

Dr Rob Yeung

**HOW
TO
STAND
OUT**

**PROVEN
TACTICS FOR
GETTING
NOTICED**

“We all need to sell ourselves and this book is a great, very readable guide on how to do that. This book is full of useful career advice – and brought to life by fascinating examples and often surprising insights.”

Rhymer Rigby, writer for *The Telegraph* and *Financial Times* and author of *28 Business Thinkers Who Changed the World*

“*How to Stand Out* covers the latest evidence on body language, communication and persuasion. It’s a rigorously researched, compelling and sometimes surprising read no matter what your goals in life. You will undoubtedly learn something new.”

Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, CEO of Hogan Assessments, and Professor of Business Psychology at University College London and Columbia University

“Engaging, no-nonsense and full of scientifically proven advice – an essential book for anyone wanting to outshine the crowd and get ahead in business and life.”

Dr. Michael Sinclair, co-author of *Mindfulness for Busy People*, Founder & Clinical Director, City Psychology Group

“An easy read with some well researched, practical and evidence-backed advice. Definitely stands out from the crowd and can easily be applied straight away.”

Paul Hughes, Executive Development Director at Cranfield School of Management

“An extraordinary book for everybody: Dr Yeung’s book presents a wealth of useful tips on how to build your confidence and stand out from the crowd. This book is a treasure trove of useful tips on how to outperform in a job interview, get promoted, win more customers, get your business funded or simply become more successful in life.”

Professor Khalid Hafeez, Dean of The Claude Littner Business School at the University of West London

“Practical, accessible tips and techniques for making yourself more interesting to clients, customers, and friends!”

Tamara Box, Partner and Global Chair of the Financial Industry Group at international law firm Reed Smith LLP

“Once again, Rob Yeung demonstrates how challenge can quickly become opportunity. He has the uncanny knack of identifying our insecurities, helping us view them from a different angle and transforming them into foundation stones for building new confidence. Whether you want to learn to ‘talk like TED’, present your best side at a job interview, or simply want to stand out from the crowd – this new book offers simple, clear and practical guidance. Like his previous books, this is another example of why Dr Rob Yeung stands out from other psychologists and coaches.”

Malcolm Green, Creative Chairman at advertising agency Green Cave People

How To Stand Out

Proven Tactics for
Getting Noticed

Dr Rob Yeung



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About the Author



Dr Rob Yeung is an organizational psychologist at consultancy Talentspace, where he runs leadership development programmes for executives as well as training workshops on topics such as presentation skills, confidence, teamwork and personal productivity. He also coaches individuals and lectures to university and business school students.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In addition, he is an in-demand keynote speaker at conferences worldwide. He is frequently asked to speak on topics such as the psychology of leadership, sales success, change and high achievement. In both his consulting work and keynote speeches, he distinguishes himself by basing his recommendations on scientific research.

He is the author of over 20 books, including the bestsellers *How To Win: The Argument, the Pitch, the Job, the Race* (Capstone) and *E is for Exceptional: The New Science of Success* (Pan Books).

www.robyeung.com

www.twitter.com/robyeung

www.facebook.com/drrobeyeung

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And final thanks must go to my parents: Stephen and Judy. You have always supported and encouraged me. You have allowed me to craft my own life and career for as long as I can remember. For this and so much else, you will always have my thanks and love.

Introduction

When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.

George Washington Carver

What is it that helps some people stand out? What helps certain individuals get picked out of the crowd – to attract attention and get noticed at work, at a party, in *life*?

I'm not talking about metaphorical crowds either. How do people stand out when they are in a literal crowd, say a room full of people at a networking event all clamouring for attention?

These were the kinds of questions I was looking to answer when I went to a networking breakfast one sunny but unexpectedly cold spring morning in west London. The venue: Lala Brasserie, a glass-fronted Mediterranean restaurant by a busy intersection. I'd been told by one of the organizers that the regular meeting began at 6.45 a.m. However, when I turned up exactly on time, I was confronted by the bustle and noise of a room thronged with scores of people already deep in conversation. It turned out that, such was the desire to get talking and do deals, most people turned up at 6.30 a.m. Being almost one of the last to arrive, I had some catching up to do.

In quick succession, I met one person after the next. Marvin ran a company offering bookkeeping services. Zane was an employment

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lawyer. Serena, a designer of bespoke jewellery. There was Anastacia, who worked in foreign exchange. Thayne, an electrician. I met so many people that the names and faces began to blur.

