

Q1 2026 RESOURCE

The High-Stakes Meeting Preparation Checklist

Use this before any meeting where clarity, authority, and impact in English matter. Run through each section in order.

CORE PRINCIPLE

Structure before words. When you know what to say and in what order, the language follows. When you don't, no amount of vocabulary will save you.

1 CLARIFY YOUR PURPOSE

- What is the single outcome I need from this meeting?
- Am I there to inform, persuade, decide, or align?
- What does success look like at the end of the room?

3 STRUCTURE YOUR OPENING

- Lead with your point — bottom line up front (BLUF)
- State your objective in one clear sentence before any context
- Practise your opening line out loud — twice

2 KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- Who has decision-making authority in the room?
- What does each key person care most about?
- Who might push back — and on what?

4 SIGNAL AUTHORITY EARLY

- Pause before you speak — two seconds signals confidence
- Avoid openers that undermine you: "Sorry to interrupt..." / "This might be wrong, but..."
- Keep your first sentence short and direct

5 MANAGE INTERRUPTIONS

- Prepare a phrase to hold the floor: "I'll come to that — let me finish this point first."
- If interrupted before your key point, restate it calmly when you regain the floor
- Don't rush to fill silence — pause and continue

6 CLOSE WITH IMPACT

- End with a clear ask, decision, or next step — not a trailing summary
- Prepare one closing sentence in advance and deliver it with intention
- Don't apologise for the meeting or your contribution as you close

7 IN THE ROOM: USE P.O.I.S.E.



When you need to make a point under pressure, run through P.O.I.S.E. in real time: pause, state your objective, give one insight, name the stake, close with a clear ask or action.