

FAST FORWARD



Find Your Voice and Use It





COMMUNICATION

4

Find your voice and use it



Power Principle #4: Find Your Voice and Use It

Gain practical skills to elevate your communication impact, take a stand for what is important to you, and advance your career. Get tools to build your professional network, merchandise your contributions, and confidently communicate with any audience.

Take A Stand Examples

- › Request flexible work arrangements
- › Reduce/eliminate weekend email
- › Better benefits package
- › Eliminate a standing meeting
- › Increase your scope
- › Increase your compensation
- › Be heard at meetings
- › Share household or caregiver responsibilities
- › Increase diversity and improve inclusion

1

Where in your life could you take a stand? How would you like it to look?

2

What difference would this make for you and others?

3

Who would you have this conversation with?

4

What is getting in the way of you taking a stand?

5

What is the cost of not speaking up?

Take a Stand: Conversation Planner



POWER PRINCIPLE #4:

Find Your Voice and Use It

KEY TOOL



INSTRUCTIONS

Use these questions to inform your outline.

1

What is your desired outcome? (At the end of the conversation, what does success look like? What will they believe/do? How will this benefit them/the company?)

Ex: My manager sees that he can improve how he moderates the team meeting to enable more people getting heard, leading to stronger culture and business results.

2

How will I open the conversation? **Practice out loud.

Ex: I know you encourage diverse perspectives and ideas — and want to get the best of everyone's brainpower so we are competitive as a business. Currently we aren't hearing from everyone in our team meeting and I have a lot of good ideas. Tom and Maria are smart and passionate, but their enthusiasm is having me and others not get airtime.

3

What requests/recommendations will I make? ****Practice out loud.**

Ex: My recommendation is that you moderate the meeting in a more structured way, asking to hear from numerous people and calling on specific people to share.

4

What objections might come up and how will I handle them?

Ex: My manager might say: "You can interject anytime" or "I like the flow of organic conversation." I'd respond: "Tell me more – what do you like about that?" And then really listen. I could then say: "I appreciate that. Given people's different communication styles and tenures, it would be meaningful to have you test out a different approach. Would you be willing to try different approach for a few weeks and see if it's beneficial to our team?"

POWERFUL CLOSE

- › **Get feedback — find out what got heard.** What are your thoughts/feedback? (wait for response). What are you saying to yourself about this idea/recommendation?
- › **Reinforce the benefit to them/the company.**
- › **Align on actions/agreements.** Who is doing what by when?

Merchandise Yourself: Your Personal Board of Advisors

It's important to create allies and advocates who appreciate your value and who will use their political capital on your behalf. Think of this as your "personal board of advisors" made up of:

- **Internal Stakeholders:** Your manager and other senior leaders who can help to advance your career.
- **Mentors and Sponsors:** Mentors provide counsel and act as a sounding board. Sponsors use their political capital to advocate for you when you are not in the room.
- **Peers and Cross-Functional Partners:** These are the people you can trust and seek counsel from.
- **External Relationships:** Industry colleagues, former colleagues who help you stay abreast of your value and recommend opportunities.

1

2

3

4

5

NOTES

Merchandise Yourself: Conversation Planner

1

What is your desired outcome?

Ex: At the end of the conversation, your audience leaves clear on your strengths, skills, accomplishments and ambitions, and is committed to advocating for you.

2

What are your ambitions for the future?

Ex: Double the size of my team and increase my revenue responsibility by 50%, Get promoted/to the next level, Sit on a board of an organization, Move to a C-Level position at another company.

3

What are 2 key accomplishments in the last year that you are proud of? What strengths were required to make them happen?

Ex: Leading my current team through challenging circumstances, which required resilience, inspiration, empathy and clear communication. Delivering internal process playbook to improve efficiency by 10%, which required strategic thinking, creativity, and relationship-building.

4

What would you ask them about their current role and the path to getting there?

Ex: What can you share about your personal experience that could help in my journey? Tell me about how you got to where you are. What were some inflection points in your career?

5

What are 1-2 requests you could make in support of your growth? (Consider: how would this benefit them/the business/the team?)

Ex: My request is that you advocate for me at the next leadership roundtable. My request is that you introduce me to the hiring manager for X role. Can I count on you for that?

Merchandise Yourself Sample Outline

Eric, thank you for making the time to meet with me. My intention is that you leave our conversation clear on my key contributions to the company and my ambitions for the future, and that you agree to advocate for me in the next promotion cycle. My ambition is to get to the next level in 18 months, in this business unit or another one in the company.

As you know, I've spent 10 years in Consumer Products in global and regional supply chain positions predominantly in manufacturing plants. I lead a global team of 60.

Two accomplishments or contributions to the company that I am most proud of are...

1. The work I did developing and scaling a global standard process called X that addressed bottlenecks resulting in 10% increased productivity.
2. I am also incredibly proud of how we've been able to keep operations running during COVID pandemic conditions. Despite 12% absenteeism, we've been able to deliver the required volume for all regions we serve achieving a record high production in September, and more importantly, taking care of our high-risk people.

The skills that made this possible are:

- My ability to work under ambiguous situations – decide and act without having the total picture, and handle risk and uncertainty.
- How I bring high energy in tackling challenging projects – I thrive on tough challenges and am constantly challenging the status quo and learning new ways to do things.
- I bring creativity, optimism, and a collaborative spirit to everything I do.
- And my ability to inspire and lead by example.

Given your role, what new skills do I need to get there and be successful?

What can you share about your personal experience to help in my journey?

Request & close:

I really appreciate all your counsel and advice. Now that you know more about my contributions and ambition, are you willing to advocate for me with the leadership team in the next promotion cycle? (If yes, thanks; if no, what more would you need to know? What gaps do you see that I would need to work on?)

Language of Impact

Language matters! Raise your awareness of when and where you are using this language and eliminate it.

› Eliminate disclaimers

"You might already know this...", "I didn't get as much time to spend on this as I'd like...", "I'll be quick..",
"This might be a bad idea/stupid question, but..."

› Eliminate "sorry"

"Sorry for taking up your time....", "Sorry we have so many slides..."

› Eliminate "just" before making points

"I just want to tell you about this..."; "I am just checking in..."

› Be concise vs. verbose

"I know you will agree with my point about our strategy, which we have all now agreed to, and after much deliberation and many long nights where we all debated for hours on end, it's really a pretty unarguable point and the strategy is very straightforward."

› Tell vs. ask

"Can we schedule time to review our proposal next week?" vs. "Let's block time to review our proposal." Or "What do you think about testing in Q2?" vs. "We recommend testing this in Q2." Also avoid raising your pitch at the end of a statement, which makes it sound like a question.

› Eliminate "does that make sense?"

Instead, try: "What do you think about this recommendation?" or "What are your thoughts on this?"

› Consider using "and" vs. "but"

Using "but" diminishes our impact and possible outcomes. Ex., "I really appreciate your insights, but we have another perspective." vs. "I really appreciate your insights, AND we have another perspective."

› Filler Words

"Um", "Like", "You know", "Right", "Actually," "To be honest."