At around 7.15 a.m. came the opportunity for everyone to address the whole room. The chairperson of the meeting – a strong-featured Irish woman with her hair pulled away from her face in a business-like manner – called for our attention. In a strident voice, she invited us to tell the room individually what we did and what we were looking for. It was our opportunity to pitch ourselves.

To keep the introductions moving swiftly, someone at the back of the room must have been sitting with a timer. A bell rang every 50 seconds – not even a full minute! – to keep people from hogging airtime.

There was a financial adviser, a landscape gardener, a virtual personal assistant, the owner of a firm of commercial cleaners. Graphic and Web designers, a guy who did something with email, a physio-therapist, a commercial property expert.

Twenty people had spoken but that wasn't even half of the people in the room. I was trying my best to pay attention but most of it simply wasn't sticking. Was Jacinta the therapist or was she something to do with charities? Who was the tall guy with curly grey hair and the glasses again? Yet still they came. More: an architect, several different kinds of lawyer, a telemarketer and a self-described "business growth engineer". For the most part, I couldn't keep track.

Many spoke too quietly to be heard in front of the 50-strong audience. A few read from scraps of paper in monotone voices without looking at the increasingly bored faces around them. Yet a few stood out.

A man with a lined face and a gravelly but sincere voice called Merik started with what the audience immediately realized were lyrics from a song: "I believe the children are our future. Teach them

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well and let them lead the way.” He paused dramatically and then said, “You know the rest.”

And of course we did. By quoting the opening lines to the well-known Whitney Houston song *The Greatest Love*, he had struck a chord with most of us and made himself instantly memorable.

He went on to say that he believed that children are the future. And that children in schools needed clean windows to be able to see properly, concentrate properly, study properly. So he asked if anyone knew of any schools that needed their windows cleaning. It was a quirky, unusual pitch for his commercial window cleaning business. And for that reason it stood out like a lighthouse on a foggy night.

Another of the small handful that stood out: Luke, a ballsy estate agent in his twenties – he looked and sounded like he could play the cheeky-but-lovable rogue on any British soap opera. He told the room how he had valued the houses of a couple of older women recently. He estimated that they could sell their houses for in excess of £1.2 million. But they had bought their houses years and years ago for around £8,000. The implication: on selling up, these women would become instant cash millionaires.

Luke joked that he didn’t know if his insurance covered him should he give an elderly lady a heart attack and the throng laughed warmly for perhaps the first time that morning. Again, he managed to distinguish himself from the crowd.

The science of standing out

Think about some of the people you know who stand out. What is it that helps them get noticed? Is it that they speak slowly and forcefully – or perhaps quickly and with acerbic humour? Do they listen and make others feel like the centre of the universe? Or do

they just radiate some kind of charm and good humour that draws others to them?

We're talking about star quality here. The reasons why one individual gets promoted again and again while others languish behind. The reasons why certain salespeople or small-business owners win new customers or clients seemingly without effort. The reasons why one person gets asked on date after date while others struggle to meet the right person.

How To Stand Out is for anyone who wants to make an impact, to get noticed for professional or personal reasons. This book is for you if you're a business owner hungry to sell more products and services – or maybe a freelance worker who needs to sell yourself. Perhaps you're a fundraiser or campaigner who needs to get your directives across more robustly, a scientist seeking to communicate

This book will help you to be more engaging, entertaining and persuasive.

your findings or a policymaker seeking to change your community. Or you yearn to socialize more easily or even find love. Through word and deed, this book will help you to be more engaging, entertaining and persuasive. It will help you to *stand out*.

Finding techniques that work

So why do *I* want to write this book?

Allow me to introduce myself by telling you what I said at that networking event back in the spring. Remember I had about 50 people watching me and I was allowed only 50 seconds. So I was speaking faster than I would normally do.

I began by saying: “Hi, I’m Rob Yeung, an organizational psychologist, which means that I develop leaders and their teams to do

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their jobs better by running workshops on leadership, team effectiveness and particular skill topics. For example, I was working on Tuesday with a corporate sales manager and his team at a growing business.

“They do most of their selling to their corporate clients face-to-face. So I was running the second of three workshops designed to help them to present better. To pitch, to get their messages across. To be more memorable and ultimately land more deals. At each session I present a few new principles then the team gets to practise by putting together and then delivering impromptu speeches.”

On that day, I gave just one example of the kind of workshop I’ve run as an organizational psychologist. Actually, I describe myself as an organizational psychologist but you could equally call me a coach, a trainer, a corporate consultant, a keynote speaker, a lecturer. I train managers. I act as a sounding board to business owners. I speak at conferences all over the world to audiences of hundreds or even thousands of people. I lecture at universities and business schools. I work with charities that want to learn to raise funds more effectively. Ultimately, I teach people techniques that will make them better in whatever their walk of life.

