

Do You Have Exec Calibre?



In large centres or hospitals, it's not uncommon for healthcare professionals to take on leadership roles — i.e., managing a team or unit.

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With their education, training and experience, physicians appear to have the right credentials for senior leadership roles. They may be seasoned professionals but many of them often fail to play the role of an effective leader — unable to get the cooperation of people they lead and to move things forward. The reason: they lack executive presence.

The expression “executive presence” refers to the behaviour and mindset fundamental to achieve success as a leader. As Diane Craig, president and founder of Corporate Class Inc., says, “There is no leadership gene; leaders are made, not born.”

She notes that executive presence training specialists have noticed a parallel between the healthcare and IT sectors. Despite their academic achievements, both groups frequently struggle to grasp the requirements that follow appointment. To be a successful leader, one needs to be able to influence with authority — often referred to as gravitas in the parlance of executive presence — with polished, poised communication skills and engagement expertise. And these skills are what healthcare leaders need to develop, Craig says.

Presentation skills. From daily boardroom meetings to major conferences and conventions, the expectation across every leadership level is that speakers will deliver high-quality, professional presentations. “Speaking with confidence and conviction is a learned skill,” Craig says. “It combines expressing ideas memorably to inspire, persuade and win people over. Facial expressions, eye contact and body language all combine with verbal delivery to elevate the message.”

Communication skills. Although presentation skills figure prominently in the context of executive presence training, they are only one segment of the spectrum comprising communications skills, according to Craig. Leaders have a responsibility to develop highly-tuned messaging and listening skills. Body language — the silent signals people send and receive — is a pivotal communications tool, she notes. “Advancement to a high-profile role automatically increases visibility where the ability to ‘translate’ the interwoven connections between verbal and non-verbal communications is critical.”

Empathy. The ability to interpret and relate to the emotions of others is central to executive presence. Emotional intelligence, or empathy, demands an awareness and understanding of other people’s emotions, Craig explains. To be an effective leader, you have to develop the ability to identify other people’s styles and, ultimately, work more effectively with them.

Source: HealthManagement.org

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