



NAPABA

Virtual Experience

November 4, 2020
12:35 PM – 1:35 PM

Session WLN2 | Presenting Your Best Self

This will be an overview of the basic ingredients of developing executive presence, including motivating and inspiring others, and emotional intelligence. This presentation will examine the power of the “subtextual” conversation—body language, vocal patterns, and mannerisms that can raise or lower one’s status in the workplace. Based on 20 years of research, nonverbal communication expert Cara Hale Alter outlines explicit “codes of conduct” for projecting credibility, especially when the stakes are high. Individually, these behaviors are easy to implement; together they form a skill set that can transform your career and help you exude executive presence.

Moderator:

Bonnie Lau, Partner, Morrison & Foerster LLP

Speakers:

Cara Hale Alter, Speech Skills, Founder

The Credibility Code “Codes of Conduct”

Posture Codes of Conduct

- Keep your spine tall and strong
- Stand with your weight balanced equally over both feet
- Keep your head level
- Point your nose directly at the listener
- Command the space around you

Gesture Codes of Conduct

- Avoid “masking” your face and hands
- Engage your gestures from the beginning of the conversation
- Reach out to your listener
- Keep gestures in the “gesture box”

Vocal Codes of Conduct

- Speak with optimal volume
- Articulate clearly
- Keep your pacing relaxed
- Highlight your message with expression
- Engage your diaphragm for resonance

Vocal Drill: “Whether the weather is cold or whether the weather is hot,
we’ll be together whatever the weather, whether we like it or not.”

The Credibility Code “Codes of Conduct”

Derailer Codes of Conduct

- Eliminate fillers
- Avoid misplaced upward inflections
- Avoid extraneous movement
- Eliminate self-commenting

Eye Contact Codes of Conduct

- Hold eye contact for three to five seconds per person
- Engage the entire room
- Keep your focus up
- Be interactive

Focus Codes of Conduct

- Project your energy:
Meet them in their seats
- Elicit a response:
Get their heads to nod
- Actively listen:
Participate even when listening

Balancing Authority and Approachability

Positive Behaviors

Authority

To cultivate an authoritative image . . .

- Take up space
- Maintain strong eye contact
- Keep head and shoulders level
- Be still
- Use strong volume and resonance
- Use downward inflections

Approachability

To cultivate an approachable image . . .

- Maintain strong eye contact
- Use fluid, interactive gestures
- Use fluid, interactive facial expressions
- Use a wide range of vocal variety
- Elicit a response verbally and nonverbally

Negative Behaviors

Authority

Signals that can lead to a “too authoritative” image:

- Emphatic gestures (hands or head)
- Sharp vocal attack on words
- Asymmetrical posture (chin up, leaning in, looking out the corner of the eye)
- Lack of facial fluidity (poker face or locked-on smile)
- Lack of vocal variety
- Poor attentive listening skills
- Lack of eye contact while listening
- Tendency to interrupt

Approachability

Signals that can lead to a “too approachable” image:

- Excessive smiling (or “tailwagging”)
- Weak posture (rounded spine or shoulders, chin down, head tilted, small stance)
- Excessive head movement (bobbing or nodding)
- Weak volume or breath support
- Soft vocal approach on words
- Verbal hedges (apologies and fillers)
- Misplaced upward inflections
- Lack of eye contact while speaking
- Conceding too quickly when interrupted

The Credibility Code

Self-evaluation Checklist

POSTURE		YES	NO		
Spine is tall and strong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Weight is balanced equally over both feet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Head is level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Nose is pointed directly at listener	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Head and arms move freely in space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
GESTURES		YES	NO		
Face and hands are relaxed (no “masking”)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Gestures are engaged from beginning of conversation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Hands consistently reach out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Gestures stay primarily within gesture box	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
DERAILERS		YES	NO		
Free of uses of filler words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Statements end in downward inflections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Free of extraneous movement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Free of “self-commenting” and apologies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
VOICE	ABSENT	BELOW AVERAGE	ADEQUATE	OPTIMAL	TOO MUCH
Volume is full and consistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Articulation is crisp and clear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pacing is relaxed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Message is highlighted with expression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vocal quality is supported and resonant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
EYE CONTACT	ABSENT	BELOW AVERAGE	ADEQUATE	OPTIMAL	TOO MUCH
Contact is held for three to five seconds per person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eyes engage everyone in the room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus is consistently up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eyes, hands, and face interact with listener	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Building Trust and Rapport in a Virtual Medium (for attorneys)
SpeechSkills: Cara Hale Alter