Of course there are many books written by consultants. But I hope I’m different from most. I completed a PhD in psychology. So I spent three solid years of doctoral research reading scientific paper after scientific paper as well as getting a few of my own research articles published in technical journals.

The main thing I learnt was the importance of systematic evidence. That we need to have *proof* about what works and what doesn’t when it comes to recommending practices and interventions that affect people’s lives.

We need to have proof about what works and what doesn’t.

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Scientists have long understood that there is something called a “placebo effect”. In medical trials, doctors have discovered they can give patients a sham treatment – such as a pill containing nothing more than common household sugar – and yet some patients will feel better.

As a result, any pharmaceutical company wishing to launch a new drug has to prove it has genuine effects over and above those of a sham treatment. In a carefully controlled experiment, some patients are given the new drug while other patients are given the sham treatment. After perhaps weeks, months or even years, researchers then measure the symptoms of those given the drug (the experimental group) against the symptoms of those given the sham treatment (the control group). Only if those in the experimental group have improved significantly more than those in the control group can the drug be considered a success.

The same test can be applied to the recommendations and rituals proposed by corporate consultants, life coaches and other alleged advisers. After all, if they say that they can change your life, shouldn't they be able to prove it?

For example, suppose you meet a friend of a friend at a party. She says that she is a hypnototherapist. It's not just standard old hypnotherapy, she explains. Hypnototherapy is a fantastic new technique which can deliver astonishing results in only a handful of hours. She says that she can hypnotize you into becoming more confident, more engaging and more credible in both your professional and personal life.

She says that it will only take three sessions. And that each session will cost £100.

You pay up. You go along to get hypnotized. And afterwards you feel pretty positive about yourself. But did it really work? Or was

it merely a sham treatment which triggered some kind of placebo effect in you? Would you perhaps have been better off spending your £300 and three hours of your time on some other form of coaching or reading books or even just sitting quietly and making plans by yourself, for instance?

In my work as an organizational psychologist, I'm a sceptic. I'm wary of gurus and advisers who claim that they can work miracles. Before recommending anything, I like to have proof. I like to read a research journal and know that a reputable group of scientists at a top university or business school has actually done a study to see what genuinely helped people. So rather than simply telling people what I feel has worked for me personally, I try as far as possible to recommend only techniques that have been revealed by researchers to work for most everyone.

Navigating through this book

So in this book I present you with proven techniques, exercises and advice. I'll show you how psychologists, economists and other scientific sleuths worked out what works and what doesn't. I'll walk you through some of their studies and include detailed references at the end of the book if you wish to follow up further.

We'll look at some of these principles and recommendations in action too. In my work as an organizational psychologist, I encounter countless fascinating and remarkable people. I work with business owners running multi-million-pound businesses, superstar salespeople and award-winning television producers. Women and men who have made a difference and who, well, stand out. And I'm grateful that many of them have imparted their stories in this very book.

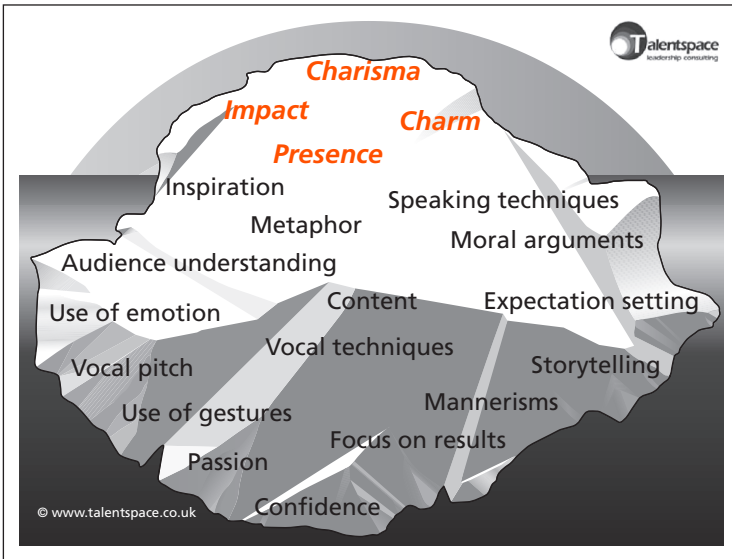
Most of these people kindly allowed me to use their real names and talk about the businesses where they work. A few asked me to alter

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a few identifying details to preserve their anonymity. But all have shared their triumphs, their mistakes and the lessons they've learnt along the way. And by hearing their real-life stories, I hope you will be inspired to try out the techniques within this book too.

