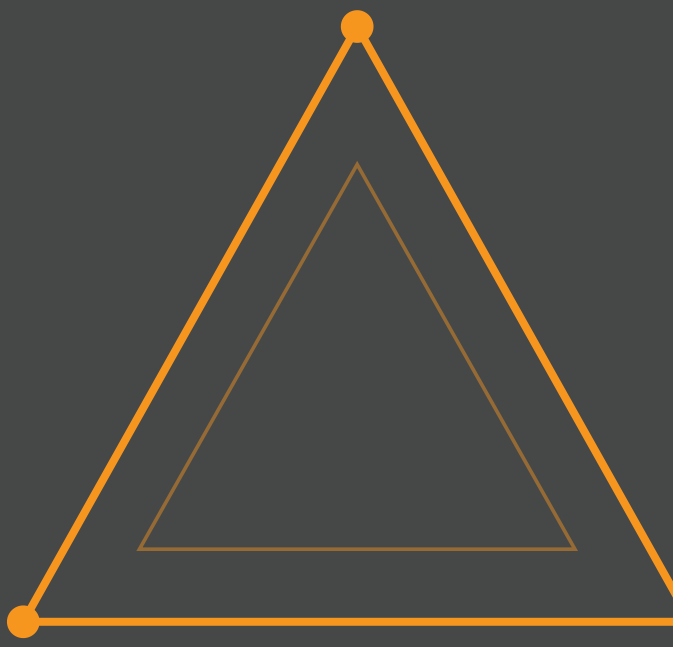
DIGICON ACADEMY

FREE GUIDE

Clarity Under Pressure

Five frameworks for high-stakes conversations

For relationship managers, sales and client-facing teams who need to stay composed, clear and credible when a client pushes back, a board interrupts, or the answer is not yet in the room.



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BEFORE YOU START

Pressure, not knowledge, decides the meeting

Most client-facing professionals know their business. They know the product, the numbers and the market. The trouble starts when the conversation turns: a CFO with ten minutes, a price challenge from a cheaper competitor, a question nobody prepared for.

Under that pressure, capable people fall back on habits that quietly cost them credibility. They over-explain, rush, guess, apologise, lead with technical detail, or leave the meeting without a clear next step. None of these are knowledge problems. They are habits, and habits can be changed.

> *Credibility is not the absence of uncertainty. It is how uncertainty is handled.*

Five frameworks, five moments

Each framework in this guide is built for one kind of moment. Together they form a simple system you can carry into any client conversation.

THE MOMENT	THE FRAMEWORK	THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS
Every conversation	**The Credibility Triangle**	Am I composed, am I clear, and have I taken ownership?
Any answer	**Point, Proof, Path**	What is the one thing this person needs to hear first?
Any friction	**Name, Frame, Aim**	How do I say the hard thing without losing the room?
Any unknown	**Known, Unknown, Next**	How do I stay credible without the full answer?
Any pitch	**SNAP**	How do I make our value felt, not just understood?

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Learn one framework at a time. Try it first in a low-stakes conversation, so it is already familiar when the stakes are high. Each page ends with one small thing to practise this week.

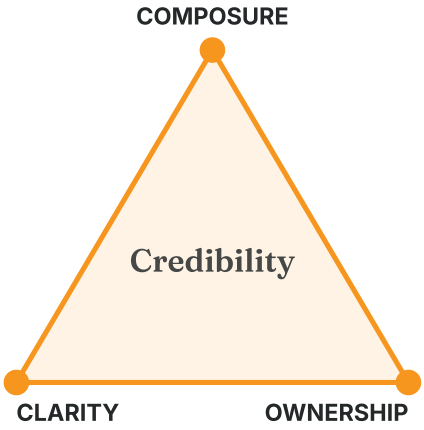
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Seanice Kacungira has spent over two decades in high-stakes communication. She is the founder and principal of Blu Flamingo Africa, a pan-African strategic marketing and communications agency, and has pitched at government, international and executive level, including at Goldman Sachs and Stanford. She trained through Stanford Seed and Kellogg, is a certified NeuroCoach, and designs and facilitates the Clarity Under Pressure programme with DigiCon Academy.

