

TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD

To ensure your voice is heard:

- Use positive, expansive body language whether standing or seated.
- Breathe deeply. Project your voice by speaking on the exhale.
- Do not yell or talk over others. You get more respect by stopping and making unbroken eye contact if interrupted.
- Plan the points you will contribute in advance. Bring your notes with you.
- “Bottom up” your remarks by starting with the important parts first, then fill in the detail if needed.
- If selling an idea, try to either get consensus or take a temperature gauge before the meeting so you are prepared.

To exude confidence when you don't feel confident:

- Prepare, prepare, prepare...and anticipate. Anticipate the questions you will receive. Rehearse your talking points aloud so that the words are familiar and become part of your “muscle memory.”
- Realize that you are not the only person in the room who's outside of their comfort zone. Take a deep breath and forge ahead.
- Wear your most confident-instilling outfit. Hold your head high.
- Continue to demonstrate positive body language.
- Look for the friendly faces in the audience.
- Smile! 😊

How to deal with difficult people:

- Try to figure out what's motivating them (Power? Wanting to look good?) Use language that shows collaboration, not contention. *“Bob, it appears that we both want the same outcome here. How can we work together so that we get there?”*
- If all else fails, know that your discomfort is short-lived.
- Be hard on the subject and soft on the person. Separate the person's behavior from the issue. Bob isn't a horrible person. The issue is causing him to behave in unproductive ways.
- To steer the discussion in a different direction, don't make Bob wrong. *“Bob, that's great and I want to build on what you said...and take us in a different direction.”*
- DTIP. Don't Take It Personally.

When politics are at play and your ideas are being co-opted:

- The actual ownership starts way before the meeting where the ideas are presented! Make sure that senior leaders know what you are up to even before the project launches. Plan check-in meetings with them to discuss milestones and goals. Own it!
- Compliment others for their contributions to “your” project...diplomatically, of course. *“Jan, we are really pleased that you contributed so many resources to this initiative. It truly helped us come in before deadline.”* Thank them on email as well.

Women in the workforce deserve to continue gathering to share good ideas...we support each other emotionally in important ways. Bring other women with you and cultivate male allies so that you know you have others in the room to back your ideas. Make networking a priority!