



MARTIN VEASEY
TALENT SOLUTIONS



The 12 Steps to Being Confident at Work

Introduction

“To establish true self-confidence, we must concentrate on our successes and forget about the failures and the negatives in our lives.” — Denis Waitley

When we feel confident, we believe the sky's the limit.

It's that feeling you get walking into an interview knowing you're going to impress the hiring manager, or stepping onto a stage to give a presentation on a topic you know you're an expert in.

You believe you can achieve success by applying your knowledge, judgement and prior experience.

You believe you can achieve anything, and it's a great feeling!

Confidence isn't something we're born with; it grows naturally. And it's cyclical, so sometimes we feel extreme confidence and on top of the world, while at other times we feel down, negative and believe we can't deal with problems that arise.

That's perfectly normal.

However, confidence is critical in today's business environment. It impacts on all areas of your organisation, from your initial recruitment stage to performance across the team, to growth of your organisation as a whole.

It's crucial to ensure that you, as an employer, are confident in selecting the right candidates for your business, and it's critical for candidates to be confident in their own abilities and skills so they come across as a great fit for the company.

In this report, we look at what workplace confidence really is, why it's so important to be confident at work and what the benefits are for the individual and the organisation.

We will take a dive into the 12 ways you can build workplace confidence and stay focused, building communication, trusting yourself and relying on your personal values to help you achieve confidence in abundance.

I look forward to working with you.

Best regards,



Roheela Khan
Recruitment Operations Director, Martin Veasey Talent Solutions

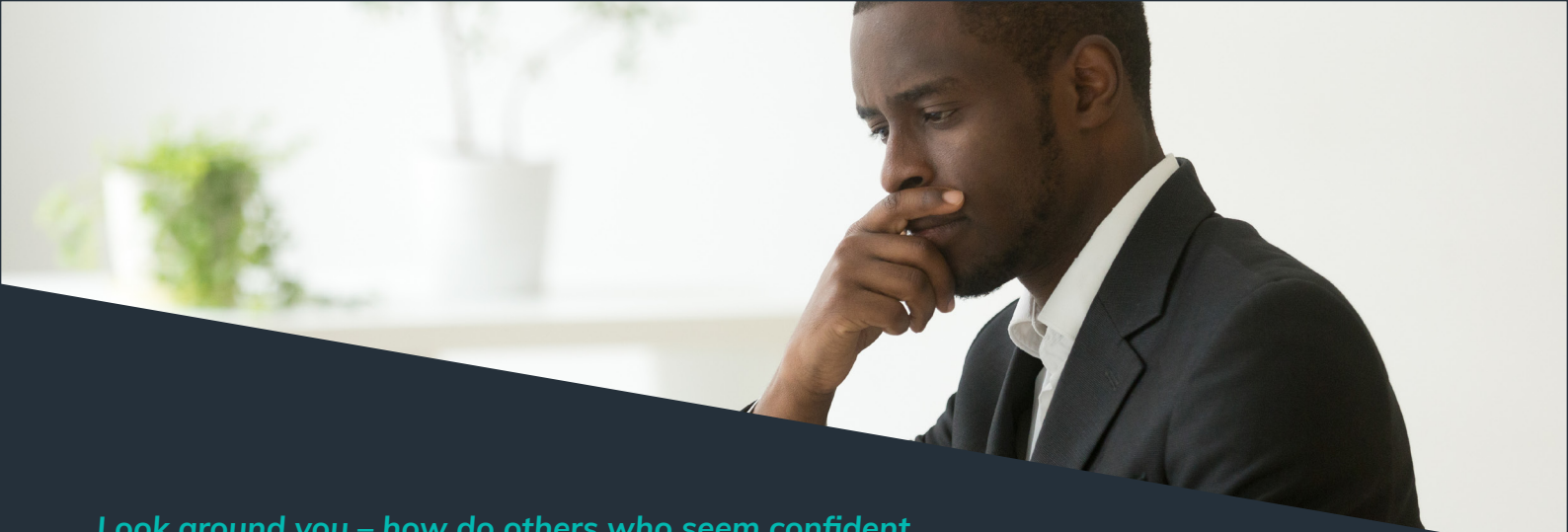
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Look around you – how do others who seem confident deal with decisions?

