

EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

**Earn trust and credibility
on any stage**



**ROSEMARY
RAVINAL**

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EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

Earn trust and credibility on any stage



In the new hybrid workplace, executive presence is critical. Discover the secret sauce that will distinguish you from the pack and set you up for success on any stage.

Executive presence is one of those terms that is used often in the context of business leadership but is not always well defined.

One of the key differences between an effective leader and a poor leader is often due to executive presence. If you want to become a successful leader, developing executive presence is essential. We are accustomed to experiencing someone's executive presence through in-person meetings, conferences, seminars, and media interviews. But in the virtual environment of Zoom, Teams or other platforms, executive presence takes on another dimension for which most individuals were not prepared.

I wrote this e-book to help present and future leaders like you understand what constitutes executive presence in the physical, hybrid and virtual worlds. And, how you can harness its benefits to foster trust, establish your authority and mobilize people around your ideas.

Why is executive presence so important?

"Leadership presence accounts for 26 percent of what it takes to get a promotion at work."

CENTER FOR TALENT INNOVATION

"Executive presence skills are ranked second in the top 20 leadership traits that make a difference."

GARTNER

Executive presence may come naturally to some in the form of poise, a good wardrobe, fluent speaking ability, charisma, and personality. But these innate talents do not ensure success in an increasingly challenging and disruptive business environment.

Like most leadership skills, executive presence needs to be practiced and polished to unlock its fullest potential.

This e-book provides practical insights to help you achieve higher levels of confidence and impact in person and online.

FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF HIGH EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

Now that you know the benefits of having an executive presence, here are four essential aspects of high executive presence to guide your own development.

1. Confidence

- Being self-aware and confident inspires confidence in others. You will transmit that confidence to others in your words and movements.
- Keeping calm allows you to think more clearly and act more efficiently to find solutions and persuade others.
- Taking care of your professional physical appearance also makes you feel more confident, poised, and organized.

2. Charisma

- Charisma is the X factor that gives you greater influence over others. People naturally follow charismatic leaders who have style and display poise.
- More than a natural trait, charisma can be learned by developing empathetic listening skills to connect better with others.
- Use active listening to make your colleagues feel heard and understood.

3. Clarity and consistency

- Individuals with high executive presence speak and express their ideas clearly.
- They understand that the impact of what they say can have on others.
- With consistent behavior and demonstration of values you can strengthen your credibility and authority.

4. Communication

- Someone with great executive presence knows how to appeal to different audiences convincingly.
- They can synthesize ideas and explain complex concepts effectively.
- When communicating with others, make eye contact and use appropriate body language to convey your message.



MEET ROSEMARY RAVINAL

Executive Communications
Coach for Bilingual Leaders

Rosemary has prepared CEOs, world-renowned celebrities, book authors, music stars, tech leaders and elected officials for speaking engagements and interviews. Drawing from her own deep experience as a corporate spokesperson and media personality, she trains clients to become more persuasive, clear, compelling, and effective in-person and online.

With more than three decades of expertise in the U.S. mainstream, Hispanic and Latin American markets, Rosemary excels at preparing clients to speak with confidence by embracing their natural abilities and personal style. She has held VP-level positions at companies such as Univision, Ericsson, and República Havas; and has a master's degree in Global Strategic Communications.



Jorge A. Plasencia

Chairman & CEO República
República Havas

"Media readiness coaching is one of Rosemary's specialties. Her approach is highly customized to fit the client's needs and the spokesperson's natural abilities. She has worked effectively with several of our clients."



Iveliesse Malavé

Vice President, Communications
The Latin Recording Academy®

"Rosemary empowers trainees to combine their natural style and personality with proven presentation and public speaking skills to up their game."



César Sabroso

SVP, Marketing
A+E Networks Latin America

"Media readiness coaching is one of Rosemary's specialties. Her approach is highly customized to fit the client's needs and the spokesperson's natural abilities. She has worked effectively with several of our clients."



Bruce Turkel

Brand Guru, Author and Innovation Keynote Speaker

"Rosemary combines her mastery in public speaking, presentation skills and media relations to assure your success in both virtual and physical settings. Rosemary's imaging superpowers are the required skill sets you need in today's now normal of face-to-face, hybrid, and remote work."

Learn more at www.rosemaryravinal.com

EXECUTIVE PRESENCE IN THE DIGITAL REALM

The term, executive presence, is often misused to describe the qualities of someone whose appearance, class, status, and demeanor would command the cover of a magazine. In the world of media and broadcasting, news anchor and hosts are groomed to exude huge levels of presence to draw your attention, earn your trust and viewership. The same goes for candidates for public office looking to win your vote.

