Authority

Authority is something we develop through our experiences, our education and training, and our background. It reflects the past that we bring to the current Challenge. Authority markers might include the role we take in leading successful projects, our job history, the clubs and networks we belong to.

Authority is about exuding gravitas and credibility. What do you bring into the room with you in respect to titles, track record, references and non-verbal credibility?

It is noticeable that women often downplay this trait preferring instead to promote their team. Women will tend to say: “The success of this project is down to my team.” While this is much appreciated by colleagues it can mitigate against developing an authoritative personal and career history. Men will, typically, be more forthright and claim ownership of a successful project.

Presence

Presence describes our capacity to ‘occupy the leadership space’, in the moment, to be appropriately noticed and to gain respect. It’s strongly dependent on our ability to build rapport and to relate effectively with a wide range of other people in the present.

Presence is about picking up on the subtleties of what’s happening around you and inside you in the here and now. It’s about creating a deep rapport space where others feel completely heard, seen and felt around you – eye contact, listening and empathy play a strong role here.
While women are often very good at the ‘soft skills’ of developing rapport and relating well to people, we find that this is typically more comfortably demonstrated in traditional female roles. The capacity to display presence in a wider range of scenarios becomes crucial in moving up the leadership ladder.

**Impact**
Impact describes our ability to change the course of events; for example, in a meeting, when we intervene to improve the outcome, or to enable people to reframe the way they think about the situation or problem they face. It is a future orientated dimension.

Impact is about using your insight to cut through the interference and reframe situations; to make a shift in people’s thinking, feeling and behaving. Sometimes it may be through a question; sometimes an observation, sometimes non-verbal.

We’re all familiar with the New Yorker cartoon, set round a board table, where the chairman is saying to the only female member: "Thank you, Miss Jones, good point. And perhaps now a man would like to make it...." While many women are good at ‘reading' atmospheres, their ability to handle conflict and dissonance productively in the moment (instead of smoothing over) can often be underplayed.