Dealing with Personal Workplace Confidence

There are several contributory factors that can lower your workplace confidence:

- It could be that you don't feel you have all the necessary skills to do your job, or that others around you are much more experienced.
- It could be that you are new to a team and unsure about meeting their expectations. Or maybe you're concerned about job security, or experiencing a difficult manager or colleagues?
- It could even be that you are just being very hard on yourself and continually striving for perfection.

All these components can quickly lead to decreased confidence and affect not just your general happiness, but your home life and workplace credibility. So how do you increase your confidence in the workplace?

Look around you – how do others who seem confident deal with decisions? How do they present themselves at meetings and in conversations?

Examining the fundamental traits your colleagues show will give you the first clues to understanding how they manage their confidence levels, and how you can do the same.

Why Workplace Confidence Is Important Right Now

With an increased awareness of the importance of company culture comes an increased requirement for individuals to develop their emotional intelligence in the workplace.

Emotional Intelligence includes the ethos of your company, its acceptance and encouragement of diversity and equality, the two-way transparent communication between employer and employee and morale in the organisation as a whole.

Employees who feel respected in their workplace feel more satisfied with their job, more productive and more grateful – and loyal – to the company.

So, it's essential to establish a good working environment that harnesses all these factors. And increasing individual confidence forms part of this. A confident employee will be more passionate about their work, authentic, comfortable and enthusiastic – they will be exhibiting their “true self”.

Similarly, an employer or senior manager who is confident will exhibit great leadership traits while demonstrating an ability to deal with negative situations calmly, by controlling ‘hormones’ through body language.

More on this fascinating topic later!

Benefits of Confidence at Work

Building your confidence in your workplace will develop and increase your self-worth as well as your self-esteem and highlight the value that you bring to your workplace.

When you feel confident, you will be able to make decisions and accept the consequences. This means that you will be able to accept failures more readily because you believe in yourself – your talent, capability and potential to achieve.

You will be able to give yourself credit where it's due and not shrug off compliments for your achievements. You will be able to rise to new challenges and develop your worth both in terms of self-esteem, capabilities and skills.

Lack of confidence will result in not feeling 'good enough' or 'smart enough' to accomplish given tasks. This can manifest itself in anxiety and stress and can cloud your judgement, preventing you from thinking logically.

Overcoming this will give you full control over your actions and decisions and the ability to believe you can complete the task in hand.

As your confidence levels rise, you will find you have increased motivation, increased trust in others (and yourself) to do the job, and consequently more and more confidence. Also, there is a strong correlation between high levels of self-confidence and success.

This doesn't mean you will be successful at everything you do, but it does mean that you stand more chance of being successful, and when you aren't you will be able to deal with it and move on.

So, let's dive into the twelve steps to building your workplace confidence.

12 Steps to Building Your Workplace Confidence

1. Identify Your Strengths and Weaknesses (Development Areas)

A good starting point is to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Many organisations will refer to 'weaknesses' as development areas, which is, of course, what they are.



A great way to give yourself a quick confidence boost is to consistently tick off achievements.

You can capitalise on your strengths, incorporating them into your daily routine tasks. These strengths may include traits such as having a great work ethic, being dependable or working well as part of a team. Build these into your routine and they will become habits, increasing your sense of self-worth and confidence.

Identifying your areas for improvement will allow you to work on them to increase ability – so if, for example, your communication isn't very good you could try listening to others intently, not interrupting, and thinking through your answers rather than blurting your thoughts out.

But don't obsess over weaknesses; accept that they can be defined, and with effort, overcome.

2. Tick Off Your Goals

A great way to give yourself a quick confidence boost is to consistently tick off achievements. By keeping a record of your mini goals on a day to day basis, you will have that feel-good factor when you tick completed tasks off the list.

This has a two-fold positive effect. Firstly, the act of ticking items off your list releases dopamine that gives you the feel-good factor.

Secondly, the feeling good will increase your confidence, and the act of ticking off will help you form a productive habit that will boost your self-esteem going forward.

This habit-forming process is known as self-directed learning and will act as momentum in growing your confidence.

Additionally, keeping a record of congratulatory emails from colleagues, and writing down three things that have gone well each day will also serve as self-directed learning to help you progress.

3. Practice Active Listening

Active listening is a great skill and will help you communicate more effectively with colleagues, boosting your confidence levels.

If you find yourself speaking before you've thought things through, learn to put the brakes on and engage your brain first.

