How's your personal presence?

Some people just seem to have that "it factor"—the effortless charm and intelligence to seem at ease and intelligent in all situations. What is their secret?

"It boils down to presence, a magical mix of confidence, charm and communication skills that exerts an outsize impact on one's social stature and ability to climb the ranks," reports *The Wall Street Journal*'s Elizabeth Holmes.

Presence comes down to three things: "how you behave, how you speak and how you look," says Sylvia Ann Hewlett, founding president of the Center for Talent Innovation, a New York City think tank.

How you act is the most important part, Hewlett says. It's often thought of as gravitas or intellect. It's about remaining calm and confident in stressful situations and then acting decisively when faced with hard decisions. Emotional intelligence is also a big factor.

How you speak, or your communication style, is next in degree of importance. It's chiefly about communicating your thoughts and ideas as effectively as possible. "A concise and compelling speaking style matters most, especially when it isn't scripted.

Confident body language and eye contact help you command a room, as does finding a low register for your speaking voice," writes Holmes.

Appearance is the least important element, though it's not unimportant. Because it's what people notice first, it can act as a filter, ensuring you move on to the next test or get weeded out immediately. Hewlett's research has found that women are often discredited because of provocative clothing, while men are often discredited for appearing physically unfit.

These elements combine to make your in-person presence, but your behavior online dictates your social presence. Those two need to mesh well together or you risk appearing phony or falling flat in person.

— Adapted from "How to Develop Your Personal Presence on Social Media and in Real Life," Elizabeth Holmes, *The Wall Street Journal.*

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