Step 1: Self-Belief and Confidence

“Confidence can get you where you want to go, and getting there is a daily process. It’s so much easier when you feel good about yourself, your abilities and talents.”

Donald Trump

Why do you need self-belief and confidence?

The first step in selling yourself is developing self-belief and confidence. For someone else to believe in you, you must first believe in yourself.

As former President Lyndon B. Johnson put it, “You’ve got to believe in what you are selling. What convinces is conviction. You simply have to believe in the argument you are advancing; if you don’t, you’re as good as dead. The other person will sense that something isn’t there.”
How this chapter will help you develop self-belief and confidence

Learn how to develop your self-belief and confidence, including:

Finding your self-belief:
- Set your target
- Understand your qualities
- Think through your business values
- Define your Unique Selling Points (USPs)

Displaying confidence:
- Project positive body language
- Make eye contact
- Smile warmly
- Stay calm under pressure
- A virtuous cycle

Finding your self-belief

There can be no substitute for genuine self-belief and there is nothing more compelling than confidence. Yet it is a myth that most people are confident. The majority of people would like to feel more sure of themselves. Generally, people feel self-assured in some situations and not in others. For example, people who are confident at making a business presentation may be shy at a party; people who are confident when asking someone on a date may be nervous at a job interview.
Also, confidence is not something you are born with or without. You can nurture and develop it through the right mind-set.

The following exercises will help you develop self-belief and confidence by identifying your target, your qualities, your business values and by revealing your Unique Selling Points (USPs).

**Set your target**

In order to achieve success, you need to know where you want to go in your life. Your target is your ambition or aspiration, how you want your life to be. Your target is also related to your values. For example, if you are someone who believes in generosity and charity, perhaps working in the voluntary sector would be right for you. If you are someone who believes in competition and challenge, perhaps working in investment banking would be right for you.

1. Close your eyes and imagine that your career has gone very well. Picture yourself in ten years’ time. You are truly successful and happy. See yourself.

2. People are telling stories about what you have achieved; think about what it is they are saying that makes you feel happy.


4. Think about what you have achieved and let this help you understand what you want to attain in the future.

This is your target and what this book will help you achieve.
Understand your qualities

You have unique strengths that only you possess: your qualities.

Take a pen and paper.

1. Think back to when you were sixteen years old.
2. Write down what you did that year (who you were living with, where you went, who you spent time with).
3. List your achievements for that year. Write down each success.
4. Go back and answer steps 2 and 3 for each year until the present day.
5. Take the year with the most achievements and write down what personal qualities enabled you to achieve these things.
6. These are your qualities; write down at least five of them here:

Your qualities

Quality 1: __________________________________________
Quality 2: __________________________________________
Quality 3: __________________________________________
Quality 4: __________________________________________
Quality 5: __________________________________________
Think through your business values
Now that you know where you are going and realize why you can achieve it, you need some rules: these are your values. These show what you consider important in life and shape your behavior. Look at the table below and underline all the values that appeal to you the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Accomplishment</th>
<th>Acknowledgment</th>
<th>Adoration</th>
<th>Adventure</th>
<th>Ambition</th>
<th>Being the best</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>Bravery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brilliance</td>
<td>Certainty</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Conviction</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Correctness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisiveness</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firmness</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Impartiality</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Ingenuity</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Inventiveness</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Making a difference</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>Outrageousness</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Persuasiveness</td>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Precision</td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>Skillfulness</td>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Thoroughness</td>
<td>Thoughtfulness</td>
<td>Tidiness</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Traditionalism</td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Usefulness</td>
<td>Utility</td>
<td>Virtue</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
<td>Willfulness</td>
<td>Willingness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the values you have underlined, write down the five that appeal to you the most here:

Your business values

Value 1: __________________________________________
Value 2: __________________________________________
Value 3: __________________________________________
Value 4: __________________________________________
Value 5: __________________________________________

Define your Unique Selling Points (USPs)

Combining your qualities and values can uncover your Unique Selling Points (USPs). These are skills that you possess in business and show how you will achieve your target.

To define your USPs, think of your main achievements in education and your experience in the workplace.

Now relate each of your key features/qualities and values to these USPs. For example:

- I achieved A grades at school because of my strength of dedication and my value of education.
- I implemented a new system at work because of my strength of being organized and my value of creativity.
Change each sentence to generic instead of specific. For example:

- I achieve at education because of my commitment to learning.
- I implement new systems at work because of my strength at being organized.
Write each sentence below as these are your USPs.

Your Unique Selling Points

1. _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

3. _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

4. _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

5. _____________________________________________
   _____________________________________________

You can be proud of your USPs—only you have them and they are based on your real experience, strengths and values. In Step 3: Personal
Presentation (see pages 55–68), we will also show you how to present these on your résumé and in Step 9: Managing the Media (see pages 141–59) we will look at how you can present them on websites such as LinkedIn.com.

Displaying confidence

“Honestly speaking, what kind of people get to become rich? Whatever qualities the rich may have, they can be acquired by anyone with the tenacity to become rich. The key, I think, is confidence. Confidence and an unshakable belief that it can be done, and that you are the one to do it.”

(Felix Dennis, How to Get Rich, 2006)

Self-belief is vital to your success, but appearing over-confident and egotistical can be counterproductive. Boasting about achievements and deliberately making yourself the center of attention can be perceived as arrogance. Project your self-belief and confidence by being positively engaged with other people.

Project positive body language

Research has shown that 90 percent of all human communication is based on non-verbal cues. You therefore need to be careful with the body language you project and avoid the negative associations of
particular body language cues. For example, hanging your head low projects a lack of self-confidence; folding your arms across your chest can be seen as a defensive or an uninterested stance; slouching in a chair suggests you’re unprepared or that, deep down, you feel you’re not up to the task at hand.