Course Content

Cognitive vs Affective Trust (10 minutes)

Rich Context Mediums vs Lean Context Mediums (5 Minutes)

How character assessments are made (10 minutes)

What signals lead to “affective trust”? (20 minutes)

- Framing and angle
- Body language
- Vocal cues
- Eye contact

Balancing authority with approachability (10 minutes)

Why should we “master the medium”? (5 Minutes)

Q and A (15 minutes)

Trainer Notes

Cognitive vs Affective Trust (10 minutes)

Cognitive Trust (Intellectual trust)

- Belief in someone’s expertise (what you know about someone based on their resume, job title, job experience)

Affective Trust (Social or emotional trust)

- Belief that someone is a good citizen, that they have your best interest at heart, that they care about their impact on you, that they can see the world from your perspective
- Under stress, decision making is diminished in the prefrontal cortex (intellectual brain) and enhanced in the amygdala (emotional brain) so Affective Trust plays a much bigger role.

Bottom line: For the attorney, Cognitive Trust is table stakes; Affective Trust builds the long term relationship. Attorneys have a higher than

average need to balance authority and approachability. This seminar addresses the specific cues that establish “Visible Credibility” (the ability to project confidence and competence so that their expertise is immediately recognized).

Think of virtual communication (v-com) skills as a skillset unto itself

Virtual meetings include virtual courtroom, video depositions, interoffice communications, client development meetings, proposals, meetings with opposing counsel, etc.

Rich Context Mediums vs Lean Context Mediums (5 Minutes)

(in person, videoconference, teleconference, email, text)

- Use richer context mediums to develop relationships, build trust, establish credibility and confidence, and give context when topics are nuanced or potentially contentious
- Use leaner context mediums to expedite or share facts or if relationship is already firmly established (or to level the playing field as with current arguments to the Supreme court)
- When we don't have enough context, we err on the side of “no” or inaction
- When mixed mediums are used, the attorney using the richest context medium has the advantage

How character assessments are made (10 minutes)

- We have a feeling, which is informed by a trait, which is informed by an observable cue
- We usually receive feedback as a “trait” (too nice, too aggressive). However, identifying the observer cue is vital to change
- We all exhibit mannerisms and vocal patterns that are unique to us, and these habits are the cues others use to assess our competency

What signals lead to “affective trust”? (20 minutes)

Goal: Like you are sitting across the table

- To build a bond of trust and more quickly establish yourself as a trusted advisor, get rid of any message/distraction/cue that this is a lower level communication (makeshift, temporary, less important) than in person communication

Framing -

- Show top of head to center of chest (“head to heart”)
- Fill the entire frame (avoid empty space above head)

Angle

- Adjust camera to eye level (prop up with books, blocks, or boxes)
- Move audience image directly under camera and resize (to lessen the distance from audience eyes to camera)

Lighting

- Face the light
- Compensate for backlighting (cross lighting is best, avoid overhead lighting)

Posture and gesture

- Spine straight, level shoulders, level head
- Head moves independently of shoulders
- Eyes and nose align, tracking in the same direction
- Avoid head bobbing and chair swiveling (movement is exaggerated on camera)
- Avoid masking of hands and face (nervous tell, counteract by reaching out)
- Use hands even if not in view (gesturing loosens up the face, increases vocal variety, and accelerates verbal processing)
- Adjust framing, angle, lighting (“Framing is the new posture”)
- Amp up active listening signals
- Prepare background and dress even if you don’t intend to participate (so you can if the conditions/requirements change)

Voice

- Volume, articulation, pace, expression, resonance
- Speak to 5 feet away
- Support to the end of your sentences

- Invest in a good microphone and/or headphone
- Increase microphone input volume (arrow next to camera icon, choose video settings, audio, microphone input volume - check if auto is on)
- Put noise absorbers on walls and desktop
- Unmute for small groups (unmute through space bar)

Eye contact

- In person, eye contact is reciprocal. Webcam makes you choose to either appear to see them or actually see them. Look at camera when primary objective is to deliver information, look at partners when primary purpose is to receive or collaborate
- Actively manage the position of the speaker to get them just below the camera (In gallery view, slide the window back and forth; in speaker view, scale the window to about 3-4 inches square)
- Two parts to the skill set on webcam - keep your focus steady and appear to see them
- Move audience near camera, look just below camera, project through the lens
- Video on creates a richer context for the audience; video off helps you reserve your energy (You have to ask yourself, what is most important here - to reserve your energy so that you will have more stamina over the day or to spend more energy in the moment so that your presence is more collaborative and interactive?)