What exactly is covered in the book? Allow me to give you an overview by sharing with you a picture. When I'm running workshops, I frequently put up a slide that I call the "influence iceberg". Often, we describe standout people as having charisma or influence. We say that they make an impact, that they possess charm or presence. And these form the tip of the iceberg, the visible part.

Beneath the surface, we can't see the many, many pieces that make up standout individuals. But make no mistake: there are many parts indeed that can be analysed, understood and learnt – and it is these that we will be scrutinizing in this book.



I've structured the book into four main chapters and a conclusion. Here's what's in each and why.

Chapter 1: Boosting Self-belief and Debunking the Confidence Con

We'll start in Chapter 1 on the topic of self-belief. It may sound obvious to say that in order for others to believe in you, you need to believe in yourself. You can't stand out and impress the world unless you have a fairly decent opinion of yourself, right?

Not necessarily. It turns out that the truth is more complex than that. Many standout people actually don't have bucket loads of confidence and I'll tell you some of their surprising stories: a sales manager who hates selling, a business founder wracked by self-doubt, a public relations guru who fears public speaking. However, they all *appear* to be confident, accomplished individuals. They *seem* as if they are able to do great things; and that outward demeanour is often enough to carry them through to great things. So in Chapter 1 we will explore this seeming contradiction – what I call the confidence con – and delve into the secret psychology of becoming more confident.

But allow me to jump ahead for a moment to the good news: there are proven mental manoeuvres that we can all use to feel more confident – some of which take *only seconds* to put into practice. Yes, you read that right. Whether at work or play, there are things we can do ever so quickly that can help us to appear more professional, capable and persuasive to those around us.

Many standout people actually don't have bucket loads of confidence.

Chapter 2: Persuading through Body Language and Nonverbal Communication

You can sometimes spot standout individuals even before they've opened their mouths to speak. There's definitely something about their stance, the way they move, the way they lock eyes with people around them. So in Chapter 2, we will examine the psychology of

nonverbal communication. Body language encompasses how we move our bodies and use our hands as well as our facial expressions. But nonverbal communication is body language plus everything about our voices – such as our pacing, loudness and pitch.

When it comes to making an impact, should we speak quickly or slowly? If our aim is to appear more charismatic, should we gesture with our hands more or less? Or is it the type of gestures that make the difference? These questions – and more – will be tackled in this chapter.

A lot has been written about body language which is frankly rubbish.

A lot has been written about body language which is frankly rubbish. So I'll tell you about some of the most recent findings by scientists at the forefront of this field. And we'll learn that even turning your hands palms up or palms down can have different effects on the people around you.

Chapter 3: Winning with Words

In our third chapter, we'll continue our journey by looking at the words, phrases and other verbal tricks that standout people use to make themselves unforgettable and persuasive. What do superstar speakers – ranging from presidents and prime ministers to chief executives and even religious leaders – actually say?

We'll examine how people use tools such as metaphor, visionary statements, autobiographical stories and moral arguments to craft more memorable missives. We'll also take a long look at how speakers can deploy emotions – such as pride and shame, excitement and fear, for instance – to nudge people into action.

When should you use the word “I” rather than the word “we”? And when should you talk about “thinking” as opposed to “feeling”?

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These may seem tiny, trivial distinctions. But we'll look at forensic studies demonstrating that even subtle changes of wording can sometimes make a real difference.

In this, the longest chapter in the book, we'll explore both academic studies and real-world examples of how superstar orators, entrepreneurs, salespeople and captains of industry use verbal techniques to help their messages hit home. For example, we'll see how a badly worded email cemented the downfall of one of the most successful companies of the 21st century. And we'll discover how the cheesy saying "If you can believe, you can achieve" may just have merit after all.

Even subtle changes of wording can sometimes make a real difference.

Chapter 4: Augmenting Performance through Passion

When I first floated the idea of a book about standout individuals to friends, colleagues and clients, I heard occasional concerns: the book would be about the triumph of style over substance. It would simply teach people to promote themselves and suck up attention even if they didn't have the underlying skills or capabilities to back anything up.

One of my clients wondered: "Doesn't the notion of standing out play into the hands of self-promoters who talk a good game but never produce the goods?"

But most stellar individuals make their mark because they manage to deliver results, because they're actually good at their jobs. And Chapter 4 will focus squarely on how people stand out by doing sensational work and making things happen.

Most stellar individuals make their mark because they manage to deliver results.