Framed more broadly, executive presence is the secret sauce that distinguishes someone from the pack. And it is an integral part of the formula for leadership in nearly every walk of life. In the real world (IRL)—that is, **the physical world—executive presence is fundamental for success. In the new normal of virtual and online meetings, executive presence is critical.**

If you want people to see you as a leader in your space, you will have to engage in online practices to reveal and promote your executive presence. But projecting your charisma and personality on video conferences is different than in person and requires specialized skills tailored for these digital platforms.

These are all reasons why you should make your executive presence a priority.

No one's asking you to dance on TikTok. All I'm telling you is that you need to understand how to use the tools and technology that earn you trust and respect as an executive, because choosing not to use these things still sends a message, and it's not a good one.



10 MUSTS TO SHOW AUTHORITY ON VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Executive presence online starts with what I call a Virtual Handshake. In this Chapter you will be introduced to the ZoomScore™, a tool I created as a yardstick for success on Zoom or the video meeting app of your choice.

If you do not know it yet, video conferencing is here to stay, even with many individuals going back to their pre-pandemic offices, at least some of the time. The workplace is being reimagined, with hybrid gatherings—in person and virtual—rapidly becoming the new alternative to the staff meeting.

In this evolving business climate, your video conferencing IQ takes on greater importance. I am referring to the skills you need to demonstrate your personal charisma, interact effectively with others online, and elevate your confidence and impact. In short, to project your authentic best self. After all, how you show up on video calls can make or break your career, your business, and

your reputation. After more than a year living on Zoom, many of you have up-leveled your skills, while others are still struggling.

There is much at stake during video calls: close to 90 percent of the information processed by our brains comes from visual data. You cannot afford to risk the way you are perceived—your credibility and authority—by showing up poorly.

I created the ZoomScore™ last year as a yardstick for success on Zoom or the video meeting app of your choice. It is a checklist based on the 10 essential elements of a professional Zoom presence. Let me explain how you can apply the ZoomScore™ system to your work online.



1. Sharpness of Image

Is your video shot well focused? Is your image displayed clearly on the screen? Is it bright or is it dark? Video cameras require good lighting to create a crisp image. Focus, exposure, brightness, and lighting are all equally important.

2. Overall composition

Composition is how the elements of the video shot are arranged. It has to do with how you organize items within the frame that help the shot become interesting to the viewer. Is it cluttered? Is there harmony in the use of items and color?

3. Framing

Are you positioned properly in the frame? Ideally, your head should appear in the top third of the image area. If you are too high, the top of your head may be cut off. Too low and you will appear small and insignificant. Pro tip: frame your body so that you can use your hands to gesture and emote.

4. Proper lighting

Is your face evenly lit from the front with minimal shadows? Are your eyes and features clearly visible? This continues to be a challenge for many Zoom users. Rule of thumb: avoid backlighting unless you have an equally bright source in front of you. Place lights on either side of you so both sides of your face are lit equally.



1	SHAPNESS OF IMAGE
2	OVERALL COMPOSITION
3	FRAMING
4	PROPER LIGHTING
5	EYE LEVEL - EYE LINE
6	BACKGROUND CHOICE
7	BACKGROUND STYLING
8	DISTANCE FROM CAMERA
9	ATTIRE AND WARDROBE
10	PERSONAL APPERANCE



5. Eye level and eye line

Improper eye line is common with people who use laptops. Unless you raise the laptop so that the webcam lens is directly aligned with your eyes, you will be looking down. Similarly, a poorly placed external camera above the user creates an awkward upward angle. Where to look so that your gaze is as close to real life as possible while seeing call participants on the screen? That takes practice and experimentation.

6. Background choice

Is your video shot well focused? Is your image displayed clearly on the screen? Is it bright or is it dark? Video cameras require good lighting to create a crisp image. Focus, exposure, brightness, and lighting are all equally important.

7. Background styling

Does the background match the message? In physical sets, objects can be chosen strategically to match your industry and reinforce your message. Think about what items you can place behind or near you as visual cues about who you are and what you stand for. Books, sports memorabilia, family photos, awards or trophies, artwork, plants, and flowers are just a few of the commonly used objects used to great advantage.

8. Distance from the camera

Too close and your face will appear distorted. Besides, you will not be able to show your hands nor much of your background styling. Too far away and you will look small and diminished and likely too far from the microphone to be heard properly. The ideal distance is about 25 inches or arm's length from the webcam.