FRAMEWORK 1 | FOR EVERY CONVERSATION

The Credibility Triangle

Credibility rests on three behaviours you can see, practise and improve. Use them to prepare before an important meeting and to review it afterwards.



Composure: stay steady under pressure

Looks like a pause before you answer, a slower pace when the client speeds up, and a grounded posture.
Slips into rushing, filler words and mirroring the client's tension.

Clarity: lead with one clear message

Looks like the main point first, plain language, and detail only where it is needed.
Slips into over-explaining, technical language too early, and several points at once.

Ownership: close the loop

Looks like a clear next step, with an owner and a date.
Slips into "I'll get back to you", vague follow-ups, and ending on the client's question.

> **Be the thermostat, not the thermometer. When the room speeds up, slow down.**

WORKED EXAMPLE: THE THREE-QUESTION REVIEW

After a client meeting, a relationship manager reviews herself against the triangle. Illustrative scenario.

COMPOSURE	"I was steady until the price question, then I rushed."
CLARITY	"I made three points before I got to the one that mattered."
OWNERSHIP	"We agreed to follow up, but nobody named a date."
NEXT TIME	"Pause before price. Lead with the main point. Close with a date."

THIS WEEK Before your next important meeting, write one sentence for each corner of the triangle: how you will stay steady, the one message you will lead with, and the next step you will ask for.

FRAMEWORK 2 | FOR ANY ANSWER

Point, Proof, Path

Senior stakeholders decide in the first few seconds whether to keep listening. Leading with your point earns you the next minute. Proof makes it believable. A path makes it actionable.

P

Point

What is the main message? Say the one thing you need them to understand.

P

Proof

What evidence supports it? Give the single strongest reason to believe you.

P

Path

What happens next? Name the step, who owns it, and when.

WORKED EXAMPLE

A CFO with ten minutes asks: "Why should we move our cash management to you?" Illustrative scenario.

BEFORE

"So, we have been in the region a long time, and we have several platforms, and depending on how your entities are structured there are a few options..."

AFTER

The point arrives in the first sentence. Every sentence after it either supports the point or moves the conversation forward.

POINT	"You get one daily view of your cash across all three new markets."
PROOF	"That is exactly what the platform is built for: every account and every currency on one screen, updated daily."
PATH	"If your team shares the account structure this week, we will show you your own view in a demo on Thursday."

WATCH FOR

- Taking too long to land the point
- Overloading the proof with every detail you know
- Ending on information instead of a next step

THE PRINCIPLE

Say it simply first. Add detail second. Close with the next step.

THIS WEEK

Before your next meeting, write the one sentence the client must remember. Under it, write your single best proof. Under that, the next step you want. If you can only say one line, say the first.

FRAMEWORK 3 | FOR ANY FRICTION

Name, Frame, Aim

Pushback, price pressure, a complaint, bad news. The instinct is to soften the issue until it disappears, or to defend yourself. Name, Frame, Aim lets you be clear without becoming harsh or defensive.

N

Name

Say the difficult thing plainly. No hedging, no burying it.

F

Frame

Give the context that helps the room understand it.

A

Aim

Point the conversation towards a constructive next step.

WORKED EXAMPLE

The client says: "Your competitor is offering us a lower rate. Why would we pay more?" Illustrative scenario.

NAME	"You're right. Our rate is higher than the offer you have."
FRAME	"The difference pays for the dedicated support and regional coverage you told us matter most as you expand. A lower rate that slows your expansion costs more than it saves."
AIM	"Let's put both offers side by side against your three priorities, so you can decide on the full picture."

EQUAL-VALUE PRESENCE

Being respectful is not the same as being deferential. Language that over-apologises or asks to be chosen weakens your authority, even when the intent is good. You bring value, expertise and partnership to the table. Respect the client, and do not shrink in the conversation.

WATCH FOR

- Softening the point until it is lost
- Defending before you have named the issue
- Apologising for your value

WHERE IT WORKS

- Price and fee challenges
- Service failures and delays
- Delivering a decision the client will not like

THIS WEEK

Think of the pushback you hear most often. Write your Name line in under ten words. Then write the Frame and the Aim. Say all three out loud until they sound like you.

FRAMEWORK 4 | FOR ANY UNKNOWN

Known, Unknown, Next

Every client-facing professional will be asked something they cannot answer on the spot. Not knowing does not cost credibility. Guessing, freezing or rambling does. This framework gives you a calm, structured way through.

