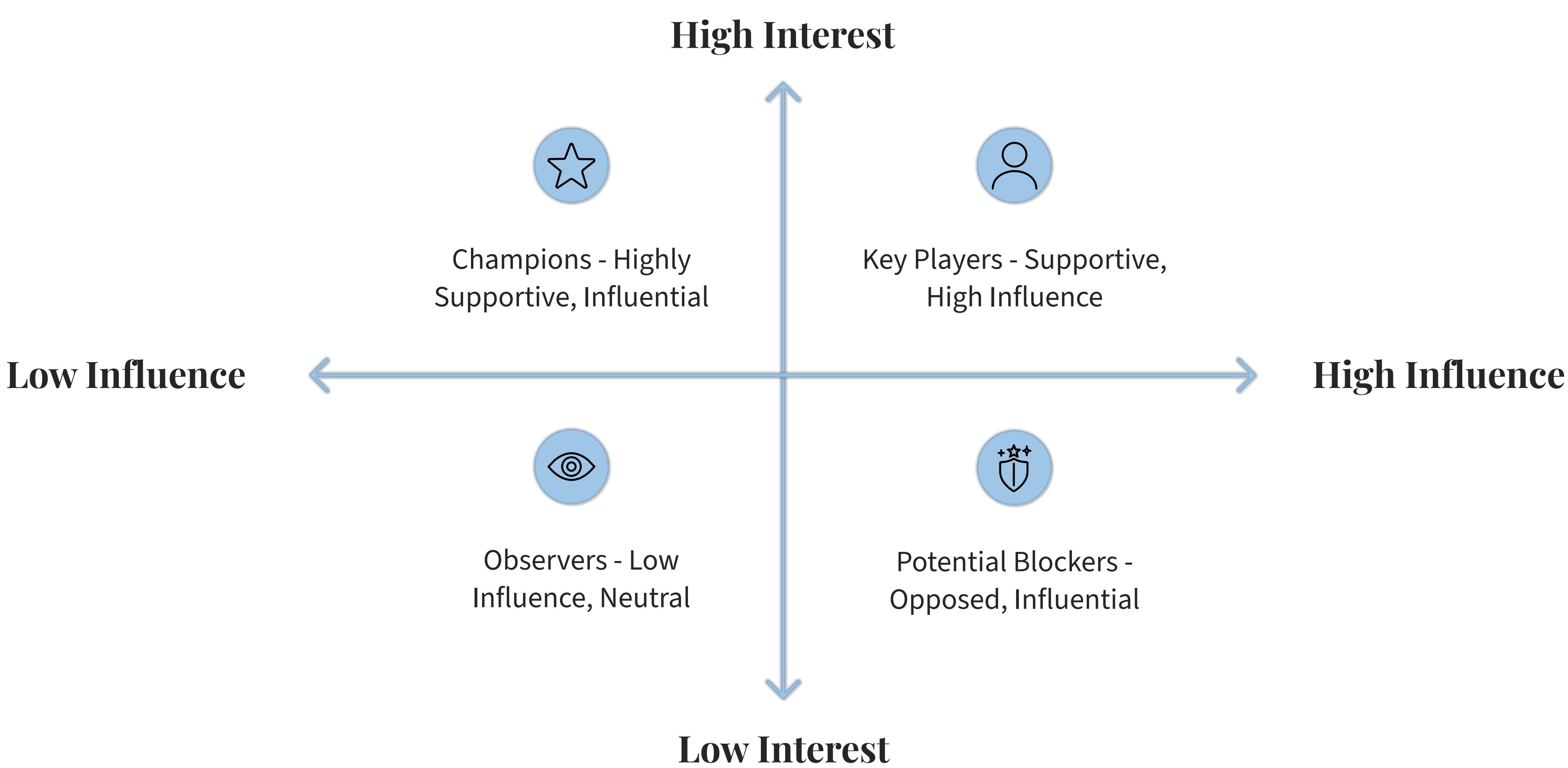
📋 Keep Commitments Religiously

Every commitment you make to a senior stakeholder — however small — is a trust deposit or withdrawal. Consistent follow-through builds the credibility that earns you more access and influence over time.

🔄 Seek and Act on Feedback

Periodically ask senior stakeholders: "How can I make our interactions more useful for you?" Acting on their answer signals maturity, adaptability, and genuine respect for their time and perspective.