By adopting a strategic approach about how and when you present your ideas, you will create the impression of being thoughtful and insightful, rather than impatient and indiscriminate.

Practise listening to colleagues' ideas without interruption, weighting logical pros and cons, and making decisions after listening to everyone's opinions.

This strategy will lead to you to confidently tackle projects and resolve conflict without acrimony. It will gain you respect amongst your colleagues, which will, in turn, increase your confidence in your abilities.

4. Break Out of Your Comfort Zone

Fear often leads us to hide in our comfort zone. Fear of failure, ridicule, or making mistakes all serve to hold back our confidence and prevent us from taking action.

But if you stay in the same place, be it mentally or physically, you will begin to stagnate. In your workplace you want to achieve more, to grow and learn and follow your career path as far as you can.

And you won't get that by playing it safe.

So, challenge yourself. Get out of that comfy place and try new things. Take on new projects and use the strengths you have to stretch yourself to achieve more.

When you take risks, you'll find you will build your confidence and feel able to tackle more.

5. Develop your Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence, or EI, has been ranked as one of **the top ten skills employees will need to have to thrive in the workplace of the future.**

So, what exactly is EI?

EI is a term gaining popularity in recent times. It is defined as the ability to recognise, understand and manage your own emotions - and recognise, understand and influence the emotions of others around you.

In practical terms, that means being self-aware – understanding how your emotions can drive behaviour and impact others (both positively and negatively) as well as learning how to manage those emotions, especially when under pressure, to achieve positive outcomes.

Now, businesses are mostly groups of people working towards a common goal. So, it's imperative that as individuals, they can manage their emotional response to situations in order to work collaboratively and help drive the business forward.

And an organisation that embraces EI will experience higher leadership, management, greater collaboration and productivity which will achieve this. In the workplace, good EI will make the difference between a happy, positive team and one where individuals are covertly looking at job adverts.

If you are a manager or leader in your organisation, showing higher EI will ensure your staff are happy, motivated and more confident in the work they are doing.



An organisation that embraces EI will experience higher leadership, management, greater collaboration and productivity which will achieve this.

A good leader with high EI will notice if an employee is a bit moody and will address it, rather than ignoring it (or even worse, not noticing it in the first place). No-one likes to believe their feelings don't count.

As an employee, EI in the workplace creates a positive experience where you will feel valued and encouraged, building your resilience and increasing your confidence to try new things and be open to new ideas.

Offering empathy and understanding to colleagues will create a respectful environment and a harmonious company culture.

6. Fake it Till You Make it

If you **feel good about your appearance**, you are likely to have more self-esteem, which will make you feel more confident.

You can boost your confidence levels by dressing smartly, and ensuring you are well-groomed. Nothing will make your confidence plummet more than turning up to an event looking scruffy and with a hairdo that gives the appearance of having been see-sawed through a hedge several times.

If you look smart, it will not only help your self-confidence, but it will influence how others see you.

And they will make sweeping judgements about you. Judgements that can result in life-changing decisions (think of an interview situation, for example) - so make sure you are giving off all the right signals.

Additionally, your body language will play a large part in these judgements as people rely heavily on nonverbal communication.

Body language is more important than you might think – in fact, **Mehrabian's findings** are that only 7% of meaning is in words that are actually spoken. So, a great deal is resting on non-verbal communication.

But did you know that you can use your body language to increase your self-confidence?

Just by changing your posture, you can increase your confidence. Do an audit of your body right now. Are you sitting or standing, arms folded or open, crossed legs?

By taking a leaf out of the animal kingdom, we can see how animals increase their confidence and power by making themselves appear larger. So, unfold your arms, uncross your legs and take up a power stance (think Wonder Woman!)

Amy Cuddy, in her **Ted Talk**, advises spending two minutes in a power stance to increase your self-confidence before an interview or important meeting.

These non-verbal communications have the power to enable the individual to think more optimistically, be more assertive and take more risks.

This is because (here comes the science part) when you assume a power stance you release testosterone (the dominance hormone) into the body which decreases the cortisone (stress hormone).

Now, influential leaders exhibit high testosterone and low cortisone – making

them the ideal candidates to make decisions, while being able to deal calmly with things that go wrong.

An experiment conducted by Amy Cuddy found that participants who held a two-minute power stance before a mock interview saw an increase of 20% in testosterone - and that's after only two minutes!

