

Leading With Confidence

REVOLUTION

PRESENTED BY CINDY JOYCE, PILLAR SEARCH & HR
CONSULTING

About Cindy Joyce

Cindy is the founder of Boston-based Pillar Search & HR Consulting, a boutique consulting firm that provides executive search/recruiting and human resources consulting expertise to nonprofit and mission-driven organizations, working with senior leaders and boards of directors to hire and develop the very best talent across all functional areas of the organization. Cindy is an Instructor with Harvard Extension School and eCornell, teaching graduate-level courses in DEI, human resources, negotiations, and women in entrepreneurship. Cindy received her bachelor's degree from Regis College (and is their current President of the Alumni Council) and graduate degree from Lesley University. She has certificates in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Women in Executive Leadership, and Workplace Conflict from Cornell University and is a Certified Diversity Recruiter.

What We'll Cover Today

In today's session, we will learn more about the traits, skills, and behaviors that set leaders apart, and discuss practical strategies so that confidence can be one of your leadership superpowers.

Who is a Leader?

- A leader can be the obvious, managing a team, department, or organization.
- They can also lead a function, a project team, or initiative.
- There are also leaders in the making...people who are newer to their career who demonstrate strong leadership potential.
- All will benefit from having more confidence in their leadership acumen.

Why Do We Need Confident Leaders?

- The hallmark of a strong leader is – you guessed it! – confidence.
- Without confidence, a leader may be perceived as ineffective, indecisive, and slow to embrace change.
- A confident leader, on the other hand, instills trust, believes in themselves and those around them, makes sound decisions, rallies the troops even in challenging times, inspires, and moves everyone towards a common goal.

Why is it Important to be a Confident Leader?

- Your team will trust you more and have stronger business results.
- By developing your confidence, you will not operate from a place of fear, will stress the small stuff far less, and be able to handle potential obstacles more effectively.
- Confidence is a leadership trait that will make you stand out.

Nature vs. Nurture

- Being a confident leader is a skill.
- Some people are born with it.
- Others need to hone the skill the way they work on anything else that they were not naturally born with, and that makes them no less effective at being a confident leader than those born with it.
- Remember, practice makes perfect and using the strategies we will cover today will help to make you a stronger, more confident manager.

How Can You Spot a Confident Leader?

According to Outward Bound, the leadership training organization, “From communities to organizations, a confident leader is a person who can shape and guide individuals while making decisions to keep the world moving. They are visionaries, motivators and encouragers. And while it may seem like our favorite leaders are just naturals, gifted with the skills needed to guide, the truth is developing leadership skills takes time. Just like learning how to canoe or rock climb for the first time, charisma, enthusiasm and self-assurance are all learned and shaped with experiences, time and practice. Many traits make up good leaders. And based on observing behaviors, great leaders consistently possess the traits on the next slide.

6 Traits of Confident Leaders

1. Integrity

Integrity is defined as the quality of having strong ethical principles that are followed at all times—even when others aren't looking. Honesty may be the main definition of integrity you think of, but it's also composed of the ability to build trust and establish consistency. The importance of integrity should not be glossed over. It is essential to building a team that will and wants to follow.

6 Traits of Confident Leaders

2. Ability to influence and communicate

Confident leadership means you can listen and communicate with a wide range of people across different experiences, ages, abilities and backgrounds. This is so important. Because when it comes down to it, conversations can both improve culture and deeply affect the success of your strategy.

6 Traits of Confident Leaders

3. Self-awareness

Self-awareness is an inward-focused skill. Having good self-awareness allows you to understand yourself, your feelings, emotions and motives better and how those affect the way you react and interact with those around you. For example, have you ever been around someone who says something to a group that falls completely flat? They may not know how they come across to others or how they show up, which makes it hard to be able to lead others.

6 Traits of Confident Leaders

4. Learning agility

Strong leaders are strong learners. Like self-awareness, learning agility is an inward-focused skill. Learning agility is your ability to learn through practice, experience and effort. It pushes you to be resilient when you face setbacks, failures or mistakes but it also gives you quick decision-making skills in unfamiliar circumstances.

Remember, strong leaders are strong learners!

6 Traits of Confident Leaders

5. Gratitude

When it comes to breeding engagement, fostering positive interactions and building resilience in others you need gratitude. A leader who shows gratitude helps those around them acknowledge accomplishments. This trait, in turn, can encourage individuals to focus on success, build camaraderie and boost self-esteem. Being thankful will make you a better leader.

6 Traits of Confident Leaders

6. Courage

Courage manifest in many ways. It can happen when someone speaks up with a hard or unpopular opinion, or through voicing a new idea, providing feedback or even having a difficult conversation. Having real courage is a key trait among great leaders. It allows them to see discomfort or conflict as growth opportunities. Courageous leaders don't shy away from difficult interactions but rather welcome them in order to experience transformation and recognize fear. Leaders choose the right way over the easy way—even if it rocks the boat a little bit!

Inspire Us!

