

The Leadership Readiness Matrix™

Imagine you're coaching a rising leader who's technically brilliant but gets overlooked for the top job. Here's the game-changer: a simple 2x2 matrix that reveals why executive presence isn't just nice-to-have, it's the multiplier that turns good leaders into legends.

Picture this grid plotting:

	Low Leadership Effectiveness	High Leadership Effectiveness
High Executive Presence	Fashionista: Stylish but lacks substance and results.	Olympian: Delivers optimal performance with compelling style and influence.
Low Executive Presence	Also Ran: Poor performance without standout presence.	Stalwart: Solid results but misses the executive "edge" for greater impact.

Leadership Effectiveness (results, skills, execution) on one axis against **Executive Presence** (gravitas, polish, influence) on the other. Aha! It's not enough to crush your KPIs; you need that magnetic "*CEO vibe*" to inspire trust and rally teams.

The Four Quadrants Unveiled

- **High Presence, Low Effectiveness ("Fashionista"):** All flash, no substance, like a slick TED Talker who can't deliver. They dazzle but flop when it counts. Ouch!
- **Low Presence, High Effectiveness ("Stalwart"):** The reliable workhorse grinding out wins, yet stuck in middle management. Solid? Yes. Promotable? Nope, they lack the "it" factor.
- **Low on Both ("Also Ran"):** Invisible and ineffective. Career quicksand.

- **High on Both ("Olympian"):** Boom! The elite performer who commands rooms, drives change, and soars to the C-suite. This is where presence amplifies competence into unstoppable impact.

Research from OLE¹ shows Olympians aren't born, they're built by blending substance with style. Use this in your workplace: plot yourself or your team, then laser-focus on the gap. Suddenly, leadership development clicks!

Consider **Arjun Mehta**, a Senior Manager in a large Indian IT services firm. Arjun consistently delivered projects on time. His technical reviews were strong. Clients respected his knowledge. Yet when an AVP position opened, someone else was promoted.

The difference? In leadership reviews, Arjun was described as reliable but not visible. In board updates, he presented data without framing the strategic impact. During difficult client escalations, he focused on technical detail rather than reassurance and direction.

After feedback, Arjun worked on three shifts:

- He began structuring updates around outcomes, not activities.
- He practiced concise executive summaries before detailed explanations.
- He calibrated his tone, pace, and posture in senior forums.

Within a year, feedback changed. He was described as composed, clear, and dependable under pressure. The next leadership opportunity, he was the obvious choice. Three Signals of Executive Presence

- You simplify complexity without oversimplifying reality.
- You remain calm when others become reactive.
- You speak with clarity even when stakes are high.

Leadership is not only about what you know. It is about how confidently and clearly you carry what you know into the room.

Note: *In my workshop I extensively cover **Sylvia Hewlett's** three pillars of Executive Presence- Gravitas, Communication and Appearance.*

¹ <https://www.oleconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Executive-Presence.pdf>