



VISION TO IMPACT

Communicating Strategy with
Executive Presence



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WHY THIS CONVERSATION MATTERS NOW

- Strategy lives in complexity and ambiguity
- Senior leaders create clarity without certainty
- How you communicate shapes trust and momentum





WHAT YOU'LL WALK AWAY WITH

- A framework for executive-level strategic communication
- Greater awareness of executive presence and impact
- Tools to translate vision into action
- Ways to stay grounded in resistance
- A leadership commitment you can apply immediately



COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

- ✔ Maintain confidentiality
- ✔ Assume good will
- ✔ Use 'I' statements
- ✔ Leverage your cohort and/or support from others if needed
- ✔ When things turn uncomfortable, turn to a sense of curiosity
- ✔ Don't freeze people in time
- ✔ No shame, no blame, no guilt
- ✔ Just because it isn't your experience, doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.
- ✔ No closure is ok





You're stewarding the enterprise, not just your function

"Your first promotion made you responsible for results. This promotion makes you responsible for the health of the system that creates results."



See the whole system

Ask what's right for the enterprise

Shape organizational health



Vision is useless without real trade-offs

"Strategy is as much about what to stop as what to start."

- Vision requires choices
- Leaders name what will be deprioritized
- Trade-offs build trust



Your presence is part of the message

"People read every reaction as a clue to what the vision really means."

- Calm under pressure
- Alignment between words and actions
- Presence shapes meaning

THINK IN TIME HORIZONS, NOT JUST QUARTERS

- Deliver today's commitments
- Lead 12–24 months of change
- Steward long-term culture and talent
- Resist short-term overreaction



GREAT STRATEGIES DON'T FAIL ON PAPER

They fail in the moments leaders
communicate them

“Strategy breaks down less because of flawed ideas and more because of how leaders show up when clarity, confidence, and trust are tested.”



**Where have your
messages made sense
— but still not landed?**

AT SENIOR LEVELS, COMMUNICATION IS LEADERSHIP

- People read tone before content
- Ambiguity amplifies signals
- Presence determines credibility





MOST LEADERS COMMUNICATE PLANS



Few communicate meaning

Plans explain what is happening.

Meaning explains why it matters and what it asks of people.

When leaders skip meaning,
people fill the gap with assumptions, fear, or resistance.

Communicating Plans

- "Here's the roadmap and timeline."
- "These are the top five priorities this quarter."
- "We're rolling out a new operating model."
- "The strategy is focused on efficiency and growth."
- "This will help us stay competitive in the market."
- "You'll see more details in the deck."

Communicating Meaning

- "Here's why this matters now — and what happens if we don't act."
- "Here's what will feel different for you day to day."
- "Here's what we're choosing not to do so this can work."
- "Here's what stays the same, even as this changes."
- "Here's what success looks like for your team in the next 90 days."
- "Here's how this connects to the pressure you're already feeling."

When leaders don't create meaning, people create their own.

How great strategic leaders communicate vision

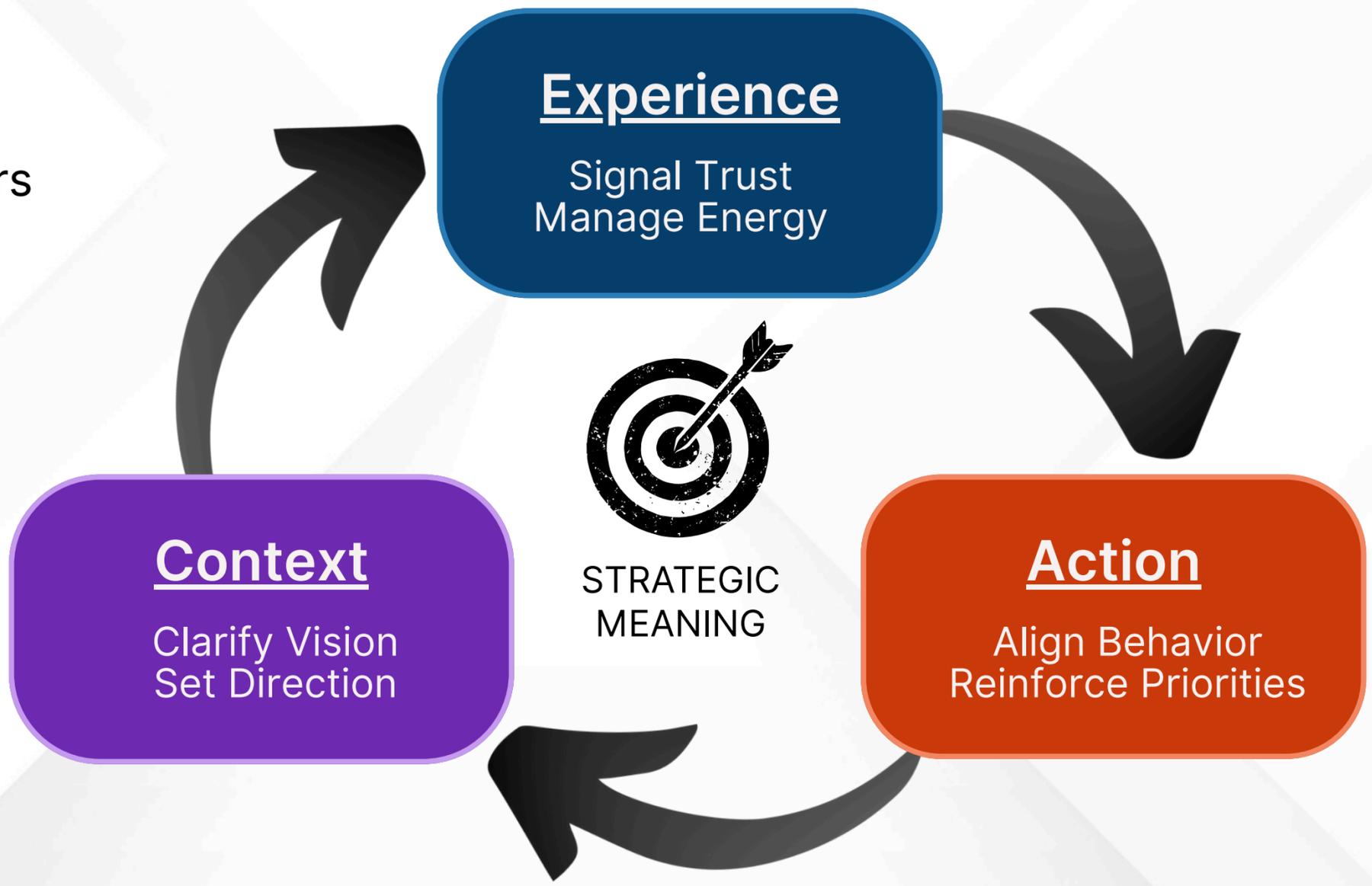
A leadership responsibility, not a communication skill