9. Attire and wardrobe

Are you dressed for the occasion or your occupation? Behavioral psychology shows us that how you dress has a direct correlation on your mindset for success. For example, select your attire in keeping with your role in a meeting. You will feel more confident and be perceived more favorably. Keep in mind that colors say a lot about us and hold subliminal messages. Choose bright colors that will pop on the screen and help you display the best version of yourself.



10. Personal appearance

Are you well groomed? Makeup is a plus for both women and men. A little translucent powder will mattify an oily shine. Watch for flyaway hair that tends to get magnified on the screen. Pro tip: Keep a mirror and brush near your video workplace to check how you look before you turn on the camera.

Use the ZoomScore™ as a checklist the next time you turn on your webcam. Keep in mind that the 10-point system is a snapshot based on the static screenshot of a speaker's video without sound and context. A more detailed evaluation is possible with live interaction between you and me as your coach.

EXECUTIVE PRESENCE IN AN ONLINE WORLD

I consulted a few friends who work at recruiting firms. I asked them: “What does executive presence represent when you screen candidates online?”

A recently divorced friend who was browsing her feed of prospects on a dating app said she liked one gentleman because of he exuded “executive presence.” I asked myself if the term “executive presence” is a measure of desirability on a dating site based on a static image, does that lessen the importance of those qualities in the business world? Has the term been overused and diluted as to render it meaningless? And how well can you gauge executive presence on video calls?

To satisfy my curiosity, I consulted a few friends who work at recruiting firms. I asked them: “What does executive presence represent when you screen candidates online?”

Mark, a global tech headhunter, said that it means the candidate has poise, confidence, and gravitas. “They look and sound relaxed and smart.” Anne, who seeks out fundraising pros for national non-profits, told me that for men and women alike, “it’s a positive first impression that starts when they show up on the screen and carries through the entire interview and beyond.” And, Mike, a recruiter in the fintech space, said that it’s simply virtual charisma, the charm and warmth that transmits through video and leads to a face-to-face interview with the hiring company.

I was relieved.

I teach C-suite leaders how to project their authentic presence, personality, and expertise on Zoom and believe that today more than ever, **executive presence is an essential component of success in the new normal of remote and hybrid teams.**

How does the way you look, sound, and behave on the small screen boost your credibility and



authority? The three recruiters agreed that executive presence unlocks the door to opportunity and that transmitting it is more important in virtual settings than in person.

“On video we look at people more closely than we would in person,” said Mike, the fintech recruiter. “If someone is unsure and lacks confidence, those qualities will be magnified on the screen.” Anne, the fundraising specialist, added that the more significant the career opportunity, the more important executive presence becomes.

The good news is that though executive presence is critical, it is neither magical nor mysterious. It is a skill, not necessarily a trait, that can be cultivated and built. Yes, some people are naturally more charismatically gifted than others, but with focus, practice and self-awareness, everyone can improve.

Here are five key steps to build your executive presence on zoom or your preferred video conference platform

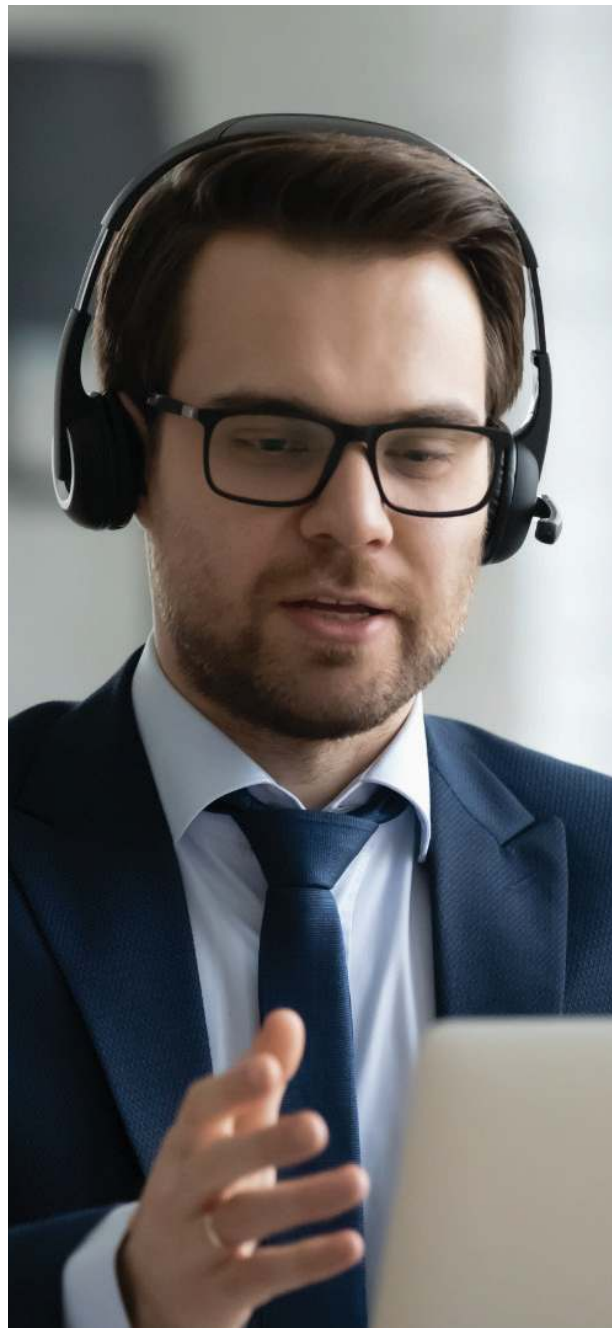
1. Be impeccable with the way you look and sound

