

# Seven Reasons Why “C” Suite Executives Are Terrific Communicators

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Rarely, does anyone make it into the senior ranks of a company without being a terrific communicator. It just doesn't happen. However, it is a mistake to think that the “C” Suite Executive is someone who, by nature, is good at communicating. No one is born a great communicator. That person honed his or her skills over the years. Here is what makes them great.

1. **Senior Executives speak a lot.** By the time, they move to the “C” Suite, they speak upwardly, downwardly and cross functionally constantly. Malcolm Gladwell in his book, *Outliers*, says it takes 10,000 hours of doing something over and over again to reach that expert level. Certainly, key executives have had many opportunities to speak and have learned from their mistakes. *Do you shy away from presenting or do you look for opportunities to speak?*
2. **They get coached and are open to feedback.** Just like an athlete, senior leaders typically are coached when they have an important message to deliver. They take the coach's comments seriously, whether those suggestions have to do with inflection, eye contact or message development. They clearly want to be better and work hard at improving. *How open are you to feedback? What is your level of commitment to getting better?*
3. **Their messages are clear and concise.** They do not over-talk something. They are not ambiguous, but rather direct and to the point. The language in their messages is also simple, not couched in jargon or techno-speak. No one leaves a meeting wondering what they are supposed to do. Additionally, how they frame their message is never offensive or accusatory. *What would people say about the clarity of your ideas? Do they ask you to get to the point?*
4. **They are good listeners and observers.** Instead of pontificating, they listen in an attempt to learn more. They try to read people's body language. They sense the attitudes in the room. They listen not only to the spoken message, but to the unspoken. *How would you assess your listening skills? Do you talk more than listen?*
5. **Their focus is on their listeners, not on themselves.** Winston Churchill was said to have spent a long time analyzing each person who sat in Parliament during the Second World War. Up front, he tried to figure the best way to approach them before delivering any speech. “C” Suite Executives also learn all they can about their audience and demonstrate through their remarks or questions that they know them. *Do you take the time to develop rapport and are you willing to change a message if it isn't in alignment with the audience in front of you?*
6. **They are honest and have integrity.** Their reputation for always doing the right thing and making ethical decisions for their company precedes them. They are known as straight shooters. People trust what they say is the truth. *How would people describe you?*
7. **They get personal.** It is a rarity for a senior leader to stay at arm's length. Typically, these people share stories about their wives, their children, the mistakes they have made or things they wished they would have known. They make humorous asides and let their real selves show through. People describe them as authentic, the real thing. *How much do you let the real you show through?*

While it's true “C” Suite Executives are strong communicators, you can be also. If you take the time to embrace these seven key points and take getting better seriously, you will be noticed. You will become someone the company wants to represent

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their views or distill ideas to others. Your star will also rise.

**Question:** *Think about your own communication style. What is something you need to change in order to be better? We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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