Imagine if you did this for longer, and regularly?

7. Take a Test

If you want to understand what makes you (and others) tick, and how you can build your confidence levels by understanding your motivations, you can take a personality test. These are generally untimed, stimulus-response tools that measure an individual's motivating drives and needs.

The tests are generally quick (around 5-10 minutes) and some are free online. They will give you an analysis of your personality such as how you think and interact, so you can begin to unpick behaviour that influences your confidence in a negative way and creates a more harmonious workplace.

These tests are often scarily accurate – but the great thing about them is that by taking them (especially with colleagues) you can see how you all fit into the team, and how to work in different ways with each other to get the best out of everyone. This builds trust and will see everyone grow and gain confidence.

Examples of personality tests are the **Predictive Index** (free, basic test) and the **DISC profile** (purchase only, but great for teams and shows the best ways to interact with individuals).

8. Help Others

Helping others isn't only an altruistic thing to do. It has a positive neurological effect on your brain by increasing oxytocin levels (which counteracts cortisol, the stress-producing hormone) and helps build trust.

Higher levels of oxytocin also lead to higher levels of serotonin and dopamine (mood-boosting hormones), so that's why you feel good when you've done someone else a good turn!

9. Look After Yourself

Doing things that make you happy, whatever that may be will increase your positivity and self-confidence in your organisation.

So, you may decide to go for a run, treat yourself to a meal out or even end a toxic relationship.

If you're stressed at work, take a break. Go for a walk and clear your head to give you space to think clearly.

Shift your mind shift to see yourself as worthy of these things – a shift to a positive mood will see you increase in confidence.

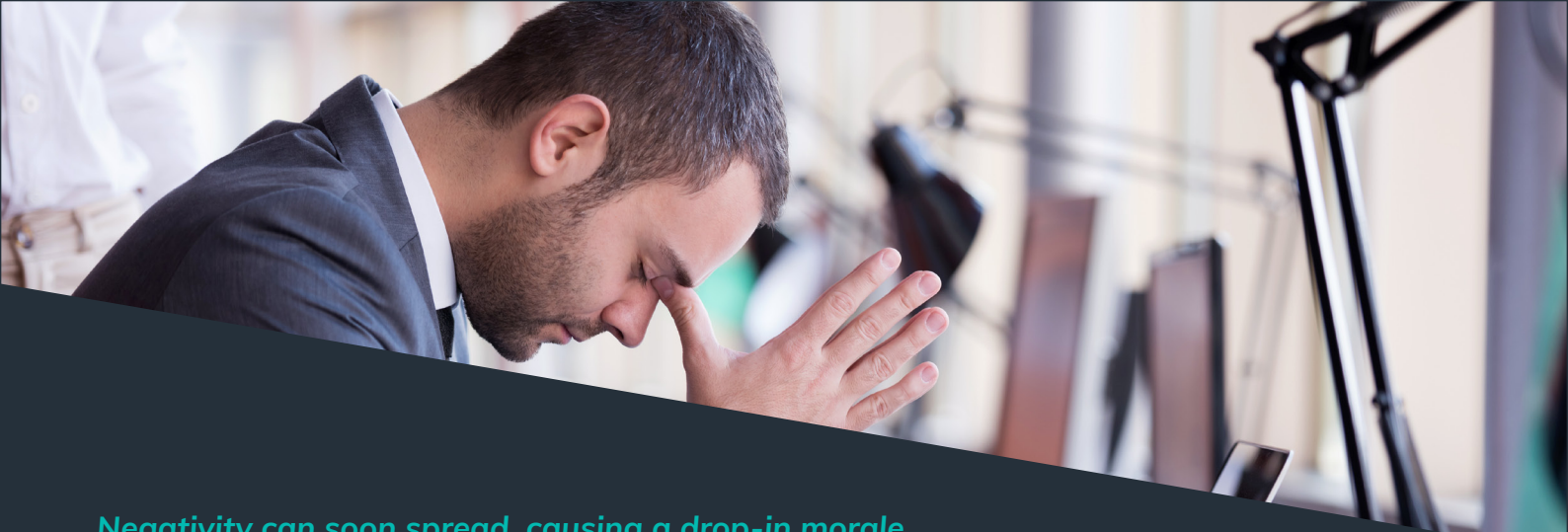
Self-awareness is the foundation for building your confidence. Practising mindfulness will help you deal with situations calmly, enjoy the current space and time, and think more rationally. In turn, your confidence will increase as your self-awareness grows.

