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Sylvia Ann Hewlett's "*Executive Presence*"
Demystifies the Overlooked Trait That's Essential
To Climbing the Career Ladder

"*Executive Presence* will transform careers and unleash a current of previously untapped potential on the world." --Joanna Coles, Editor-in-Chief, *Cosmopolitan*

Research reveals that the top jobs often elude women and professionals of color because they lack "executive presence" or underestimate its importance. These findings underpin the premise of economist and thought leader Sylvia Ann Hewlett's new book **EXECUTIVE PRESENCE: The Missing Link Between Merit and Success** (HarperBusiness; June 3, 2014), which defines and unpacks executive presence in all of its nuances and offers guidance to individuals seeking to improve opportunities for advancement.

Using a wealth of hard data, including findings from a nationwide survey and dozens of focus groups, Hewlett reveals executive presence to be a dynamic mix of three things: gravitas (how you act), communication (how you speak) and appearance (how you look). She also draws on personal stories of her own executive presence and journey, and in-depth interviews with a wide selection of admired leaders like **Sallie Krawcheck, Joanna Coles, and Cornel West** to reveal how they embody and deploy key elements of executive presence.

"No man or woman attains a top job, lands an extraordinary deal, or develops a significant following without this heady combination of confidence, poise, and authenticity that convinces the rest of us that we're in the presence of someone who's going places," Hewlett explains. Just witness how far "executive presence" has propelled the careers of **Barack Obama, Christine Lagarde, Steve Jobs, Angela Merkel, and Angelina Jolie**.

"Executive presence will not earn you promotion after promotion, but lack of executive presence will impede your ability to get as far as you want to go," states Hewlett. "Quite simply, promotions are not just functions of ability, values, or the numbers you hit, but also rest critically on how you are perceived."

In addition to an in depth exploration of the pillars of executive presence and tactics on how best to navigate and overcome hurdles, chapters in the book also explore:

- the varying executive presence standards for men, women, multicultural and LGBT employees;
- how to get actionable feedback from politically correct bosses intent on avoiding discussions about appearance or communication blunders;
- the tangible behaviors and traits that endow aspiring leaders with executive presence; and,
- authenticity versus conformity

"Learning how to command a room or read a client, figuring out how to "use" silence to punctuate a speech, finding the perfect skirt or suit for your body type. None of this is easy," warns Hewlett "and will require

hours of painstaking effort. But you can count on the results being transformative. Cracking the executive presence code will close the gap between where you are right now, and where you could be...”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

SYLVIA ANN HEWLETT is the founding president of the Center for Talent Innovation, a Manhattan-based think-tank focused on helping companies and professionals to fully realize their talent potential. She is the author of several acclaimed books and has appeared on “Oprah,” “The View,” “The Charlie Rose Show,” “60 Minutes”, CNN, CNBC and many others, and has been profiled in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. Her book *Forget a Mentor: Find a Sponsor* was named one of the ten best business books of 2013.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

EXECUTIVE PRESENCE: The Missing Link Between Merit and Success

By Sylvia Ann Hewlett

HarperBusiness

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For more information, visit <http://www.sylviaannhewlett.com>

Suggested Interview Questions for Sylvia Ann Hewlett, author of EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

1. What is executive presence?
2. What does the data show about how our careers are impacted by how we're perceived vs. merit?
3. From Dove's Real Women campaign to Sheryl Sandberg's partnership with Getty Images, women have been fighting against images and demanding instead to be recognized on merit alone. Is this too idealistic? Are images friend or foe of women?
4. How can women like Marisa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo!, escape the double bind of appearing tough enough to project leadership material but not so tough that they're perceived as the "b" word?
5. How do you know if your self-presentation is right for your workplace? Isn't it too awkward to ask for feedback?
6. How does body language influence how we are perceived at work and what is the right and wrong body language?
7. How can professionals strike a balance between projecting the right professional image but still being their authentic selves?
8. What did the findings uncover about how makeup and tight clothing impact the way women are perceived at work?
9. The findings show that gravitas is the most important factor in determining executive presence. Why?
10. What was your first professional experience with executive presence?
11. How are the standards for executive presence different for women and minorities?
12. What are some examples of leaders in the news right now who exude executive presence? Who could perhaps enhance their EP?
13. Why do most people of color feel held to a stricter code of executive presence than their Caucasian peers in the workplace? In what ways does this cause minorities to make greater sacrifices? What is the most common EP blunder?
14. Why don't professionals (women and people of color, in particular) get the feedback needed to develop executive presence and how should they go about getting it?
15. What can professionals start doing tomorrow to advance their careers?
16. What can organizations and society at large glean from your findings about how we perceive each other, present ourselves to each other and promote each other up the career ladder?

Key findings from the study that the new book Executive Presence is based on, from The Center for Talent Innovation

Gravitas is the core characteristic, according to 67 percent of the 268 senior executives we surveyed.

- Six behaviors characterize gravitas:
- Exuding confidence and “grace under fire” (79 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 76 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Acting decisively and “showing teeth” (70 percent say it contributes to men’s and women’s EP)
- Showing integrity and “speaking truth to power” (64 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 63 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Demonstrating emotional intelligence (61 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 58 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Burnishing reputation (56 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 57 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Projecting vision (50 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 54 percent say it contributes to a man’s)

Communication, according to 28 percent of senior executives, telegraphs you’re leadership material. They identify these key verbal and non-verbal abilities:

- Great speaking skills (60 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 63 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Ability to command a room (49 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 54 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Ability to read an audience (39 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 33 percent say it contributes to a man’s)

Appearance counts, largely as a filter through which your communication skills and gravitas become more apparent. Central to looking like a leader is:

- Good grooming (35 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 38 percent say it contributes to a man’s)
- Physical attractiveness (16 percent say it contributes to a woman’s EP, 14 percent say it contributes to a man’s)

EP blunders include:

- Unkempt attire (83 percent say it detracts from a woman’s EP, 76 percent say it detracts from a man’s)
- For women, too-tight or provocative clothing (73 percent say it detracts from a woman’s EP)
- Sounding uneducated also proves a tripwire (59 percent say it detracts from a woman’s EP and 58 percent say it detracts from a man’s)

Women and multicultural professionals struggle with EP due to an intrinsic tension between conforming to corporate culture and remaining true to oneself:

- 56% of people of color feel they are held to a stricter code around executive presence, compared with 31% of Caucasians; 36% deliberately recast the way they tell their stories, compared with 29% of Caucasians.