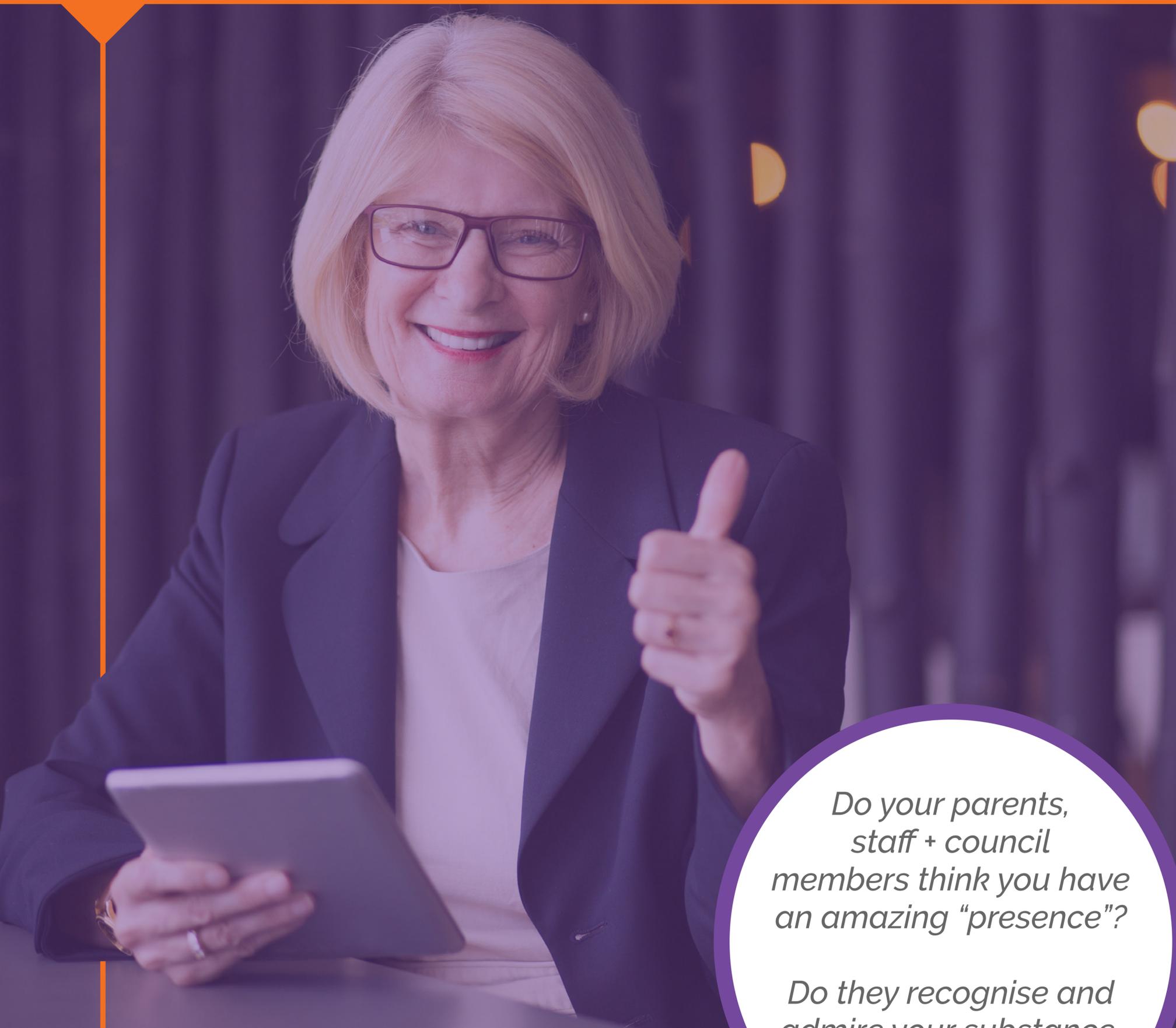


MASTERING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™ DO YOU HAVE IT?



*Do your parents,
staff + council
members think you have
an amazing "presence"?*

*Do they recognise and
admire your substance,
character and style?*

YOUR PERSONAL
INSURANCE POLICY

Thankfully, we are seeing more and more focus on the importance of leadership development and learning programmes designed for principals, aspiring deputy principals and leadership teams of schools in Australia and around the world.

All of these programmes address the importance of the principal's and their leadership team's school community relationships but most don't break it down or dive deeply into understanding what are beneficial and influential relationships, how school leaders can measure and assess the quality of their relationships, what actions they can take to better - and master - them and the impact this will have on everybody's success. Not least of all, that of the principal's.

So the first honest question principals and leaders need to ask themselves is - do you have school relationships that are contributing or constraining?

If there are any questions marks with your Board, teachers, staff, students, parents or alumni around this or positive connectedness, influence, loyalty, common purpose, harmony, mutual respect, cooperation, behaviour standards, healthy communication, alignment of direction, understanding and acceptance, to name but a few, you have some work to do. There are few that don't.