- Think of a confident leader that you know.
- In chat, write down one word that describes them.
- What words are we seeing consistently to describe confident leaders?

How to be a More Confident Leader

TIPS & STRATEGIES

Lead by Example

- By leading with confidence, you will inspire others to be more confident as well.
- Demonstrate the attitude, presence, and demeanor you want to see in others.
- Practice an attitude of gratitude. Thanking people and demonstrate genuine appreciation makes them feel good and elevates how you are perceived.
- Be positive, open, and strive to do your best, and others will follow.

Elevate Others

- They elevate and recognize the work of others, sharing credit where credit is due.
- They praise others when they do well.
- Speaking of praise, they praise publicly and provide constructive feedback privately.
- They celebrate wins of others, big and small, to elevate and drive the right results and behaviors.
- In short, they do not have a need to be the center of attention and recognize that a rising tide will raise all ships.

Provide Feedback

- Countless studies have shown that the #1 thing that employees want is feedback. This includes the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- If you manage people, let them know what they excel at. Share their opportunities for growth and help them strategize on how to make those improvements.
- By providing feedback, you signal to your team that care and have confidence in them, and they in turn will view you as more confident and effective as a leader.

Be Open to Feedback

- Pulse surveys, “stay” interviews, focus groups, frank feedback during 1:1 meetings. All are great ways to gather information on ways that you can improve as a leader.
- As a bonus, asking for actionable feedback has the bonus of boosting your credibility as it demonstrates your own desire to learn, grow, and exceed expectations.

Embrace a Growth Mindset

- Confident leaders embrace a growth mindset see opportunities where others see obstacles.
- They have a big-picture view and finding solutions that will advance the organization over the long-term.
- They know that their skills and talents – and those of others – have the potential to grow with time.
- They embrace change instead of resisting it.
- In addition, they are able to get comfortable with the uncomfortable, such as uncertainty and ambiguity.

Know When to Hold Them, Know When to Fold Them

- It is important to know our strengths and as importantly know our weaknesses or areas of lower expertise.
- Hire people who complement your skills set.
- Bring them in when you know you cannot go it alone.
- A confident leader is ok with not being the be-all-end-all expert. They surround themselves with people who make them better and more effective.

Decisions, Decisions

- A confident leader can make a decision instead of waffling.
- They weigh their options and consider the impact of potential outcomes.
- While there are many decision-making styles, they are not overconfident, nor are they frozen by fear. Their confidence allows them to make sound, balanced business decisions.
- They own the decisions they make.

Confident Leaders Prioritize Communication

- Lack of or poor communication can lead to low morale, missed performance goals, and lost sales. Inadequate communication can cost large companies an average of \$64.2 million per year. (*Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit*).
- Communicate Revolution's goals, results, future plans, and be available for questions. Communication is a two-way street.

Transparency is Key

- According to a survey by the American Management Association, more than a third of senior managers, executives, and employees said they “hardly ever” know what is truly going on in their organizations. Confident leaders understand that transparency will help to eliminate that complaint.
- If there is something that you are asked about that you are not yet at liberty to share, state that. People appreciate the honest response of “I am not yet able to share that information and will as soon as I can” instead of silence or sidestepping the question.

Learn from Mistakes

- By recognizing and admitting to mistakes, you humanize yourself. Nobody, even the best and most experienced leader, is infallible.
- The important thing is to learn from them commit to do better in the future.
- When those around you make a mistake, focus on it being a growth opportunity, and reassure them that they are not their mistakes.
- Need proof? Check out [this article](#) on mistakes that resulted in big innovation and invention – and pay close attention to #6, which was the invention of plastics!

Delegate

- Most of us know of or have suffered through working with a leader who is a micromanager.
- Micromanagers are the opposite of a confident leader. Their insecurities and fear cause them to try to control EVERYTHING.
- A confident leader understands that delegating helps to elevate everyone, because:
 - It is an opportunity for others to learn and grow and for them to see that you trust them to take on and learn new things
 - It frees you up to focus on bigger picture items

Practice Self Care

As they say, you cannot help others until you put on your own oxygen mask. Take the time to do what fills you up so that you can be a stronger and more present leader, including:

- Adequate sleep
- Stress management
- Personal development (including hobbies)
- Exercise
- Good nutrition

Create Psychological Safety

- Leaders set the tone, and when they put the needs of employees first, people feel psychologically safe and will do their best work.
- Employees who have psychological safety are more engaged, more effective, and more productive.
- Let's listen to leadership expert Simon Sinek on the importance of leaders who create a sense of safety: [VIDEO](#)

Activity!

In 1-2 words written in the chat function, what from Simon's video can you do to be a more effective and confident leader through creating psychological safety?

Leadership Presence

- 25% of what it takes to get to the next level is how you are perceived. The rest is how you add value and deliver results
- Executive presence comes from being authentic, building confidence in others, and inspiring others to take meaningful action.
- Developing your executive presence is a journey of personal transformation of the kind of leader you are and the kind of leader you want to be.
- Positive change comes with managing triggers, behaviors, and your ability to self-manage in situations to achieve excellent outcomes.

