

# LEAD WITH GREATER CONFIDENCE

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**A**n article in Nature Neuroscience led by Benedetto De Martino, a cognitive neuroscientist in the field of decision-making and neuroeconomics, states that the brain has direct links between knowing what you want and the ability to express it. His research demonstrated that the more confident a person was in his or her ideas, the more likely they were to maintain those beliefs over time. These deep-seated principles led to a capacity to speak with greater conviction.

Conviction and confidence in how you communicate does not guarantee success. But the lack of both almost always guarantees failure – especially when it comes to leadership. It’s a personal and deep-seated belief that compels individuals to move forward despite doubt and cynicism. Conviction drives decision making, promises action, tolerates risk, and overcomes doubt. It doesn’t always happen immediately but progresses over time through both positive and negative experiences.

## **STEVE JOBS – A MAN OF CONFIDENCE AND CONVICTION**

I use Steve Jobs as example quite often in my coaching and teaching. The reason is simple, he was a visionary and revolutionary leader who exemplified confidence and conviction. Here was a man who often was the smartest guy in the room. But he often camouflaged his intelligence with emotion when he spoke. He introduced ideas and products never before seen or considered; we are living the result of his conviction today.

When Jobs introduced the iPod, he didn’t talk about hardware and software. He talked about the prospect of having a thousand songs in your pocket. It was delivered in language that was easy to follow, packed with emotion, and translated easily from speaker to listener.

Jobs’ communication tactics were straightforward. The smartest guy in the room did not communicate in facts and figures. He did so with simplicity, energy, and above all, conviction. When you integrate those three qualities—simple tones, creativity, and emotion—nothing is lost. They can absorb all of it, and the ideas behind your speech will stick.

## **CHOOSE YOUR WORDS – AND ACTIONS - WISELY**

Why would anyone follow you up a mountain, onto the playing field, or into the line of fire if you use weak words? Why would people buy what you are selling? In order to become a leader, project strength. That strength should be communicated, first and foremost, via the quality of the words you choose.

But speaking with conviction is far more than choosing quality (not filler) words. It is also expressed in actions and reactions. More than a century ago, the philosopher Thomas Carlyle said, “Conviction is worthless unless it’s converted into conduct.” Ask most serial entrepreneurs about the start-up challenges they confront, and they’ll likely agree with Carlyle’s base assumption. Start-ups require the three Cs: courage, capital, and conviction. You need all three to succeed

as an entrepreneur, but each works in different ways. Courage is felt, capital is raised, but conviction must be demonstrated in order to be of value.

## **YOUR TURN**

Confidence and conviction go hand-in-hand. Whether you're giving a keynote address to hundreds of professionals or leading your team of four – your ability to lead with confidence and conviction will determine how successful you are. Consider these tips for increasing your confidence:

### **Know how you truly feel about an idea or position.**

Take the time to work through different concepts before presenting those ideas to those around you. Do your research and really understand why you feel the way you do.

### **Avoid “filler” or empty words that don't communicate anything.**

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### **Always consider your audience.**

What's motivating them? What are they most likely concerned with? The more you seek to understand those you are communicating with, the more successful you'll be in crafting how to deliver your thoughts.

**Don't be afraid of incorporating emotion.** We are not only thinking beings, but first and foremost feeling beings who need connection.

### **When you speak, choose your words carefully.**

Our words won't always be interpreted as we intend – a reality that has resulted in disastrous results for some.

Over-confidence can cause self-inflicted harm and ruin a company; however, conviction and healthy confidence are essential ingredients to effective leadership. Don't fear it. Use it as a tool for self-improvement and professional development. Learn more by visiting [chuckgarcia.com](http://chuckgarcia.com).



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A 25-year veteran of Wall Street, he spent 14 years in sales and marketing at Bloomberg in a variety of leadership positions. He was Director of Business Development at BlackRock Solutions, an arm of the world's largest investment manager, and was a Managing Director at Citadel, a prestigious alternative investment manager.

He is also a mountaineer and has climbed some of the world's tallest peaks, including Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Elbrus, the Matterhorn, as well as mountains in Alaska and the Andes.