Guided meditations are an excellent way to start – just a few minutes every day can really boost your general feelings and confidence levels. The **Headspace** app is a good starting point.

10. Limit Social Media

Once again, those pesky hormones are active when we're on social media. Every time you get a 'like' or a retweet, your brain is releasing dopamine. With no constraints, your mind soon starts to rely on these, interpreting them as positive affirmations. This inevitably leads to false positive feedback loops, making you dependent on the next 'like' or retweet for a feel-good factor. And before you know it, you're a social media addict.

If you don't get acknowledgement on social media, you start to feel down.



Negativity can soon spread, causing a drop-in morale and productivity...

So, keep social media to a minimum, recognise it for what it is, and don't become dependent on your like ratings for your confidence levels!

11. Lose the Negativity

"Knock it off with them negative waves" as Odball said in Kelly's Heroes (if you are old enough to remember that!)

It's a fact that negative words and thoughts impact on your psyche. The more you use them to describe how you feel, the more difficult it becomes for you to see anything in a positive light.

It can also have a knock-on effect across your workplace. Negativity can soon spread, causing a drop-in morale and productivity levels among colleagues. By letting yourself be overtaken by negativity, you are effectively closing the door on future opportunities.

12. Know Your Value

Don't treat yourself as if you are worth less than others in your workplace. If you learn to value yourself, your confidence will increase.

So, when someone compliments you on a piece of work or a presentation, accept it graciously and acknowledge that, yes, you did do a good job.

Don't brush aside those little things that will build your self-esteem – take the credit where it's due!

Conclusion

Developing your confidence in your organisation is about believing in yourself. It's about deciding to take a positive pathway and believe in your actions. It's also about accepting ownership if things go wrong, dealing with it calmly and moving on.

It's about **developing your mindset** – from fixed to growth, to enable you to achieve confidence through engagement; processing errors and correcting them, and embracing change.

Losing self-doubt will remove fear from decision making and allow you to develop into a role model for others - as someone with a positive, can-do attitude who is resilient and effective.

Believing you have the innate ability to overcome challenges and achieve your goals will make others see you as someone to be respected and trusted.

Staying focused, building communication, trusting yourself and relying on your personal values will help you achieve confidence in abundance – and because believing in yourself is likely to lead you to try until you do succeed, you will have the experience that creates self-efficacy; it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Confidence thrives in the right culture.

Here at Martin Veasey Talent Solutions, we have dedicated staff who can help you build a resilient, confident team that collaborates well to fulfil your organisational goals.

It's not always easy to gauge who is the right fit for your organisation at interview – our access to talent pipelines can help you source the best fit for you quickly, ensuring a confident individual who can bring benefits to the workplace.

We can offer support and guidance on all aspects of recruiting, interviewing and compiling competency-based questions to ensure you hire the right, confident people to take your organisation forward.

We can also help train your managers to be more confident when conducting interviews, to ensure they are clear and confident in their vision and communication style.

For candidates, we offer the best advice for preparing for interviews to have a positive experience.

If you aren't encouraging confidence building in your organisation, now is the perfect time to start. I'd like to leave you with a link to **4 Exercises to Boost Your Creative Confidence** to start you on your journey!



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How **Martin Veasey Talent Solutions** can help you

At Martin Veasey Talent Solutions, we have been working with blue-chip and SME businesses for over 35 years, both in the UK and around the world.

We are an independent consultancy company with highly qualified and experienced executive recruitment professionals including degree and Masters educated consultants, certified by professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the British Psychological Society and with recruitment expertise across a diverse range of industry sectors and functions. Martin Veasey Talent Solutions are also experts when it comes to recruiting and building new teams.

We have unique expertise in hiring for **interim** and permanent senior roles both in the UK and Internationally for **Board & Senior, Supply Chain & Logistics, Purchasing, Procurement & Sourcing, Manufacturing & Engineering, Pharmaceutical & Life Sciences, Sales & Marketing, Construction & Civils, Human Resources, FMCG & Retail** related opportunities.

If you are looking to work with a highly accomplished recruiting partner, you can call us on **+44 (0) 1905 381320** or email **info@martinveasey.com**

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