Stakeholder Mapping Worksheet



Use this mapping tool to build a clear, strategic view of your key stakeholder relationships. Update it quarterly or whenever your role, team, or project portfolio changes significantly. This is not a bureaucratic exercise — it is a strategic planning tool that keeps your communication focused and your relationship investment intentional.

Stakeholder Name	Their Top Priority Right Now	Current Relationship Quality	Preferred Communication Style	My Next Action
e.g. Meera Sharma, VP Sales	*e.g. Q4 revenue target*	*e.g. Strong — monthly 1:1s*	*e.g. Direct, data-first, email summaries*	*e.g. Share retention analysis by Friday*

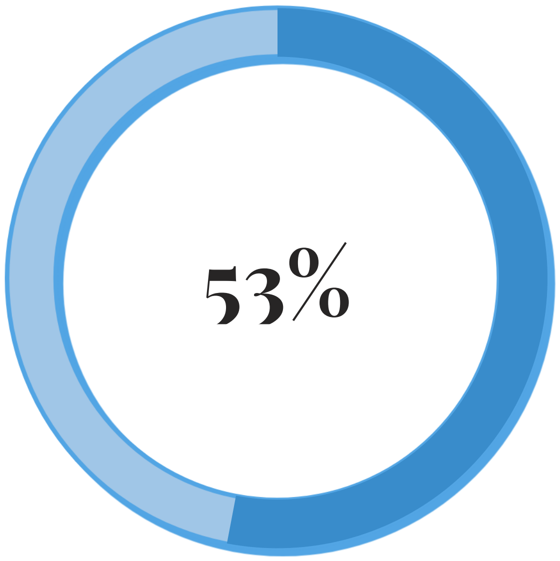
💡 **Relationship Quality Key: Strong** = regular access, mutual trust, they advocate for you | **Developing** = occasional contact, neutral or positive perception | **Needs Work** = limited access, unclear perception, or past friction | **Unknown** = no direct relationship yet

CHAPTER 8

Executive Presence — The Intangible That Decides Everything

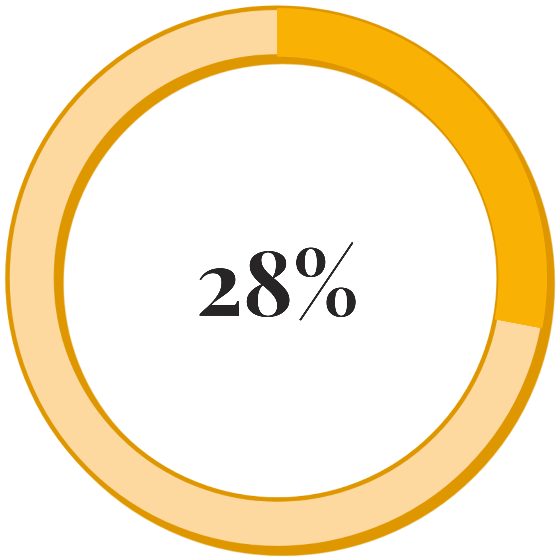
Ask any senior leader what they look for in the professionals they choose to sponsor and promote, and you will hear two words repeatedly: **executive presence.** It is widely discussed and rarely defined clearly. This chapter gives you a working definition and, more importantly, a set of practical behaviours you can develop intentionally — starting today.

Executive presence is not about personality type, charisma, or title. It is about the cumulative impression you make when you communicate: the clarity of your thinking, the confidence of your delivery, the composure under pressure, and the consistency of your follow-through. It is the signal that says: *this person is ready for more.* And it is built — not born.



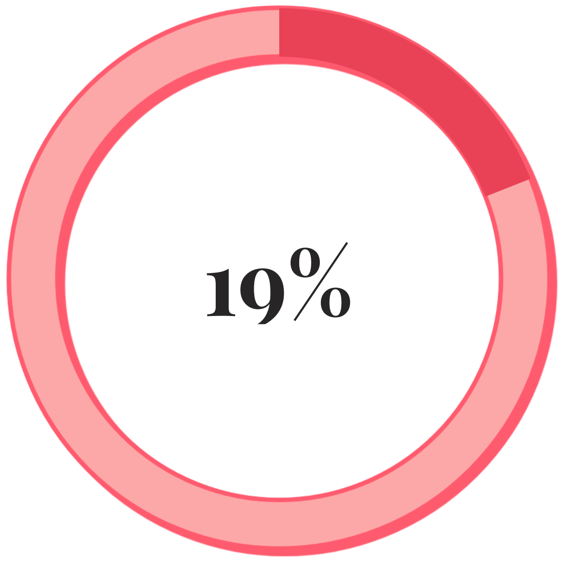
Gravitas

How you act — confidence, composure, decisiveness, and willingness to take a stand



Communication

How you speak and write — clarity, succinctness, and your ability to command a room



Appearance

How you look — professional polish that signals you understand the context and culture

Source: Sylvia Ann Hewlett's research on Executive Presence. These proportions represent how senior leaders weight EP components.

