

● Practice Playbook

Speak Up, Stand Out | Public Speaking Practice Lab

Summer Alexander, M.A. | summeralexander.com

Section 01 | The IMPACT Framework

Prep With Purpose

Run through these six elements before any important conversation, meeting, or presentation. Even 90 seconds of prep changes how you show up.

I

Intention

What do I want them to KNOW, FEEL, or DO?

Define your outcome before you open your mouth. This is what keeps you from rambling.

M

Message

What is my core point in one sentence?

If you can only say one thing, what is it? Write it before you speak it.

P

People

Who is in the room and what matters most to them right now?

P is the thinking you do before you walk in. Understand their priorities, pressures, and what is in it for them. This is your audience analysis.

A

Authority

What qualifies my voice in this conversation?

Know the value you bring before you speak. Your track record, your expertise, your vantage point. These are your credibility. You do not need to perform confidence when you are grounded in what you actually know.

C

Connection

How will I say out loud that I understand their world?

C is when you execute on P. You have done the audience analysis. Now you say it explicitly in the room: 'I know we have been focused on X. This directly addresses that.' One sentence. Do not leave it implied.

T

Takeaway

What is my specific ask or closing question?

End with direction. A specific request, a decision point, or a question that keeps things moving. Do not fade out.

P vs C: the key distinction

P is the thinking before you walk in. C is the sentence you say out loud in the room. You cannot do C well without P. But P without C is wasted preparation.

Quick Prep | Use before your next meeting

Intention: What do I want them to know, feel, or do?

Message: My core point in one sentence:

People: Who is in the room and what matters most to them?

Authority: What qualifies my voice in this conversation?

Connection: How will I say out loud that I understand their world?

Takeaway: My specific ask or closing question:

Section 02 | What, So What, Now What

Your Message Formula

Use this every time you need to communicate an idea, update, or ask. In meetings, emails, and presentations. Lead with the point, not the backstory.

WHAT?

Your core idea or observation.
State it first. Do not build up to it.

SO WHAT?

The significance.
Why does this matter to your audience? Why now? Make the relevance explicit.

NOW WHAT?

The call to action.
What specific step should they take next? Do not end without a clear ask.

Example: "Our onboarding is running 3 weeks behind." **(What)** "This delays Q2 targets by an estimated 12%." **(So What)** "I need 30 minutes with leadership this week to align on a fix." **(Now What)**

My speaking moment: What meeting or conversation am I preparing for?

What? My core idea in one sentence:

So what? Why this matters to them:

Now what? What I am asking them to do:

Section 03 | Scenario Cheat Sheets

Your Toolkit for Real Workplace Moments

Keep these with you. Each scenario covers what tends to go wrong and the moves that work.

Round 01 | Pitch It

The situation: You have an idea to bring to leadership or your manager. You have 90 seconds to make your case.

What goes wrong: Leading with all the context before stating the idea. Over-explaining. Ending without a clear ask.

What works:

- Open with your What. State the idea first, in one sentence.
- Follow immediately with your So What. Why does this matter right now?
- Close with your Now What. One specific ask.
- Practice saying it out loud before the moment comes.

My pitch: Use What, So What, Now What to plan it:

Round 02 | Under Pressure

The situation: You are presenting and someone asks a tough, unexpected question.

What goes wrong: Rushing to answer before you have thought it through. Saying too much. Losing your place.

What works:

- Pause before you respond. Two seconds of silence signals confidence.
- Acknowledge the question. 'That is a fair question' buys you a breath and builds rapport.
- Answer what you know. 'I do not have that right now but I will follow up by end of day' is a complete, credible answer.
- Return to your point: 'Coming back to what I was sharing...'

Phrases to keep handy:

"That is a fair question. Let me make sure I give you an accurate answer."

"I do not have that detail right now but I will follow up today."

"Let me come back to that at the end. I want to finish this point first."

Round 03 | The Skeptic

The situation: You are sharing a proposal and someone pushes back hard. You need to hold your ground without getting defensive.

What goes wrong: Getting defensive. Abandoning your point to avoid conflict. Over-explaining to convince over listening to understand.

What works:

- Validate without surrendering: 'I hear you. Can you help me understand which part concerns you most?'
- Anchor back to evidence: 'The reason I am confident in this is [data/experience]. That is what is driving my recommendation.'
- Invite them in: 'What would need to be true for this to work for you?' This shifts from debate to problem-solving.
- Know when to table it: 'Let us take this offline and get the right people in the room.'

Plan It Before It Happens

Pick one real speaking moment coming up in the next two weeks. Use both frameworks to map it out completely. Write it. Say it out loud at least once before you walk into that room.

The moment: What is the meeting, conversation, or presentation?

Who is in the room? Who are you speaking to and what do they care about?

Impact Prep

Intention: What do I want them to KNOW, FEEL, or DO?

Message: My core point in one sentence:

People: What matters most to them right now?

Authority: What qualifies my voice in this conversation?

Connection: How will I say out loud that I understand their world?

Takeaway: What am I asking them to do at the end?

My Message Formula

What? My core idea in one sentence:

So what? Why this matters to them:

Now what? What I am asking them to do:

After: How did it go?

What went well that I want to repeat:

One thing I would do differently next time:

Section 05 | Your Action Plan

Small Steps. Consistent Reps.

You do not need to be ready for the big moment to start building the skill. Every meeting is a rep. Every update is a rep. The goal is one intentional choice per day.

My Commitment:

"I will focus on _____ during my next _____
to achieve _____."

This week, I will:

☐

Choose one upcoming meeting and run through IMPACT before it (even 2 minutes counts).

☐

Write a What, So What, Now What before I send my next speaking moment.

☐

Notice one moment where I held back. Ask: what would I say if I knew it would land?

Notes: What am I taking away from today?

Section 06 | Resources + Next Steps

Offerings developed by Summer Alexander to support your leadership journey:

FREE

Leadership Influence Style Assessment

leaderinfluencestyle.com

A short assessment that identifies your influence style and where to build. Good starting point for understanding how others experience your communication.

FREE

Influence Map

yourinfluencemap.com

A free app to map your influence strategy for any stakeholder or situation. Useful for preparing high-stakes conversations and understanding who you need to align.

PAID

Everyday Presentation Planner

everydaypresentationplanner.com

A planning tool for everyday workplace speaking moments. Pairs directly with IMPACT and What, So What, Now What to help you show up prepared.

PAID

Saturday Sessions: Public Speaking Practice Lab

summeralexander.com/saturday-sessions

A monthly live practice lab, capped at 15 participants. Each session covers a different skill set. You were just here. Come back next month.

PAID

The Public Speaking Playbook

summeralexander.com/public-speaking-coaching

A 3-month 1:1 coaching program. Three phases: Clarity, Presence, and Influence. We work on your real presentations and the specific moments where your voice needs to carry more weight.

PREMIUM

Public Speaking VIP Day

summeralexander.com/public-speaking-vip-day

A private, in-person full-day coaching experience in Dallas, TX. Six focused hours on message architecture, delivery, and tough Q&A.; Includes a pre-session strategy call and post-session integration call.

About Summer Alexander: Summer Alexander is a Public Speaking and Leadership Coach helping leaders communicate with confidence and lead with influence.

summeralexander.com
saturday-sessions.com
linkedin.com/in/summeralexander