

A FIELD GUIDE

The First 30 Seconds

The senior room forms its verdict on you in the first thirty seconds, **before your content has had a chance to matter**. Not on what you say. On how you arrive. Here is how to make those seconds work for you, drawn from the SIGNAL framework I use with leaders across the Caribbean and beyond.

01

Before you open your mouth

STEADINESS · GRAVITY

- **Own the room, don't enter it.** Arrive early enough that the space is yours before the audience arrives. You cannot command a room you are still catching up to.
- **Set your feet.** Stillness reads as authority. Motion reads as nerves. Plant, and let the room settle around you.
- **Take one breath before the first word.** The pause is not empty. It is the first thing that tells the room you are in control of the moment, not chased by it.

02

Your first line

INTENTIONALITY · NARRATIVE

- **Lead with the position, not the backstory.** The room wants to know where you are taking them before it wants your history. Say where you are going, then earn it.
- **Cut the throat-clear.** No "thanks for having me, so, basically." Your first sentence is the most expensive one you will say all day. Do not spend it apologising for taking the floor.
- **Say the headline.** One clear line the room could repeat afterward. If they can carry it out the door, you have landed.

03

How you land the open

LANDING

- **End on a full stop, not a trail-off.** Finish your first thought cleanly. A sentence that fades invites the room to fill the silence for you.
- **Hold the eye contact one beat longer than is comfortable.** That single beat is the difference between being heard and being followed.
- **Then let the silence do the work.** Composure is the loudest thing in the room. Trust it.

Before your next high-stakes room, run this.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ I arrived early enough to own the space. | ☐ My first sentence is not an apology. |
| ☐ My feet are planted. I am still. | ☐ I will pause before I begin. |
| ☐ I have my one headline line ready. | ☐ I will end my open on a full stop. |

The full work is one live day.

The Boardroom Voice — holding the room when the audience is senior.

Take your seat