K

Known

What can I confirm right now?

U

Unknown

What still needs to be verified?

N

Next

What will I do next, and by when?

THE HOLDING LINE

"What I can confirm now is X. What I need to verify is Y. I will come back to you by 3pm with the confirmed position."

Short, honest and specific. It avoids guessing, over-apologising and rambling, and it ends with a commitment the client can hold you to.

WORKED EXAMPLE

The client asks: "Can you guarantee the facility will be approved before our board meets on the 20th?" Illustrative scenario.

KNOWN	"What I can confirm now is that your application is complete and with the credit team."
UNKNOWN	"What I need to verify is whether the review will finish before the 20th."
NEXT	"I will speak to the credit team today and call you by 10am tomorrow with a firm date."

MAKE THE NEXT STEP SPECIFIC

"Let me get back to you on that."

"I will come back to you by 10am tomorrow with a firm date."

THIS WEEK

List the three questions you most dread being asked. Write a holding line for each, using Known, Unknown, Next. Keep them somewhere you will see them before client meetings.

FRAMEWORK 5 | FOR ANY PITCH

SNAP

Facts inform. Stories move. When you compete against a cheaper alternative, the client needs to feel why your value matters, not just understand it. SNAP turns a pitch into a short story with a point.

S

Story

The story behind the facts. A real human moment, not a status update.

N

Need

Make what is at stake real and felt for the client.

A

Answer

Answer the objection before it is raised.

P

Proof

Evidence woven into the story as its resolution, not a data dump.

WORKED EXAMPLE: BRIAN'S HOUSE

Pitching a construction monitoring app to people in the diaspora who are building at home.

STORY	"Brian lives in London. He sent £30,000 home to build a house in Kampala. Six months later, only the foundation was finished."
NEED	"He had no way of seeing where his money had gone, and every month of delay cost him more."
ANSWER	"You might think the answer is a more trustworthy builder. The real answer is visibility: daily photos, expense tracking and approval of every payment from his phone in London."
PROOF	"Projects monitored this way finish 60% faster, and on budget."

> **Stories are not decoration. They are strategy. A good story helps the client see risk, value, urgency or possibility more clearly.**

PRACTICE: BUILD A SNAP

Pick a real situation from your own work. Draft one line each for Story, Need, Answer and Proof. Deliver it to a colleague as a 60-second pitch. Ask them two questions: did the need land, and was the objection answered before I raised it?

THIS WEEK

Start a story bank. Write down one client moment that shows why your value matters beyond price. One good story, told well, will outlast a dozen slides.

KEEP THIS PAGE

The five frameworks at a glance

FRAMEWORK	USE IT FOR	IN ONE LINE
The Credibility Triangle	Every conversation	Composure, Clarity, Ownership: stay steady, lead with one message, close the loop.
Point, Proof, Path	Any answer	Say the main message, back it with evidence, name what happens next.
Name, Frame, Aim	Any friction	Say the hard thing plainly, give useful context, point to a constructive next step.
Known, Unknown, Next	Any unknown	Confirm what you can, name the gap, commit to a specific next step and time.
SNAP	Any pitch	Story, Need, Answer, Proof: make the value felt, answer the objection early, resolve with evidence.

BEFORE YOUR NEXT IMPORTANT MEETING, ASK

- **What is the one thing I need this person to understand?**
- **What will they push back on, and what is my Name line?**
- **What could I be asked that I cannot answer yet, and what is my holding line?**
- **What next step do I want, with an owner and a date?**

FOR TEAMS

Reading the frameworks is the start. Using them under pressure is the skill.

Clarity Under Pressure is an executive communication and storytelling programme for client-facing teams. Four 90-minute virtual modules build the frameworks. A one to two-day immersive simulation lab puts them to work in a live, escalating client mandate, with every participant scored on composure, clarity and ownership.

100%
of respondents rated the training excellent

9.9/10
average likelihood to recommend

8 of 8
had already applied what they learned

Book a one-hour discovery call. We reply within 12 hours.

www.digicon.academy/training/executive-communication-training

Figures: post-programme feedback, Stanbic Bank Uganda Client Coverage cohort, 2026, eight respondents.