Video conferencing is a visual medium. How you show up casts the first impression that others will have of you, and we know how difficult it is to reverse a bad first impression. The human brain processes visual and auditory data at an approximate ratio of 90 to 10. That is, if you are not optimizing your appearance, or the 90 percent of the equation, you are missing out.

Appearance is just one of the four aspects of ASSETs, Appearance, Staging and Styling, Energy and Technology, which contribute to your executive presence online. The sound—your words and how your voice transmits—comprises the other 10 percent. But note that what you say, and the quality of your ideas are success factors on their own.

2. Build your executive communications skills

Public speaking is the foundation of leadership. People with great executive presence are excellent communicators. Invest the time in building strong oral communication skills and adapt them to the medium of video conferences. You need to be concise, focused, and highly connected to your audience to hold their attention and resonate. Avoid verbal fillers that clutter and tarnish your statements. Get to the point and make every word matter.



3. Become an excellent listener

Many people forget that one of the most important communication skills is your ability to listen. People with great executive presence are exceptional listeners. They engage with their full attention, they ask great questions, and they use listening to engage others and explore significant ideas. The element of engagement is crucial to successful interactions on Zoom where the ability to “read the virtual room” often determines the effectiveness of a meeting. And there is an added benefit: The ability to listen effectively demonstrates self-confidence, another critical part of executive presence.

4. Articulate your personal mission statement

One of the key ingredients of inspiring confidence is having a compelling vision— a well-conceived notion of what you are working to accomplish. What do you stand for? Why do you do the work you do? It should be appropriate in scale for your level of seniority. You should be able to communicate your vision flawlessly in any circumstance whether it is a self-introduction or a meeting with investors, employees, or other stakeholders. A robust, well-articulated vision is particularly valuable on video meetings where attention spans and patience are in short supply.



5. Learn to manage performance anxiety

How do you behave when the stakes are high? How do you respond to technical glitches and connection problems that are common on video calls? Do you project steady composure or do your body language, facial expressions, and voice telegraph nervousness? People with good executive presence present themselves as calm, even keeled, well-prepared and in charge, even when factors beyond your control go haywire. That demonstrates the confidence and poise necessary to assume progressive levels of responsibility in an organization.

Simply put, executive presence can be a make-or-break factor in high-stakes situations where your talents, expertise, decisiveness, and vision are on display. And, in the new normal of remote work and online meetings, this secret sauce of leadership takes on even greater importance.

And one more benefit of executive presence: it may well be the elusive quality that you seek in the perfect romantic match. Leadership yields many rewards indeed.



HOW TO CONVEY CHARISMA AND PERSONALITY

Commanding a room is not the same as commanding a Zoom. Here are 7 steps to boost your e-charisma.

If you spend most of your day on video chats, you may be wondering how to boost your charisma on Zoom. E-charisma involves a different set of skills and social interaction than in the physical world.

Whether you are leading a meeting or participating, there are some tough lessons to be learned about commanding a video conference. My daughter, a clinical psychologist, recently called me out for hogging the conversation during a family Zoom on Thanksgiving Day. As a family therapist and mental health professional, she navigates difficult conversations in her practice which is now completely virtual. Her astute comment made me think about people working from home who are naturally shy and unaccustomed to the nuances of standing out on video calls.