Balancing authority with approachability (10 minutes)

- Positive behaviors to cultivate image of authority:
 - Take up space • Maintain strong eye contact • Keep head and shoulders level • Be still • Use strong volume and resonance • Use downward inflections
- Positive behaviors to cultivate image of approachability:
 - Maintain strong eye contact • Use fluid, interactive gestures • Use fluid, interactive facial expression • Use a wide range of vocal variety • Elicit a response verbally and nonverbally
- Negative behaviors for cultivating authority or approachability lead to resistance, misinterpretation and noncompliance
- Common misperceptions: Confusing authority with aggression. Confusing approachability with being non threatening or casual

Why should we Master the Medium? (5 Minutes)

- 1 Practice/habit - no brainspace when it counts - each new skill chips away at your cognitive processing - that's why we go blank - but worse yet, you are focusing on yourself rather than them. Stamina -- it takes stamina to focus on other people, takes energy to be at your best.
- 2 Holistic communication - posture affects mood, voice, energy, processing speed - and others - creates synergy and emotional contagion
- 3 Trailblazers differentiate themselves. Expectations are low now, but soon the bar will be raised. Learn the tools: Rename, side by side view, whiteboard, polling
- 4 Self-awareness is attractive - Implications for lack of self-awareness
1) Don't know rules, 2) Can't manage one more thing 3) Don't care 4) Blind to own habits
- 5 More comfortable = more confident, more present, more authentic, the more inner confidence you will exude
- 6 Focus more on the people, less on the medium, they feel like they are in good hands

Q and A Prep:

Problems with Virtual Meetings

We lower expectations

- We expect it to be less enjoyable, less connected, less productive
- We expect less effort from our colleagues and of ourselves

We can easily go into observer mode

- We forget we can be seen - engage in distracting behavior or multitasking
- We offer little nonverbal or verbal feedback

It's an uneven field (which can work to your advantage or disadvantage)

- Different tools - Video on/off, changing bandwidths, different versions of apps/platforms
- Different levels of skills/comfort - When we are less familiar with format, we feel less comfortable, participate less, feel less natural

Advantages to Virtual Meetings

Inclusive and equalizing for remote or geographically disperse workers

Front row seat

Very humanizing to see colleagues in personal environments

Resources for travel (time/expense/energy) are minimized

ZOOM FATIGUE

Why?

- Limbic brain reaction to eyes on you (releases adrenaline and cortisol) and encroaching on personal space (on an *elevator, we face front, stop talking, look down to adjust*)
- Can't read signals as easily so it takes extra effort to comprehend meaning
- Lack of feedback and validation for our contributions
- Being on camera requires constant attention to your image (in person we spend a good deal of the time looking down or off in distance and we can adjust in our chair regularly)
- When we are forced to be too close we close down nonverbal cues
- It's a new form of communication that requires a new level of stamina (fitness happens at the localized level)
- It's monotonous
- Our eyes tire when looking at one distance

Solutions

- Don't crowd the camera/give them their personal space
- Set yourself up to be able to look off in the distance
- Change perspective/locations when possible, standing desk

- Take breaks between meetings (to empty the brain's junk drawer just like when you used to walk between meetings)
- Use more features (rename, polls, reactions, chat) that are unique to the medium
- Go audio only (though careful of "phone it in" and uneven playing field)

When attending a meeting, how to decide if you should have the camera on or off?

Camera on is a service to others, video off helps you reserve your energy

How do you handle not being able to see their reactions?

Speaking into a void is challenging and requires practice and skill building. Your internal conversation can get in the way.

How do you manage interruptions in zoom?

Using a facilitator, 15 second soundbite, group rules