



Speak to Lead

“At the beginning of my career when someone would ask me a question, I thought my job was to relay the vast amount of information I had on that subject, so I would tend to give a bunch of useless information. Over a period of time, I realized that it was the synthesis of that information that was so much more important. People were looking to me as an executive or a leader to just give the kernels of information that were important, not the laundry list of everything that happened. And I think that we tend to do the latter—a lot.” — Nina Richardson, Board Director, Zayo, Silicon Labs, CallidusCloud. Women who are powerful communicators make the best leaders (and vice versa).

Nina’s advice about focused communication is just one of the pearls of wisdom we collected as we researched and developed our newest program, **Confident Speaking for Women**. In our last blog, [“There’s Power in Women Speaking,”](#) we talked about some of the critical questions we asked ourselves in designing the course, like How can women become more aware of their language and mannerisms? How can they learn to use vocal variety to make their points and engage the audience? How can they walk that fine line between getting to the point and giving people enough data? What’s the best way for women to find the mentors and sponsors who can help them become better communicators and leaders?

These and other questions led us to the core of the program, a model of essentials we call the “3 Cs” of powerful communication: **Be Clear. Be Confident. Be Courageous.** Here’s a quick preview:

Be Clear. You gain credibility by getting to the point and using decisive language. In the workshop, we show you how to avoid “talk traps,” unnecessary data dives, and language that harms your credibility, like filler words, hedging, qualifiers, etc.

Be Confident. Executive presence comes from a combination of mannerisms—stance, voice and appearance—that say to people, ‘I know my stuff and I’m comfortable in my skin.’ Again, Nina Richardson: “If I’m talking, I usually take up space. I take up space with my hands. I take up space by leaning in. I think it makes a difference. I’ve noticed that I pay more attention when somebody leans in and speaks.” We will teach you how to “take up space” when communicating.

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Be Courageous. This part of the workshop asks you to step into an even bigger field, by getting out of your comfort zone, seeking opportunities to grow and creating the support system you need to thrive as a leader. Who are your mentors? How can you adjust to your audience and still maintain direction? How best to develop your own personal “board of directors”? Listen to Lynne Zaledonis, SVP Product Marketing, Salesforce: “I think it is super important to build your board of directors. We talk a lot about how you need a mentor, you need an advisor, but I think you need all of the above. Building this army of people who are behind you every step of the way becomes very important early in your career.”

We are excited about the launch of **Confident Speaking for Women** in June. It’s a highly interactive, 3-hour working session designed for women rising in the organization. Through video clips, inspiring stories, practice sessions and discussion, you will learn where your strengths are and where you can improve as a communicator. At the end of the workshop, you will walk away with an informed action plan to become more clear, confident and courageous in your communications—and ultimately, as a leader.

If you’d like to hear more, please contact us at coordinator@powerspeaking.com.

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