The critical insight here is that **gravitas is more than half of executive presence**, and it is built through your communication behaviours. When you walk in prepared, deliver a clear message, handle challenge with composure, and follow through on every commitment — you are building gravitas deliberately. This is not luck or personality. It is a practice.

CHAPTER 8 · CONTINUED

Executive Presence Self-Assessment

Rate yourself honestly on each dimension below. This is not about self-criticism — it is about identifying your highest-leverage development areas. Choose one or two items from the "Needs Work" column and focus there for the next 30 days. Reassess monthly.

Behaviour / Competency	Consistently Strong ✅	Sometimes / Developing 🔶	Needs Work 🔴
I lead with the headline message, not background context			
I prepare a clear objective before every senior meeting			
I make a specific ask rather than leaving the meeting open-ended			
I handle challenging questions with composure, not defensiveness			
I follow up within 24 hours of important meetings			
I use confident, direct language in written communications			
I connect my work to strategic priorities when presenting			
I proactively surface risks with a proposed path forward			
I invest in stakeholder relationships between formal meetings			
I adapt my communication style to the stakeholder's archetype			

CHAPTER 9

Real-World Application — Case Study

Theory lands differently when you see it in context. The following case study illustrates how a mid-career professional applied the principles in this guide during a critical stakeholder interaction. Read it once for the story, then re-read with the framework in mind to identify the specific techniques being used.

> ### The Scenario
>
> Riya is a 6-year-experienced product manager at a mid-size edtech company. She has identified that a key feature — the AI-powered learning path tool — has a 34% drop-off rate that is not being addressed in the Q3 roadmap. She needs to convince her CPO (Chief Product Officer) to reprioritise one sprint. She has 15 minutes in a scheduled 1:1.

❌ How Riya Used to Handle It

"So I've been looking at the AI path tool, and there are some interesting patterns in the data. We ran a survey and got 87 responses. Some users said the interface was confusing, others mentioned they didn't understand the next steps. I was thinking maybe we could look at the UX and potentially squeeze in a fix at some point, if there's capacity."

Result: The CPO listened politely, said "let's keep monitoring it," and nothing changed. Riya left without an outcome and the problem persisted into Q4.

✅ How Riya Applied This Guide

"I want to flag a risk to our Q3 retention target. The AI path tool has a 34% drop-off rate — that is costing us roughly 1,200 active users per month. I've identified the root cause: a single UX friction point at step 3. My recommendation is to prioritise one sprint fix. It is a two-day development effort, and based on our benchmarks, it should recover 40–50% of that drop-off. Can I get your go-ahead to add it to the next sprint?"

Result: The CPO said yes within 90 seconds. The fix was shipped the following sprint. Drop-off reduced by 41%.

Notice what changed: Riya used BLUF (led with the risk to a strategic metric), quantified the problem in stakeholder-relevant terms (1,200 users/month, not just "34% drop-off"), connected it to a goal the CPO cared about (Q3 retention), offered a specific recommendation with an effort estimate, and made a clear ask. The underlying information was the same. The framing transformed the outcome.

CHAPTER 10

Common Mistakes and How to Fix Them

Even experienced professionals make recurring mistakes in senior stakeholder communication. Awareness is the first step to correction. The following are the most common patterns that erode credibility and trust — along with specific, actionable fixes you can implement immediately.

❌ Mistake 1: Over-Explaining the Journey

What it looks like: Walking through every step of your analysis before reaching the point. *"First we did this, then we noticed that, then we decided to..."*

The fix: Use the Pyramid Principle. State the conclusion first. The journey is supporting context — offer it only if they ask.

❌ Mistake 2: No Clear Ask

What it looks like: Presenting well, but ending with an open-ended statement: "So... I just wanted to share that update." No decision is made. No momentum is created.

The fix: Every interaction should end with a named next step or a specific ask. Write it down before the meeting and say it out loud at the end.

❌ Mistake 3: Defensive Responses to Challenge

What it looks like: Becoming flustered, over-explaining, or appearing hurt when a senior leader questions your data or recommendation.

The fix: Treat every challenge as a legitimate information request. Pause, acknowledge, and respond with evidence. Composure is the message.

