

Executive presence is redefining career success, where confidence, communication, skills, and discipline shape leadership impact and build trust. PHOTO/FILE

When confidence, skills, impact align

WORK

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As we roll into another month, many professionals still hope to get fresh opportunities, change jobs, climb the corporate ladder, or strengthen their careers.

Amid all these ambitions and resolutions, one quality stands out as a true differentiator: executive presence.

In today's fast-paced business environment, where competition is intense and innovation drives success, executive presence is far more than a buzzword.

It is an invisible currency that shapes how professionals are perceived, how teams are inspired, and how organizations thrive.

From personal appearance and body language to confidence and decisiveness, executive presence signals leadership long before results are delivered.

It is about projecting mature self-confidence, navigating unpredictable situations, making tough decisions swiftly, and holding one's own among strong-willed peers.

It is the ABC of leadership: appearance, behavior, and communication, woven together to create influence and impact.

Alfred Geresom Musamali, a retired public servant and seasoned communications and public relations consultant, says that executive presence is not reserved for CEOs or boardroom veterans.

"It is about how you carry yourself, how you communicate, and how you inspire confidence in others. Whether you're leading a team or just starting in your career, executive presence is what makes people believe in you," he says.

Musamali notes that presence begins with first impressions. The way you dress, your posture, and even how you enter a room send powerful signals.

"People should feel energy and assurance the moment they walk in. That is the power of presence, it tells others where you belong," he says.

But appearance is only the beginning, and confidence is the anchor. Professionals who speak with clarity and authority reassure colleagues and managers alike.

"Confidence inspires trust. It makes people believe you can handle responsibility, even in uncertain situations," Musamali emphasizes.

Equally important is communication. Executive presence means engaging, not just talking. Asking questions, encouraging input, and listening actively build respect and collaboration.

"It's about connection as much as command," Musamali says.

And when challenges arise, presence becomes the ultimate test. Those who remain calm, decisive, and transparent in difficult moments stand out.

"In times of crisis, presence is the difference between panic and progress," he says.

For those aspiring to grow, he adds that executive presence is not just an inherent trait; it is a skill that can be cultivated.

"Mentoring others, demonstrating commitment, and consistently delivering results embeds presence into your professional identity. It can be taught, shared, and multiplied," he says.

Discipline and commitment

For Paul Mwesigwa, the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited managing director, executive presence goes beyond appearance. It is rooted in professionalism, discipline, and commitment to service.

At UEDCL, he says, these values are anchored in a strict code of conduct that guides how staff present themselves both in the field and in the office.

"In the field, professionalism means dressing appropriately in protective gear, not suits and ties," Mwesigwa says.

"It also means speaking respectfully in the community. We do not tolerate foul language. Failure to comply leads to disciplinary action, and persistent offenders are dismissed. That is the culture we instill in our employees."

He notes that field staff are judged not by words, but by delivery, because "nobody is waiting to hear what you are saying; they are waiting for the service".

In the office, executive presence takes a different form...

Leadership

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