In face-to-face meetings, physical presence often goes a long way to helping individuals get noticed, possibly advancing their careers. In the virtual space, commanding a room is not the same and draws upon skills that may seem awkward at first.

- **How do you get noticed when your co-workers are dominating the conversation?**
- **How do you interrupt to make a point?**
- **How do you convey physical presence from a “Brady Bunch” tile?**

At a minimum, it starts with turning on your video and audio. As Woody Allen said, *“Eighty percent of success is showing up.”*



Here are some of the most effective techniques to boost your charisma on Zoom or the videoplatform of your choice

1. Use all the built-in features of your video conference platform

These include raised hand, applause, and emoticons. For example, Zoom's non-verbal feedback features allow you to express opinions by clicking one of several icons on the participant panel. Get to know your platform's options and go through your technical checklist to make sure your own participation is flawless.

2. Be twice as animated as you would be in person

People are only seeing a small version of who you really are, so emote bigger and gesture more. Use your hands for emphasis making sure they are fully visible in the frame. Smile, nod and show that you respect everyone's time and are paying attention.

3. Use vocal variety

Vary your tempo and volume to display emotion. Insert five-second pauses to build drama and draw attention back to you.

4. Make your video set speak volumes about you

Avoid virtual backgrounds if possible and populate your set with items that speak to who you are and what you stand for. Well, composed, organized, well lighted videos attract attention. Make sure your sound is good, too.



5. Check your appearance

Dressing for success on video is no different from the physical world. Show you care by showing up well-groomed and dressed in a flattering color that looks good on the screen.

6. Acknowledge people by their name

We all love to hear our names. Because video calls tend to be impersonal, a shout out to someone, even someone you do not know, can spark interest and engagement.

7. Ask questions

I had a mentor who told me that asking questions is a way to flatter the speaker. When you ask a question—even if it means interrupting—it makes the other person feel important, and in turn, you demonstrate your own value and interest in the topic.

If there is a silver lining to living on Zoom, it is that every day we are finding new ways to make virtual more human. Charm and personality can be transmitted on a video call, but you must be willing to step out of the box and feel uncomfortable.



HOW TO ACE VIRTUAL MEDIA INTERVIEWS

How should you prepare for a press interview? Consider that even print and audio podcasts are done via video calls these days. The reason is that the visual aspect adds dimension and context to the conversation.

Though most broadcast media have returned to their studios, many interviews will continue to take place on Zoom. The bar has been raised for showing up looking sharp and professional. Our friends at Room Rater have no plans to fold up their tent. They continue to heap praise on great video set-ups and skewer those who just do not get it.

How should you prepare for a press interview? Consider that even print and audio podcasts are done via video calls these days. The reason is that the visual aspect adds dimension and context to the conversation. This is your opportunity to use your ASSETS: appearance, staging, styling, energy, and tech savvy to show up as authoritative, credible, and impactful.



Put all your ASSETS to work

Appearance

Your appearance says a lot about you and your expertise. Is your appearance consistent with your message? Is your competence in full display without your saying one word? Good grooming, wardrobe, lighting, and position in the shot create the first impression that stays etched in people's minds. The media amplifies that impression. **Remember: you do not have a second chance to make that first impression.**

To the right is an example of a spokesperson blunder. Last fall, a health official in Oregon chose to announce the number of COVID deaths in the state while dressed as a clown. Your takeaway: be authentic and dress for the role you really play.



Staging and styling

Are you using a virtual background without a green screen? If you do, you risk showing up as an amoeba. Ditch the green screen and style your shot to enhance your brand and message points. Everything in your shot should speak to who you are, what you stand for, and what you are trying to convey. Visual language is far more powerful than audio alone. Do not give away the power of props, artifacts, posters, artwork, photos, and other cues to your boost your desired outcome for the interview. And ensure that there is nothing visible that could be cause for embarrassment.



Yvette Amos, a part time bar worker was asked about her experiences of lockdown unemployment on BBC Wales TV. This interview went viral when viewers noticed a sex toy on the bookshelf.

Energy

Your vocal variety, intonation, body language, and facial gestures make your messages resonate. Your movements translate to an energetic delivery and more potent and quotable sound bites. Frame yourself at waist level so you can use your hands and arms comfortably on the screen.

Technology

Good video and audio quality are essential. Ensure that your camera is properly calibrated—exposure, focus, framing—and that your microphone picks up your vocal qualities. Know how to work the video platform, and do not forget to practice in advance so you don't waste precious interview time with bad connections. Choose a quiet location. If you are home, alert your family members that you should not be disturbed.



