

A man in a dark blue suit and tie stands at the front of a meeting room, gesturing towards a large screen displaying a presentation. The screen shows a slide with a blue header, a list of bullet points, and a pie chart. Several people are seated around a long table in the foreground, facing the presenter. The room has large windows and a modern, professional feel.

# How to Nail C-Suite Communication

How to communicate to be trusted, remembered, and promoted

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Build Your Edge 

# How to Nail C-Suite Communication

## Clarity. Brevity. Impact.

- At some point in your career, you'll present to senior leaders.
- Their time is scarce, and their attention is split.
- How you show up will shape both the decision in front of them and your reputation.

# The impact on your career

## Communication as an accelerator

- Clear, concise communication makes you memorable.
- Leaders trust you.
- Your name comes up in rooms you're not in.
- When promotion time comes, you're the one they say yes to.

# Why it feels different

## The C-Suite environment

- Back-to-back meetings.
- Hundreds of emails.
- Constant context switching.
- Your message matters, but it's one of many competing for attention.

# Your job in the room

## Enable decisions, not detail dumps



- Don't showcase every spreadsheet or slide. Executives aren't there to admire the volume of work.
- Your role: make their decision easy.

# Don't be scared

## Hold your nerve



- Whether this is your first time in the hot seat or you are a seasoned presenter to senior leaders, remember this:
- They are real people, just like you



# The principle

## Clarity. Brevity. Impact.

- **Clarity:** State up front why you're there and what you need.
- **Brevity:** Strip out the noise; keep it sharp.
- **Impact:** Frame the options, provide your recommendation, and clearly outline the consequences.



# Pro tip

## Reduce. Reduce. Reduce.

- Before your next presentation, cut your draft in half.
- Then cut it again.





# Getting on the calendar

## Finding time is the first hurdle

- Tap into the PA/EA network. It's the golden ticket.
- If the executive you want to address manages their own diary, ask colleagues how they prefer things to be done.
- Use sharp subject lines: "Decision needed: budget approval."

# Preparing with friendlies

## Don't prepare in isolation

- Run your slides past someone outside the detail.
- If they don't get it, the C-Suite won't either.
- Friendlies spot unclear asks, missing context, and extra noise.

# Structuring your message

## Problem → Solution → Ask

- Start with the executive summary.
- Keep details in the appendix.
- In emails: flag urgency in the subject line, put the ask first, and context below.

# Email example

Short, sharp, clear

Please approve the purchase of a table at the Women in Tech Awards Dinner for £8,000.

Payment needs to be made by Friday.

We have three finalists this year, and I've selected a cross-functional group to attend.

More details below.

# Delivering with confidence

## Show up, don't shrink back

- Sit where you can be seen.
- Open with purpose: “We need a decision on X.”
- Expect interruptions and out-of-order questions. Don't let it throw you.
- Always bring it back to the decision.

# Managing time and outcomes

## Respect the clock

- If you get agreement quickly, thank them and give them their time back.
- If running long: “We’ve got five minutes left. Shall we decide now or book a follow-up?”
- Always leave with either a decision or clear next steps.

# Avoid the detail trap

## Keep depth in reserve

- Executives assume you've done the homework.
- Don't lead with every slide or calculation.
- Keep the details ready. Use them only when asked.



# Know what makes them tick

## Think like an explorer



- Do your research.
- Talk to colleagues who work closely with them.
- Learn their preferences and habits.
- And remember: PAs and EAs usually know best.



# What happens next

## Build trust over time

- Follow up quickly with notes and next steps.
- Prepare for the next round.
- Each interaction builds your reputation for clarity and decisiveness.

# One thing to remember

## Your real job in the C-Suite

- Your role is not to impress with detail.
- Your role is to enable decisions.

# The full episode

## The Build Your Edge podcast

- This presentation accompanies Cheryl's episode on the Build Your Edge podcast.
- Find full details here:
- <https://www.buildyouredge.org/community/podcasts/episodes/how-to-nail-c-suite-communication>

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