The greatest compliment any principal or leader can receive is being told that they have 'presence'.

But what is that?



WE ALL TALK ABOUT PEOPLE HAVING 'PRESENCE' BUT IT IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE AND EVEN HARDER TO MEASURE AND EMULATE IT.

WE HAVE ALL HEARD COMMENTS LIKE, "YOU JUST KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT" OR "HE/SHE HAS JUST GOT IT", WHATEVER 'IT' IS?!

Perhaps its depth and multi-faceted nature make it difficult to define.

According to [Forbes](#), corporate executive presence is "the ability to project gravitas – confidence, poise under pressure and decisiveness" as well as "communication – including speaking skills, assertiveness and the ability to read an audience or situation – and appearance."

The [Bates Model of Executive Presence](#) states that it is as much about the personal qualities of leaders and their knowledge. They win a loyal following and bind colleagues and collaborators to their mission.

Presence is about you: how you are perceived and your impact or influence when engaging with others.

The corporate world very clearly understands the power of investing in and developing their executives' presence. It is estimated that corporates spend \$50 billion each year on leadership development.

But how often do we talk about developing good Principal Presence™? How much has been invested in developing school principals and their 'presence'? The leader of the school is often a lonely role and most likely has not received the equivalent benefit to those in the corporate world in professional leadership development.

THIS IS A CONCERN BECAUSE EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS AND EXEMPLARY PRINCIPALS ARE UNDERPINNED BY PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™.

We are all witnessing the power of unhappy parents and alumni who expertly use news and social media to mount campaigns against principals and/or school councils and leadership teams.

Perhaps the 2018 trouble at Melbourne's Trinity Grammar will enter the text books as a case study of this. After at least four weeks of news coverage the school had its fine reputation decimated. The human cost culminated in school council resignations, governance reviews and, ultimately the unplanned departure of the headmaster.

THE NEGATIVE OPINIONS PARENTS HOLD IN ALL AREAS OF PRINCIPALS' PERFORMANCE NO LONGER RESIDE AS AN INTERNAL, SCHOOL COMMUNITY ISSUE. IT IS NOW OPEN TO THE 'COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION', FRONT AND CENTRE OF THE NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

It will not get better and will get worse. As school community members see the 'successful' results of public campaigns mounted, sadly, the more we will see principals attacked in the most public of ways.

The dimensions and facets of recognised Principal Presence™ go a very long way towards mitigating this and form part of a principal's personal insurance policy.



THE FOCUS IS ON YOU, IN BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE DIMENSIONS. HOW DO YOU MANAGE THE ACCOLADES REALISTICALLY AND SAFEGUARD THE NEGATIVE DIMENSIONS?



In the corporate world, time and money is spent on the professional development and training of CEOs and leaders, as a critical success factor for the company.

It should be no different for school principals (and their leadership teams). At the very least understanding a principal's 'presence' with all members of the school community is good common sense. It can also be key in effective and strong leadership leading to an exemplary school with strong stakeholder approval, support and trust – a safer position to hold against negativity that can lead to public attack.

INCREASINGLY, PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATIONS ARE OFFERING LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES. IT IS TIME FOR PRINCIPALS OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, SUPPORTED BY BOARDS AND COUNCILS, TO SERIOUSLY INVEST IN PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™ AND TO BUILD RECOGNITION, ADMIRATION, INFLUENCE AND, IMPORTANTLY, TRUST.

EXUDING GOOD PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™ DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO BE THE SMARTEST OR MOST EXPERIENCED PRINCIPAL IN THE ROOM TO QUALIFY.

Understanding the meaning of and the psychology behind Principal Presence™ will help principals to be perceived by parents, staff and other stakeholders as having good character, substance and style.

Good character and substance will attract positive stakeholder perception and recognition of a principal's wisdom, composure and the capacity to connect with people.

And a good principal 'style' will be perceived as a readiness to engage frequently with energy, honesty and openness.

These are the foundations/pillars of Principal Presence™. Principals who understand these will not only have a solid body of new knowledge but also a personal insurance policy to engage their stakeholders, to align goals and to inspire people in their school community to act.

Importantly, they will also have their community's trust, at the deepest level, if there are challenging issues which arise – inevitably – that may challenge this and which require a calm approach.

MISTAKENLY, MOST PEOPLE ASSUME THAT ONLY PRINCIPALS WHO ARE GOOD COMMUNICATORS WILL ACHIEVE A GOOD PRESENCE AND, WHILST THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT COMMUNICATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF LEADERSHIP PRESENCE (BECAUSE GREAT COMMUNICATORS MAKE GREAT CONNECTIONS), THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™.

Principal Presence™ has 15 different facets of principals' behaviour under the strategic dimensions of Character, Substance and Style that principals need to understand to achieve their own successful 'presence'.

The science of the internationally recognised [Bates Executive Presence Model](#), which underpins Principal Presence™, is based on the **perception of others** - parents, staff, school council members, students - and the way they 'perceive' that their principal behaves.