THE STRATEGIC PRESENCE FRAMEWORK

What leaders must manage in high-stakes moments

Strategy fails less because of what leaders say — and more because of what they don't manage in the moment.



CONTEXT

Making the vision concrete

Body:

Context is how leaders orient people when the future is unclear.

It answers:

What's changing

Why now

What stays steady

What this means for real work



What are people guessing about because you haven't named it?



CONCRETE BEATS CLEVER

- Explain what's changing and why
- Name what stays steady
- Connect strategy to roles and decisions



What concrete strategy communication sounds like

"In two years, 60% of customer interactions will be digital-first — and here's what that means for this quarter."



BREAK



EXECUTIVE SELF-CHECK: CONTEXT

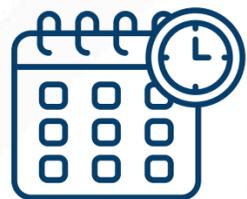
- Can people picture what will change?
- Would someone two levels down understand?
- Have I translated meaning, not just direction?





BREAKOUT: Strategy Breakdown Autopsy

Diagnosing where leadership signals broke down



Time:
25 minutes



Small groups of 3–4

Choose one real strategy that stalled or faced resistance

You are not fixing it. You are diagnosing it.





GROUP EXERCISE: STRATEGY BREAKDOWN AUTOPSY

- Identify a stalled strategy
- Where was context unclear?
- How did ambiguity show up?



WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

Common patterns across the room

- Where did leaders assume context instead of creating it?
- What ambiguity showed up as resistance?
- What signals were unintentionally sent?



EXPERIENCE

What it's like to be on the receiving end of you

Body:

People don't just hear your words.

They experience your tone, pace, reactions, and presence.

Under pressure, your presence often communicates more than your message.



If you were in the room, how would you experience yourself?



EXECUTIVE PRESENCE IS NOT POLISH

- Clarity in uncertainty
- Grounded confidence
- Connection without over-accommodating



PEOPLE DON'T RESIST STRATEGY

They resist being managed through change

Body:

When leaders rush clarity, minimize impact, or avoid hard conversations, people experience control — not leadership.

Resistance is often feedback, not defiance.

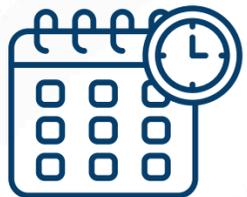


What might resistance be telling you right now?



INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION → PAIR SHARE

Presence under pressure



Time:
20 minutes



Think of a moment you
felt challenged,
questioned, or resisted

Focus on how you
showed up, not what
others did

This is about awareness,
not judgment





GROUP EXERCISE: PRESENCE UNDER PRESSURE

- Recall a moment of resistance
- What was your intent?
- What was the experience?



WHAT SHIFTED FOR YOU?

From intent to impact

- What did you notice about your default presence?
- What signal might others have experienced?
- What would you adjust next time?



ACTION

What reinforces—or contradicts—
your message

Body:

People believe what leaders reinforce,
not just what they announce.

Your actions clarify the real strategy:

What gets...

- funded
- rewarded
- tolerated
- repeated



What are your actions teaching people right now?



YOUR ACTIONS ARE ALWAYS COMMUNICATING

- What gets funded
- What gets rewarded
- What gets tolerated
- What managers repeat





THE THREE ELEMENTS WORK TOGETHER

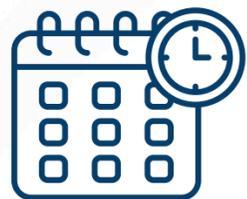
- Clarity without empathy feels cold
- Empathy without clarity feels vague
- Words without aligned action feel hollow





CAPSTONE APPLICATION

Redesign a real upcoming message



Time:
30 minutes



Choose a message you must deliver in the next 30 days

This should feel real, not theoretical

You'll apply the full C-E-A framework



GROUP EXERCISE: STRATEGIC MESSAGE REDESIGN

- What context must be named?
- What experience do you want to create?
- What actions must reinforce the message?



WHAT'S DIFFERENT NOW?

How the message — and your presence — shifted

- What did you add that wasn't there before?
- What did you remove?
- How does this feel different to deliver?





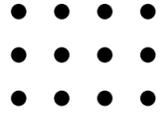
Your leadership commitment

- One message to clarify
- One presence behavior to practice
- One upcoming moment to apply this



Executive Q&A

Executive presence in real moments



ERIC S. PHILLIPS



Executive Vice President, Lending Strategies
Chief Credit Officer
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Final reflections and questions

What will you take forward as a steward of the enterprise?