
Discussion guide

Communicating with confidence

Brought to you in collaboration with
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This discussion guide includes everything you need to discuss PwC's *Communicating with confidence* video and to practice the skills it introduces.

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Key points

🕒 15 minutes

Discuss the key takeaways from the video

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🕒 10 minutes

Complete an assessment of your current communication style and identify areas you need to work on to improve your ability to communicate with confidence

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🕒 30 minutes

In groups of three, practice using verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey confidence

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🕒 5 minutes

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Worksheet

🕒 ongoing

Use this worksheet on an ongoing basis to prepare for upcoming conversations

Key points

🕒 15 minutes

Communicating with confidence

🕒 *Timing for review: 5 minutes*

What is confidence?

Confidence is trust in your own skills and abilities. The behaviors that demonstrate confidence can be improved over time.

Why is this important?

Confidence is essential to leadership and is an important component to career advancement. Confident people are more likely to volunteer for opportunities, take risks, learn from each interaction, and fulfill their potential.

Think about it

Confidence is a combination of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. By acting confident, you can influence how others perceive you, and you can change how you feel about yourself.

What does confidence look like?

Point of view: It's what you say. Confidence requires having and sharing a point of view. A point of view is more than just an opinion. It's an informed perspective that takes what you know and relates it to the agenda at hand. It doesn't have to be a brilliant analysis that took years to develop. In fact, it doesn't even have to be a statement. You can display confidence by asking a thoughtful question that moves a conversation forward.

Presence: It's how you say it. Confidence is not about how you feel—it's about how you act, so be aware of the verbal and nonverbal signals you are sending. Be mindful of your pitch, pace, and projection, and avoid disclaimers when sharing your perspective. Remain poised and authentic in order to build a connection with your audience.

Practice: It's what your audience hears. Effective communicators practice all the time. They experiment with different techniques in different situations. Choosing the right word or the most compelling facts and anticipating what your audience will think and how they will react takes practice. Get feedback from others on what you say and how you say it. The more you practice, the more equipped you will be to communicate with confidence.

Take action

When planning for a meeting, think about:

- What is the message I want to convey?
- What is my point of view on the subject matter?
- How will I contribute to the conversation?
- What impression will I make?
- Who can help me prepare and practice?

Key points

Share with your Circle

🕒 *Timing for sharing: 1 minute each; 10 minutes total*

In your Circle, share your response to one of the questions below:

- Who did you connect with in the video, and what messages personally resonated with you?
- What differences, if any, do you see in how men and women display confidence?
- Have you ever attended a meeting and not said a word? What was the short term and long term impact?

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Personal inventory

🕒 10 minutes

Communicating with confidence self-reflection profile

🕒 *Timing for individual reflection: 5 minutes*

Being aware of your current communication style is a good place to start. Circle your response to the questions below. Be honest with yourself so you can identify your strengths and areas to work on.

Point of view: What you say

How comfortable are you with...	1: <i>extremely uncomfortable</i> 5: <i>extremely comfortable</i>				
Expressing your ideas and opinions in a group discussion?	1	2	3	4	5
Presenting to a group of people?	1	2	3	4	5
Asking questions in a group?	1	2	3	4	5
Admitting you don't know something?	1	2	3	4	5
Disagreeing with someone in a way that doesn't cause undue conflict?	1	2	3	4	5

Presence: How you say it

How consistent are you at...	1: <i>extremely inconsistent</i> 5: <i>extremely consistent</i>				
Walking into a room with confidence?	1	2	3	4	5
Making eye contact with people you have just met?	1	2	3	4	5
Being mindful of the verbal signals you send?	1	2	3	4	5
Being mindful of the nonverbal signals you send?	1	2	3	4	5
Avoiding disclaimers when you speak? (e.g., "I'm not sure, but...")	1	2	3	4	5

Prepare: How your audience hears it

How often do you...	1: <i>never</i> 5: <i>always</i>				
Prepare your thoughts in advance of a discussion?	1	2	3	4	5
Practice how you will articulate your thoughts?	1	2	3	4	5
Think through the impression you want to make?	1	2	3	4	5
Write down your goals and objectives before a discussion?	1	2	3	4	5
Seek feedback from a trusted friend or colleague before important conversations?	1	2	3	4	5

Personal inventory

In what situations are you most confident and why?

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When do you experience the most self-doubt and why?

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Share your insights

 *Timing for small group sharing: 5 minutes*

In groups of three (trios), share one of the following:

- Based on your inventory results, what are the top one or two things you want to work on in order to improve your ability to communicate with confidence?
- In what situations are you most confident and why?
- In what situations do you experience the most self-doubt and why?

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Practicing skills

 30 minutes

 *Timing for individual preparation: 2 minutes*

Think of a one-minute story that you will share with your trio. This can be a story about a recent success, a vacation, a hobby, or something else that you know well and that you can share a point of view on. The content of the story is not relevant since the focus will be on how you communicate your message. Use the space below to document your ideas.

Practicing skills

🕒 *Timing for trios sharing: 3 rounds at 6 minutes each; 18 minutes total*

Each six minute round will consist of the following:

- Speaker shares her story while observers take note of the speaker's verbal and nonverbal behaviors and ability to demonstrate confidence. The speaker can request to have the story video-taped on her smartphone to view the presentation as part of the feedback discussion. *(1 minute)*
- Observers provide feedback to the speaker on both a strength and a developmental area regarding verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The speaker takes notes on the feedback, using the table below. *(3 minutes)*
- The speaker delivers the story again, making adjustments based on the feedback received. *(1 minute)*
- Observers provide feedback on what changes they observed between the first and second presentation. *(1 minute)*
- Rotate roles so each person has an opportunity to be the speaker.

Verbal behaviors	Nonverbal behaviors
<i>Strengths</i>	
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<i>Developmental areas</i>	
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Share with your Circle

🕒 *Timing for Circle sharing: 1 minute each; 10 minutes total*

In your Circle, share your response to one of the questions below:

- What did you do well during the activity?
- What behavior did you find challenging?
- What feedback did you receive to improve your ability to demonstrate confidence?

One action

🕒 5 minutes

Based on the feedback received, identify up to three action items that you will commit to working on as part of your goal of communicating with confidence. Use items from this list or document additional goals in the space below. Share your commitment with your Circle to help you stay accountable for making a change.

Actions I will take to improve my confidence:

Point of view

- Reflect on my point of view in advance of a meeting or conversation.
- Write down a few key questions I can ask to generate dialogue.
- Share my unique perspective.

Presence

- Practice using pitch and inflection when I speak.
- Match my pace to the topic and to the audience.
- Project my voice so that I'm heard.
- Avoid disclaimers that undermine my credibility.
- Leverage nonverbal communications, such as good eye contact, a warm smile, and appropriate gestures and facial expressions to create a connection with my audience.

Practice

- Experiment with different techniques for different situations.
- Identify a trusted friend or colleague who will observe me before an important conversation or meeting.
- Document feedback I've been given and continue to improve.

Other actions I will take to improve my confidence include:

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Share at your next Circle meeting: What have you done differently?

Worksheet

Make copies of this worksheet so you can continue to use this tool as part of your ongoing efforts to communicate with confidence.

When is my next meeting?

Who is it with?

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What unique perspective can I bring to this discussion?

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What is my point of view on the matter that will be discussed?

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What relevant questions can I ask to further this conversation?

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What are one or two developmental areas that I want to improve regarding my presence and communication skills?

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Who can I practice with?

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