Of course, their perception is also their reality.

PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™ HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN AUSTRALIA BY RECOGNISED INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT, SAM ELAM, FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH PRINCIPALS AND HER SUCCESSFUL ACCREDITATION ASSESSING PRESENCE USING THE [BATES EXPI™\(EXECUTIVE PRESENCE INDEX\)](#) WHICH SHE STUDIED IN BOSTON, USA.

BY THE TIME TEACHERS RISE TO BECOME DEPUTY PRINCIPALS, PRINCIPALS, AND THEY ARE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR EXCELLENCE AS EDUCATORS AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATION, BUT NOW THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE ADMIRER FOR THEIR PRESENCE.

YOUR PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™ ASSESSMENT

BELOW IS A BRIEF CHECKLIST OF A PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™ ASSESSMENT. THESE ARE A SELECTED FEW FROM THE 15 MEASURABLE BEHAVIOURAL FACETS OF PERCEPTION, AND THE JUDGEMENTS MADE OF A PRINCIPAL BY THEMSELVES, BOARD MEMBERS, PARENTS, STAFF, ALUMNI AND/OR STUDENTS.

SUBSTANCE

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTION OF YOUR CREDIBILITY, YOUR VISION AND WISDOM IN LEADING THE SCHOOL – IT IS CULTIVATED QUALITIES OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT SPECIFIC TO A LEADER WHICH INSPIRE COMMITMENT, INFORM ACTION AND LEAD TO ‘ABOVE AND BEYOND’ EFFORT.

- Do you know how your qualities of leadership are perceived?
- Do they indicate the depth of your thinking, the richness of your vision and the quality of your judgement?
- Do they see that you display highly honed qualities of insight that get to the heart of issues and produce prudent decisions?

STYLE

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR DRIVING EXECUTION THROUGH THE ACTIVE, ITERATIVE QUALITIES OF COMMUNICATIVE LEADERSHIP THAT BUILD MOTIVATION AND SHAPE AND SUSTAIN PERFORMANCE

- Do you know how your overt manner would be described when you engage, interact or express yourself?
- Do you possess intentionality? – clarifying direction, keeping actions aligned and on track without shutting down dissent or neglecting needs to readjust course?

CHARACTER

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO INSPIRE AND GAIN STAKEHOLDER TRUST. THEY ARE THE QUALITIES WHICH ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE PRINCIPAL AS A PERSON TO HIS/HER IDENTITY, THAT GIVE STAKEHOLDERS REASON TO TRUST THEM AND GIVE THEM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.

- Do you know how your stakeholders perceive your human qualities that anchor your values and define you?
- Do you demonstrate concern by showing an interest in others, encouraging adaptive development and promoting a healthy, sustainable culture?
- Do they see your restraint illustrated by a calm disposition characterised by reason and by avoidance of emotional extremes or impulsiveness?



SAM ELAM,
*Managing
Director of Media
Manoeuvres*

Sam Elam, Managing Director of School Manoeuvres (a division of Media Manoeuvres Pty Ltd), is recognised as an issues and crises media and stakeholder communications expert for independent schools and founder of the Principal Presence™ assessment and coaching programme in Australia.

Sam developed the new Principal Presence™ programme following extensive experience working one on one with principals in Australia underpinned by her international Bates ExPI™ (Executive Presence Index) accreditation.

As founder and Managing Director of Media Manoeuvres, Sam has been involved in the communications, presentation skills, publishing and media fields for the past 25 years.

When it comes to principal 'presence', Sam's experience observing principals' stakeholder and media engagement, particularly when issues or critical incidents occur, gave her an unique insight into the often overwhelming expectations placed on a school leader.

This forged a passion and desire in Sam to assist independent school principals not only in communications planning, training and management in times of issues and crises but also in the big picture of establishing a congruent and powerful principal 'presence' and mastering better school community relationships.

Sam has won numerous communications industry awards, is a member of Melbourne's RMIT course advisory committee, a keynote speaker workshop facilitation at principals' conferences and an accredited workplace coach and trainer.

PRINCIPAL PRESENCE® PROVIDES NEW SOURCES OF SELF-PERCEPTION, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE COMPLEX, DEMANDING AND ULTIMATELY REWARDING ROLE OF PRINCIPAL IN AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL. IT IS YOUR PERSONAL INSURANCE POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING ATTACK BY SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY WITHIN THE SCHOOL GROUNDS AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING YOUR PRINCIPAL PRESENCE™?

NEXT STEPS

THIS IS A GOOD START:

Read more in the white paper, *Conceptualizing and Measuring Executive Presence* authored by Bates Communications in America. The Bates model underpins the Principal Presence™ programme.

Review any 360 assessments you have done with your school stakeholders and identify alignment and any gaps in self-perception versus their perception. The latter requires some adaptive behaviour.

Ask Sam Elam about how you assess your Principal Presence™ with some or all of your school stakeholders; parents, teachers, students and/or Board members.