Korean affairs expert Professor Robert Kelly was live with BBC News when his children walked in to play.

Apply the ground rules of great interviews

Taking a page from the classic do's and don'ts of professional media interviews, here are seven ways to use the video call format to your advantage when dealing with journalists.

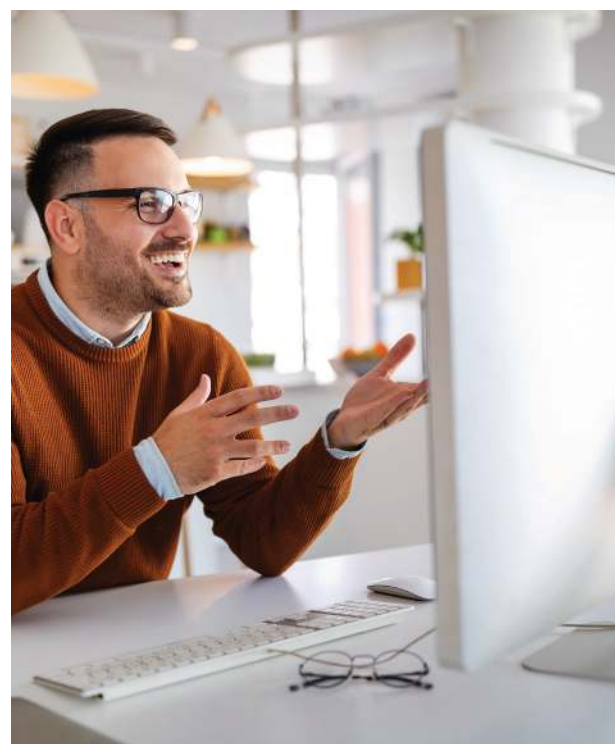
1. Wait for your turn to speak. Do not speak over the journalist or another interview guest.

2. Give short, simple, and quotable answers that will not be edited out. Stop after you say something important to give the editor a place to cut and not trim your video mid-sentence.

3. Be economical and get to the point. Avoid filler words and phrases: "Well...you know, I mean," when delivering your answer. Use pauses instead.

4. Set a goal and speak with intention. What do you want people to remember? Whether it is a TV interview, an industry panel discussion, or a podcast, your words and image can be clipped into bites that travel the world instantaneously, often detached from the original context. Be consistent and stay on message.

5. Stay composed. Look at the webcam not at the person on the screen. Look straight at the lens when you are not speaking. Do not fidget or move in your chair. Remember that you are being recorded and any part of that recording can be used to your advantage or disadvantage.



6. It is OK to react but do not look annoyed or flustered. Do not let them see you sweat. Smile often and naturally.

7. Understand that everything you do or say is fair game, even comments said before the recording begins. Remember the basic rule: There is no such thing as “off the record.” And hot mics have caught utterances that have cost people their jobs.

Prepare and be proactive

Research the media outlet and journalist when you are booked for an interview. Preparation will ensure a better outcome and position you as a desirable guest.

- **Research and understand the format, the interviewer’s style, and the audience.** Listen to their podcasts, watch their shows, read their by-lines, and anticipate their questions. Is the format confrontational or friendly? Who is the intended audience? What are they like?
- **Prepare short, snackable, sticky sound bites** that capture your point of view and state your message. Speak from your expertise and do not be led astray into topics with which you are not familiar.
- **Expect tough questions.** Plan your response or pivot to what you know and what you want to say.
- **Create visual aids,** video clips and images that can be used as B-roll to illustrate your point and spice up the interview.
- **Set up your camera shot in advance** so that you are properly framed and lit and have good sound. It is a plus to have some company branding behind or near you—but do not overdo it.



These are just a few of the pointers that will help you approach interviews with more confidence and impact. Working with the media successfully takes work and the guidance of an experienced coach. Zoom and advanced video conferencing technology can make you a media star overnight. But the consequences of a derailed interview can be far reaching, erode your credibility, and tarnish your career, business, and reputation.

Let's Connect

Power up your presence with high-touch, high-impact training tailored to your natural abilities. Let me help you elevate your executive presence in person and online. I will work with you individually or in small groups to polish your public persona and add gravitas to your next presentation.

Send me a message

✉ info@rosemaryravinal.com

Learn more at

www.rosemaryravinal.com



My work in-house and as outside consultant has helped executives at these companies achieve better results in make-or-break scenarios or everyday communication.



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