**Make eye contact**
There are few aspects of non-verbal communication more important than eye contact. The eyes are known as “the windows to the soul,” transmitting your emotions and intentions to others. In the corporate world, making good eye contact is the first test you face at every meeting.

Ensure you look directly into the eyes of the person you are speaking to. If there is a group of people, make an effort to look into the eyes of each person equally. Even when just listening to someone, look into their eyes and concentrate fully on what they are saying. Positive eye contact projects confidence, transparency and sincerity.

**Smile warmly**
Smiling is so simple and yet such an immensely powerful way to build rapport with people. Professor James V. McConnell, a biologist and animal psychologist at the University of Michigan, found through research that people who smile more are better at managing, teaching and selling. Smiling is so effective that many sales organizations encourage their salespeople to smile while speaking on the telephone, even though no one can actually see them. Smiling is also contagious and will encourage others to smile, feel more positive and, as a result, be more open to your ideas and proposals.
Stay calm under pressure
Many working situations involve stress and pressure. In such situations it is necessary to maintain a positive attitude, especially if there are clients or colleagues present who may perceive your anxiety as a sign of inefficiency. Staying calm under pressure also forms the basis of good management, as effective leadership involves being solution-oriented and level-headed in difficult circumstances.

A virtuous cycle
Dr. Rob Yeung, a psychologist and coach, explains in his book *Confidence: The Art of Getting Whatever You Want* that there is a “virtuous” cycle between behaving confidently and feeling confident:

Psychologists call it the principle of retrospective rationality. Your brain likes to believe that you’re behaving in a fashion that is consistent with your beliefs. So if you start behaving as a confident person, your brain tries to explain your behavior by forcing your mind to believe you are a confident person.
Case study:
Donald Trump, self-belief and confidence

Donald Trump’s career wonderfully illustrates how self-belief and confidence are crucial to selling yourself and succeeding. After graduating from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, Trump joined his father’s company, building apartment complexes in Queens and Brooklyn. However, Trump gravitated toward Manhattan, the most glamorous and wealthy part of New York. He wasn’t fully content having a stable job and a good living; he wanted to accomplish something great and make a powerful statement.

I like thinking big. I always have. To me it’s very simple; if you’re going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big. Most people think small, because most people are afraid of success, afraid of making decisions, afraid of winning. And that gives me a great advantage. (Donald Trump with Tony Schwartz, The Art of the Deal, 1987)

Think big . . .
Trump moved to a small apartment in Manhattan and scanned the area for property development opportunities. He found a disused waterfront site in a rundown area that was notorious for high crime levels. At the time, New York was going through a difficult period—it had defaulted on bonds it had issued, causing a financial crisis as a result. Property prices were falling. There were even rumors that the city would go bankrupt.
Trump managed to arrange a meeting with the company that owned the waterfront site, Penn Central. Although only twenty-seven years of age, Trump impressed the executive responsible not only with the proposal but also as a person. With no money down as a deposit, Trump was granted the rights to purchase two waterfront sites from Penn Central at a cost of $62 million.

He then had to find a way of developing the site, and seized on the idea of having a state convention center that was being developed relocated there. Channeling his self-belief into promotion, Trump waged a campaign in the media, highlighting the benefits of having a convention center on his waterfront site, and emphasizing the disadvantages of using the other areas under consideration. He targeted key politicians, arguing the case for the overall benefits this kind of regeneration would have on New York City. He won the deal, and the convention center moved to his site, netting him over $800,000 in fees.

... Think bigger...

For Trump's next deal, he aimed bigger. Penn Central offered him rights to a huge hotel, the Commodore, which had become dilapidated and was losing money. Still only twenty-seven, he was trying to buy and develop a 1,500,000-square-foot building into a 1,400-room hotel. Trump had a three-pronged strategy:

- get professional management for the hotel
- receive tax abatement from the city
- find financing from an investor

For professional management, he went straight to the top of a
large hotel chain, the Hyatt, where he convinced the owner, Jay Pritzker, to strike a deal in which the Trump Organization developed the site and Hyatt managed it. For tax support—after a long campaign, again leveraging coverage in the media—Trump won a forty-year tax abatement from the city worth tens of millions of dollars. On financing, after being turned down by many banks, he won investment from two institutions: Equitable Life Assurance Society for $35 million and Bowery Savings Bank for $45 million. Trump added an eye-catching design, using reflective glass for the outside of the hotel and brown Paradiso marble for the interior lobby. The renamed and relaunched Grand Hyatt Hotel was soon making operating profits of $30 million a year.

**Build towers**

Shortly afterward, Trump put together an even bigger deal, which saw the construction of Trump Tower—the tallest residential building in New York. Over the following years, he grew from strength to strength and expanded into the gaming business, buying some of the most prominent casinos in Atlantic City. He did fall into severe financial problems in the 1990s but bounced back in 2001 when he built the Trump World Tower in Manhattan.

Today, Donald Trump owns several million square feet of prime Manhattan real estate. He is also a media celebrity, famed recently for taking part in *The Apprentice* (the television show in which hopeful young businesspeople vie for the chance to work for his organization). His name has become synonymous with the ambition and the success of New York City itself.

There are few better examples of the power of self-belief and confidence than a New York City skyscraper with your name on it.
What you have learned about self-belief and confidence

In this chapter, you have developed your self-belief and confidence by identifying your qualities, values, targets and USPs. This chapter has highlighted what you want, what you aspire to and how you will achieve it. You have also learned how to project confidence the right way by interacting with other people in a positive and engaged manner. You have consequently achieved the first step to selling yourself successfully: Self-Belief and Confidence.