Here's another way of putting it: the first three chapters will look at inspiring and moving others. But this fourth chapter will concentrate

on how people inspire and move themselves, as studies tell us that people who enjoy what they do tend to perform better than those who don't. So how can all of us find a place in the world that allows us to feel that little bit more enthusiastic about our working lives?

Conclusions: Onwards, Upwards and Over to You

By the time we near the end of our excursion, we will have scrutinized dozens of research studies conducted by the brightest minds on the planet; we will have delved into the lives of many fascinating individuals. You will be armed with enough tools and techniques to keep you busy for months.

But this book isn't meant to be a dry, academic tome to be read and then set aside, never to be picked up again. I really hope this is a book you will use. That you will apply the principles and practices to overhaul how you use language and behave. That you will think more deeply about the audiences you will address. That you will interact with people in ways that will allow you to be influential and effective.

So in this final section of the book, we'll look at how to take those techniques and recommendations and translate them into a plan of action. I won't have done my job unless you decide to do something differently.

But I'm talking about the end of the book and we haven't really begun yet. So let us start at the beginning by looking at the conundrum of confidence. Why does telling yourself to calm down not work? Why should you sit down to write an essay before your next job interview or a hot date? And how could understanding that your skull isn't made of glass help you to appear more confident and persuasive?

I really hope this is a book you will apply.

1

Boosting Self-belief and Debunking the Confidence Con

I learnt that courage was not the absence of fear,
but the triumph over it.
Nelson Mandela

Could you get turned down dozens of times every day, week after week after week, year after year?

I couldn't. In fact, when I was at university and needed a temporary job, I tried my hand at telephone sales.

I lasted one day.

But that's the reality of life for most salespeople. And that's why it takes bundles of confidence to approach dozens or maybe even hundreds of people every single day and get knocked back by most of them.

Permit me to introduce you to a dogged sales manager I'll call Julia Kryger. I clearly remember the first time we met because I wondered if she might be trouble. I was running a workshop – the first of five leadership development boot camps – and she was one of the half-dozen senior managers I was working with.

Nearly everyone else in the workshop seemed chatty, friendly, engaged. They listened attentively as I presented. They reflected on the questions I asked them. They took part in the discussions and raised sensible queries. But not Kryger.

She sat with her legs crossed, checked her smartphone every few minutes and said almost nothing. With her tanned, athletic frame and North American accent, I imagined she was probably a cheerleader or even a mean girl at school. She came across as aloof, tough and iron-lady confident. I wondered if she might be a sceptic, thinking she already knew it all or didn't believe that leadership was a teachable discipline.

Fast forward nearly a year and she laughed warmly as I shared my recollections of my first impressions of her.

“If you were to do a survey of my colleagues, they would probably say that I'm one of the most confident people in the business. They would describe me as really ambitious, confident, on it, quite matter of fact, very business oriented, just like a bulldozer,” she told me.

Kryger is Head of International Sales for a UK-based “audience technology” start-up. The fledgling business uses clever algorithms to help advertisers target people online. Within the space of just over a year, she has already recruited a sales squad of three people who report to her and she has landed deals with top brands, including Adidas, British Airways, Volkswagen and Marriott Hotels, to the tune of £2 million. She's the youngest person on the management board too. Not bad for a 28-year-old.

“I say this not to toot my own horn but I do feel I’ve excelled really quickly. I’ve moved up the ranks pretty quickly and on minimal experience,” she said.

She had just got back from a business trip to Germany where she and her boss were pitching to a major advertiser. She was in France and the Netherlands not long before that too. Clearly, she’s the kind of strong-willed individual who just loves high pressure and landing big deals, right?

“Even [my boss] said this to me: ‘You must love presenting in front of a room full of people. You’re like this power woman. You eat people alive.’”

But it’s an impression that conceals an emotional battle raging secretly within her. Only a handful of her closest compatriots know that she has wrestled greatly with fear, suffered overwhelming panic attacks and has even sought medical help for anxiety-related health issues.

“There are people that mask anxiety really well and others that cower and hide and I’m definitely one of those people that puts on a face when I walk in the door at work,” she admitted.

There are people that mask anxiety really well and others that cower and hide.

Kryger experienced her first panic attack three months into her current role. Ironically, her boss had that day told her how proud he was of her rapid success. He had initially set her a target of bringing in £25,000 of revenue and she had brought in over £50,000.

In celebration, she went shopping for a new pair of jeans in Top Shop when she suddenly noticed that she felt really “spaced out”. She rushed home with the sense that something terrible was