

COACH FOR CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence: it's not just about feeling good.

When someone is seen as confident, they are also more likely to be seen as competent. This leads to a number of workplace benefits, including more opportunities to lead and higher social status. The perception of competence persists, even in the face of evidence to the contrary (Kennedy, Anderson, & Moore, 2013; Locke & Anderson, 2015; Murphy, Barlow, & von Hippel, 2018).

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Do you need to FEEL confident to LOOK confident?

NO.

A 2019 global study of more than 4,200 global leaders conducted by MRG found no correlation between feeling self-confident and conveying self-confidence.

There were no common patterns of behavior for leaders who feel confident. There were, however, patterns in the behavior of leaders who were seen as confident by their bosses, peers, and direct reports.

What does this mean for coaching leaders?

To help a leader experience the benefits of self-confidence, you can focus on helping them work on the behaviors that convey confidence to those around them.

What Confidence Looks Like

Research reveals that leaders who convey confidence exhibit a different pattern of behaviors than their counterparts who appear less confident.

Leaders who look confident are:

More likely to...

- **Be comfortable being in charge**, and seek out opportunities to be influential and accomplish results through others (*Management Focus*)
- Think before acting, **analyze the impact of their decisions** and understand the implications of their actions (*Strategic*)
- **Win people over**, build commitment and sell ideas (*Persuasive*)
- **Know their field of expertise** and maintaining in-depth, specialized knowledge in those areas (*Technical*)

Less likely to...

- **Defer to people in positions of authority** or automatically follow organizational norms (*Deference to Authority*)
- **Accommodate others**, be willing to be helpful and compromise (*Cooperation*)

At a Glance:

Behaviors of leaders who convey confidence

More...

- ↑ Management Focus
- ↑ Strategic
- ↑ Persuasive
- ↑ Technical

Less...

- ↓ Deference to Authority
- ↓ Cooperation

Confidence Doesn't Look the Same for Everyone

The research indicates that there are some universal themes in the behavior patterns that convey self-confidence. There are nuances, however, when we look more closely at the data to explore demographic differences.

	Feeling Confident	Appearing Confident	How a Confident-Looking Leader Behaves
Does Generation Matter?	<p>✗ No.</p> <p>The three generations feel confident at the same rate.</p>	<p>✗ No.</p> <p>Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y leaders are perceived as equally confident.</p>	<p>✓ Yes.</p> <p>Baby Boomers who appear confident place more emphasis on providing feedback.</p> <p>Gen X leaders who convey confidence place more emphasis on clear communication.</p> <p>Millennials who look confident are less likely to overemphasize the use of empathy.</p>
Does Gender Matter?	<p>✓ Yes.</p> <p>Overall, male leaders feel more confident than female leaders.</p>	<p>✗ No.</p> <p>Men and women convey confidence at equal rates.</p>	<p>✓ Yes.</p> <p>Men who appear confident place more emphasis on acting independently and focusing on short-range, practical strategies.</p> <p>Women who convey confidence often focus more on strategic behaviors, increase their technical expertise, and are more persuasive with others.</p>

How to Coach Leaders to Convey Confidence

1

Focus on developing the behaviors that convey confidence.

Regardless of demographics, there are certain behaviors a leader can emphasize that research shows will convey confidence to their bosses, peers, and direct reports. Coaches should consider helping leaders:

- Seek opportunities to be in charge and feel comfortable in that role
- Focus on long-term impact
- Exert influence and expand their expertise
- Be persuasive, and not place others' agendas ahead of their own

2

Be aware of demographic nuances.

Understand that a leader's gender or generation may have an impact on which behaviors they should emphasize and/or deemphasize to convey confidence. Leverage this research to help inform the creation of a developmental plan that works to the individual's best advantage.

3

Use 360 feedback to guide leaders as they learn to convey self-confidence.

With almost no relationship between feeling and conveying confidence, it may be nearly impossible for leaders to self-determine whether they are demonstrating confidence to those around them. Use a scientifically designed 360 assessment like the LEA 360™ to both gauge the confidence a leader conveys, and identify the confidence-associated behaviors that they could develop.

The LEA 360™ is available exclusively from MRG or MRG's Certified Partners.

To see a sample report or experience the assessment, contact MRG today.