

## Transcription - Showing Confidence

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we're going to talk about being confident. We're talking about being confident from a cultural point of view. We understand that there are some cultural taboos about what would appear to be overconfident, about blowing your own trumpet, for want of a better phrase. We want to talk about confidence in terms of promoting yourself and your skills and your abilities and not being seen as unsure, not so much not confident, but not being able to carry out the tasks. So I'll let Fulyana talk a little bit about the differences and then we'll follow up the conversation with Our own views.

We're talking about being confident and some people love being that main person in the room, love talking about themselves, being the peacock and some people don't like it or feel artificial, if you like, and border on arrogance. Now, it's not either/or. You've got to think factually, as far as I can see. It's basically being confident. It is able to allow people to listen to you, allow people to look at what you're saying and understand it. If you're confident about explaining to me a crisis, a product, how does something work, why is it good to have this in your tool kit, why is it important not to do that, you come across as confident and I like listening to you, taking value from what you're saying and using it.

If you're talking about yourself and all of a sudden you turn into, not deliberately, but you turn into being timid and humble, which is nice to be humble, but not to the point where I don't understand who you are. I don't understand what your experiences are. You not telling me your story, I don't understand. I don't get to know you. How is that going to help anyone? Do I go away and say oh, that guy was really humble, that woman was really nice? That's it? That's all I can say about you the positive thing but what I can't say is what sort of person you are. What do you like? What's your passion? What is your career aspiration? What's your family like? So you've got to learn to talk about yourself by telling your story in a way that is factual, realistic and normal. It doesn't have to be a big grand presentation. It doesn't have to be a show off thing. But also use some of the techniques and tools like if I'm saying yes I was fortunate enough to get an award for reducing costs by 2 million dollars. Say it like that, that's not arrogant it's a fact. Then say, just let me explain that - I was one of 5 people, one of a team of people, whatever, that actually did this and how it started, it started with, for example, one of the team members who does the data mining got this data out and said this doesn't look right, maybe we should look into it.

When you do that, guess what? I'm understanding how you saved the money, I

understand that you are humble. I understand that you're a team player. I understand that every part of that team had made a difference to achieve the outcome not just you, but you got an award together with or if you got it as a single award for leading that team. So I got it on behalf of the team, that's fine. But the important thing is the facts. I want to know what it was and how. It's not always the big finale, it's every bit that led to it like the data analyst that came up with that idea, like that person who said if we design this differently or we just changed the color, you would get X.

The most important part of that is remembering that when someone else is asking you about an activity for which you have been acknowledged, they're not interested in you. It's not about you as much as you might have been told all your life that you're wonderful and you're special, it's actually not about you. It's about the project, it's about the results, it's about the activity. Focus on that and that should make it easier for you to speak confidently and to sound confident because you are talking about a process or a project or an activity of which you were part, you might have been an integral part, it might have been you that did it all, but they're interested in the activities and the results. They're not interested in you as an individual, they're interested in the activities.

Being able to articulate that to a group of people - they're going to be a mixed group. For example, if you're sitting in a room and you had this idea or you want to tell us about something you've done, it's going to be a mix of people in that room. Some of them will be technical, some of them will not be technical, some of them will be short attention span, some will be result oriented etcetra. So start off at high level, the articulation of what you did and the factual will reach everyone using plain English. It's really just like you telling some of your friends but telling them in a serious way not in a joking manner.

In terms of presenting information, we've talked about it before, it's about keeping it in plain English, making it clear and not bombarding people with the detail, the data, the technical information. If they want that, you have it available and you say you've got it available, but that's the first thing that will switch people off is to be bombarded by information that they can't take in and can't work in to their own understanding, but they are at a meeting or a presentation where they're expected to hear all the information and then you might ask them a question at the end of it. They know they're not going to be able to work out the answer so they switch off and you get the brunt of their frustration with that activity because you're putting them in a position where they are not confident about their abilities. My message to you in that sense is about the presentation. It's keep it simple, keep it focused and have the other information available for

the people who want that information. If they don't want it, if nobody wants it, it doesn't matter because you've got the information there in case someone asks for it six months down the track.

The other thing is, if you are not clearly communicating, you're going to come across as unsure which may lead people to all sorts of thoughts like, oh maybe he didn't really have a part in it, maybe he doesn't understand what's going on. All you're doing in being preoccupied and being humble and not arrogant, is missing the facts side of things and telling it as it is. So ditch the bit about worrying too much. Be yourself, say it naturally, back it up and explain the project or whatever it is you are talking about.

I understand, as I said at the beginning, that for some people culturally, they will not want to promote themselves or what they've done. In this instance what we're talking about is not thinking about yourself. I work with people when they're doing presentations who are very unsure about getting up in front of a group because they don't feel that it is their place and so they have difficulty in actually looking at an audience because they shouldn't be having eye contact with people who are their peers or they would consider are of a higher eschalon in an organisation. That's a cultural activity that they can't get past and I understand that. What we do in those situations is to really, really focus on the message. So you are the messenger, it's not about you. It's not about your standing. It's about the message you want to impart and so we focus on the message and if they cannot bring themselves to look at the audience, then I will cite say to them, look beyond the audience because, if you are only slightly raised from the rest of the group, if you look out over the top of their heads to a point on the back wall, in the middle of the back wall, to the audience it looks like you're looking at them because your eyes are in that direction. For you, you're not faced with that cultural anxiety of feeling that you're looking at someone directly or you don't get caught up, even if it's not a cultural thing, actually having eye contact with someone and then you keep going back to that person because they're looking at you. We want to avoid all of those things. Pick a spot on the back wall and focus on that. I assure you that for everyone in the audience it will look like you are looking at them and it will be easier for you to impart the information without those distractions and get that message through. It's about the message. I know I keep saying it but that's the thing that gets people though - think about the message. It's very good for nerves as well because when you focus on the message and the importance you feel about the message, the nerves wont be an issue. You wont think about being nervous because you're focused on thinking about the message.

I remembered something, somebody was helping, and it's not me because I can talk, but there was a person trying to help with "no, I'm not comfortable talking about myself". They related the example of who has the best cherries in town and they're at the back of the shop, there's no sign to say we've got some fantastic cherries, there's no sign, there's no advertising, there's nothing. And then the grocer is wondering why he didn't sell the best cherries in town. To me that stuck in my mind when my friend told me that's what she was told and she always remembers the cherries in the back of the shop, nobody touching them when she tried to be more confident, more comfortable talking about her skills and abilities etcetera.

Why does it not surprise any of us that someone told you a story about food to make you remember?

I loved it because it's actually a good analogy.

We've touched on confidence, thinking about confidence in terms of how it is being perceived by the listeners to you. It's not about how you feel and we'd be interested in your views. If you've got any stories or anecdotes about what you use to make you feel comfortable or get through a situation where you know you need to be confident, we'd love to be able to share those with our other listeners. Let us know, drop us a line. For now I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.