❌ Mistake 4: Burying the Risk

What it looks like: Sandwiching bad news between positive updates, hoping it will not be noticed or that the positives will soften the blow.

The fix: Surface risks early, clearly, and with a proposed mitigation. Transparency paired with a solution is a sign of leadership, not weakness.

❌ Mistake 5: Speaking to the Wrong Level of Detail

What it looks like: Presenting granular operational detail to a strategic audience, or being too high-level with someone who needs specifics to make a decision.

The fix: Read the room at the start. Ask: *"Would you like the headline or shall I go deeper on any area?"* This demonstrates awareness and invites them to co-design the conversation.

❌ Mistake 6: Hedging Language

What it looks like: *"I might be wrong, but..."* or *"This is just my opinion..."* or *"Sorry if this is a silly question..."* These phrases signal low confidence and cause your content to be received with lower trust.

The fix: Replace hedges with direct statements. You can express appropriate uncertainty without undermining yourself: *"Based on the current data, my view is..."*

QUICK REFERENCE

Your Senior Stakeholder Communication Playbook — At a Glance

Save this page. Refer to it before any high-stakes senior interaction. It distils the entire guidebook into a rapid-reference format designed for time-poor professionals who need a quick mental reset before a meeting, a presentation, or a difficult conversation.

⚡ Before the Meeting

- Define your one objective
- Identify their top priorities
- Craft your headline message
- Choose 2–3 supporting data points
- Anticipate 2 likely objections
- Write your specific ask
- Confirm the right channel and format

🎯 During the Meeting

- Open with BLUF — conclusion first
- Use the 5-Part Framework
- Match their archetype and pace
- Pause before responding to challenge
- Be honest about what you don't know
- State your recommendation clearly
- End with the named ask

✅ After the Meeting

- Send follow-up email within 24 hrs
- Document all commitments made
- Complete all "I'll get back to you" items
- Update your stakeholder map
- Reflect: what worked? what to adjust?
- Schedule next touchpoint if needed
- Add relationship-building action

🔑 Power Phrases You Can Use Today

"My recommendation is..."

"The data suggests..."

"I need your go-ahead on..."

"The risk I want to flag is..."

"I'll confirm that and revert by..."

"Let me be direct about..."

SUMMARY

Key Takeaways — What to Remember and What to Do Next

You have now worked through a comprehensive framework for senior stakeholder communication. The ideas here are not theoretical — they are drawn from real professional practice and backed by research on executive presence, strategic communication, and organisational influence. The only thing that separates knowing this from owning it is consistent, intentional practice. Here is your distilled summary and your clear path forward.

1. **Senior stakeholders think in outcomes, risk, and decisions — calibrate to their lens, not your process.**

   Always ask yourself: what is the impact, what is the risk, and what decision needs to be made? If your communication does not answer at least one of these, reframe before you deliver.

2. **Preparation is 80% of the work — use the worksheet before every high-stakes interaction.**

   Define your objective, understand their priorities, craft your headline message. Twenty focused minutes of preparation will outperform two hours of improvisation every time.

3. **Lead with BLUF — state your conclusion first, every time, without exception.**

   This single structural shift — leading with your recommendation rather than your journey — will change how you are perceived by senior leaders more than almost any other behaviour in this guide.

4. **Handle challenge with composure — your response under pressure is your personal brand.**

   Pause, acknowledge, separate what you know from what you don't, and hold your ground respectfully when you have good reason to. Composure is the message.

5. **Follow through religiously — trust is built between meetings, not during them.**

   Send the follow-up email. Complete your commitments. Close every loop. This discipline, applied consistently, builds the relationship equity that earns you access, support, and sponsorship.

6. **Invest in relationships beyond formal touchpoints — communication is a long game.**

   Add value between meetings. Keep your stakeholder map updated. Ask for feedback and act on it. The professionals who get the most out of senior relationships are those who invest in them continuously, not just when they need something.

7. **Executive presence is built, not born — choose one behaviour to practise this week.**

   Use the self-assessment in Chapter 8 to identify your highest-leverage development area. Focus there for 30 days. Reassess. Then choose the next one. Consistent, intentional practice compounds over time into a fundamental shift in how you are seen at every level.

> 🚀 **Your Next Step:** Choose ONE meeting in the next 7 days where you will apply the 5-Part Executive Communication Framework. Prepare using the worksheet. Deliver with BLUF. Follow up within 24 hours. That is it. Start there. The rest will follow.