

Kathleen Rich-New's Tips for Executive Women...

Be More Effective in Meetings

1. Take a seat at the table and pull out your own chair. Many times women will sit against the wall waiting to be invited to the table. Show your confidence by sitting at the table like the others. If you allow a colleague to pull out your chair you may become "the little woman."
2. You are on trial until you show the value you add; so speak up and be specific. You were hired to help the organization be more successful and they expect you to tell them what you think.
3. If introducing a new idea, gather support in advance. No surprises in the board room. Others can help you improve your concepts and identify key factors you need to address.
4. Develop your executive presence by learning how to enter a room and connect with everyone in it. Women too often enter a room and stand back or sit down and watch the men shake hands and connect with each other. Learn how to do it too.
5. Be prepared to ask questions, do your research in advance. Many times women will sit there letting others ask questions and shake their heads. If you don't speak up, why are you there?
6. Challenge assumptions you don't think are accurate. You may be the only one who can see the blind spot in their thinking. As a woman you have a different set of skills and references, use them.
7. Disagree with ideas, not with people. Women typically hate conflict and will avoid it at all costs. Be prepared to have others challenge what you say. It is not personal; it is about creating a better outcome. You can respond to disagreements by saying, "Interesting point" or "Perhaps you are right"...then consider their idea.
8. Leave your purse in your desk drawer, your car or your briefcase. Don't fidget or put on lipstick.
9. Just say it. Ask your question or make your statement, but don't preface it with excuses, background information, apologies or qualifiers. Don't apologize for what you cannot control, like, "I am sorry the traffic was bad." Don't ask permission, as in "May I ask a question?" Women overuse conditional language like "maybe" and "perhaps" which makes you sound doubtful.
10. Speak up. Make sure your voice is clear and loud enough to be heard. Don't end your statements with the inflection of a question. A rising pitch makes you sound unsure of yourself or you are seeking approval. Also under pressure women often increase the pitch of their voice and are perceived as hysterical. Ask for feedback from associates on your speech patterns.



Kathleen Rich-New specializes in coaching executive and entrepreneurial woman and those who want to improve their results. She has coached executives in top corporations including Apple Computer, Nortel and SGI (Silicon Graphics). She is a featured speaker at regional and national conferences. She holds an MBA and a Master's degree in International Human Resources. Co-author of *Looking for the Good Stuff...a guide to enjoying and appreciating life*. Contact her at (321) 452-7308 or visit her web page www.executivewomanscoach.com.