Leadership Presence *(cont'd)*

- Those with executive presence render difficult decisions quickly and publicly, stand their ground, and can make sound judgment calls and standing behind those decisions
- They also walk the walk when it comes to living the mission and values of Revolution
- They treat every member of the Revolution Plastic team as well as they would the CEO, regardless of title and level in the organization, honoring people's differences and that which makes them diverse while creating an inclusive culture.

Confidence in Your Voice

- Try to avoid the um's and ahhh's and likes.
- Please and thank you goes a long way:
 - Thank your team regularly, verbally and in writing, individually and in a group setting, send thank you emails to your staff and others around Revolution who help you out, and send a thank you email or note after a first client meeting and as appropriate thereafter, such as a visit or lunch.
 - Say please when asking for something.
- Speak with conviction.

Confidence in Your Voice *(cont'd)*

- Ask people what name they prefer to be called, and pronouns used.
- Use more full words and less contractions, both verbally and in writing, such as I will instead of I'll, it is instead of it's, and you are instead of you're
- Try these to see how much more powerful your statements are:
 - Replace the word *but* with *yet* or *and*
 - Instead of saying *I think*, say *in my experience* and/or *I believe*

People See You Before They Hear You

- The moment that you enter a room (in person or on Teams/Zoom): people will assess your physical presence, including:
 - How confidently you walk
 - How confidently you stand (or sit, if a video call)
 - How firmly you shake hands
 - How quickly and how much you make eye contact.
- Stand tall, stand proud, and sit tall, sit proud. You are a leader and have earned your place in the room. Own it!

More Than Words

- The impression we make as leaders is more than just the words and tone we use. It is how present we are and how we present (or how we show up) that supports and defines the impression we are making.
- It is a combination of what you say and how you say it that truly reflects your personal brand and the high value you bring as a leader along with your knowledge and contributions.
- It is also important to keep people engaged when speaking. Use inflection. Next time you are watching a newscast, notice that the great ones are not monotone. A News Anchor in Boston once told me that it is important to use inflection often, at minimum every 6th or so word to keep your voice and tone engaging.

Leaders LISTEN!

A leader who lacks confidence feels the need to talk more than listen. A confident leader takes the time to truly listen. Tips:

- Listening – to direct reports, peers, and those above you – is the hallmark of a confident leader
- It shows that you are self-assured and do not always have to be the one speaking – think of the 80/20 rule!
- It helps the other person to feel seen and heard, which in turn will build trust and rapport
- Listening demonstrates collaboration, understanding, and care

Leaders LISTEN! *(cont'd)*

- Listening – to direct reports, peers, and those above you – is the hallmark of a confident leader.
- It shows that you do not always need to be the “star”
- It helps the other person to feel seen and heard, which in turn will build trust and rapport
- Listening demonstrate collaboration, understanding, and care...all of which will help you to come across as confident and self-assured.

Activity!

The following are referred to as the “7 C’s” - traits that confident leaders demonstrate:

- Composure
- Connection
- Charisma
- Confidence
- Credibility
- Clarity
- Conciseness

On your own, take one minute to write down the two that you feel you excel in, and two that you’d like to work on. For the two you need to work on, jot down what you can immediately do to start honing your leadership superpower.

Kickstart Your Leadership Confidence

To create and foster your leadership skills, be sure to:

- Focus on your strengths.
- Internalize your accomplishments.
- Embrace a growth mindset.
- Invest in the power of mentorship and community.
- Ask for feedback.

What if You Wake Up Tomorrow Without Confidence?

- It happens. We all have our moments of doubt. The two most common are:
 - Imposter syndrome is akin to feeling like you mistakenly reached the point you are at by mistake instead of for being qualified and capable.
 - Generalized insecurity, which is when we don't feel up to the challenge and feel unsure all around.
- EVERYONE, from the most junior leader to the most seasoned executive, experiences a “crisis of confidence” from time to time.

What if You Wake Up Tomorrow Without Confidence? *(cont'd)*

Strategies:

- Think about why you are feeling this way. Was it a trigger of sorts? A challenging decision you had to make? Or simply a bad day?
- Fake it 'til you make it. Sometimes, putting on a brave, confident face and demeanor will kickstart your true confidence.
- Practice makes perfect. Do some quick, low-hanging-fruit activities that will boost your confidence.
- Breathe....and remember, this feeling too shall pass.

Takeaways

- In chat, please share:
 - What was your biggest takeaway from today's session?
 - What can you do today to lead with confidence?

Thank You

What questions do you have?

Additional Resources

Links to additional suggested readings:

- The 5 Second Rule: Transform your Life, Work, and Confidence with Everyday Courage (Mel Robbins, 2017)
- Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges (Amy Cuddy, 2015)
- Find Your Leadership Voice In 90 Days: How to show up, speak up, and stand out with confidence (Kadi Cole, 2021) *Note: written for female leaders*
- 9 Brilliant Inventions Made by Mistakes (*Inc. Magazine*, 2012)