



# Schachter Monthly

By Ephraim Schachter • Mar 07, 2023

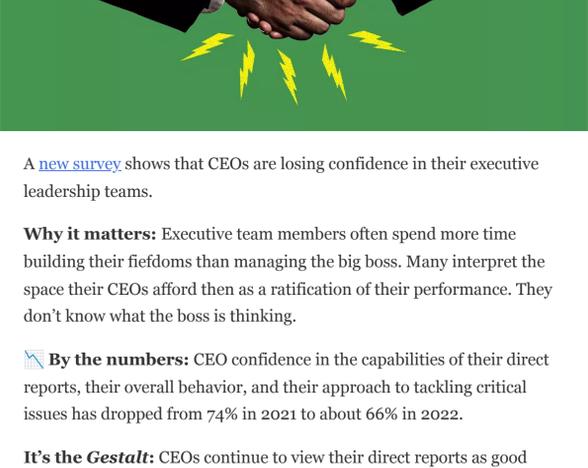
Smart Brevity® count: 4.5 mins...1152 words

**Happy March** to my senior leaders!

🏆 **Let's get your 2023 firing on all cylinders.** Here are some more straightforward insights and actionable tools & tips.

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## 1 big thing: Get closer to your CEO



A [new survey](#) shows that CEOs are losing confidence in their executive leadership teams.

**Why it matters:** Executive team members often spend more time building their fiefdoms than managing the big boss. Many interpret the space their CEOs afford them as a ratification of their performance. They don't know what the boss is thinking.

📊 **By the numbers:** CEO confidence in the capabilities of their direct reports, their overall behavior, and their approach to tackling critical issues has dropped from 74% in 2021 to about 66% in 2022.

**It's the Gestalt:** CEOs continue to view their direct reports as good leaders and people, managing risk and making incremental progress. It's that things are faster, more complex and global now.

- In other words, you may not be passing your boss' *vibe test*. Jeez, how the heck are you supposed to know that?!

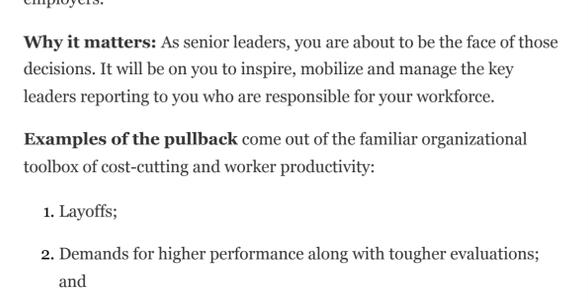
🎯 **My POV:** Engage your CEO boss deliberately. Become a partner, confidant & resource. Consider the following:

1. **Get underneath** your boss' perceived map of the world. Their own task objectives and personal objectives. Pain points you can help relieve.

2. **Seize alignment opportunities** where your assets multiply value to the boss.

3. **Be easy** to work with. Mirror the boss' work practice preferences.

## 2. What if you're the bad guy now?



🔥 **Employer flexibility** – which reached a peak during the pandemic – is on the way out, per [TIME](#). The article makes the case that empathy was a blip and that the traditional power differential has returned to employers.

**Why it matters:** As senior leaders, you are about to be the face of those decisions. It will be on you to inspire, mobilize and manage the key leaders reporting to you who are responsible for your workforce.

**Examples of the pullback** come out of the familiar organizational toolbox of cost-cutting and worker productivity:

1. Layoffs;
2. Demands for higher performance along with tougher evaluations; and
3. Phaseout of perks.

🖼️ **The big picture:** Steel up your reserves and take a deep breath. Now exhale. Embrace this opportunity to convey empathy, understanding and support. Recognize the underlying tension between senior management and the organization:

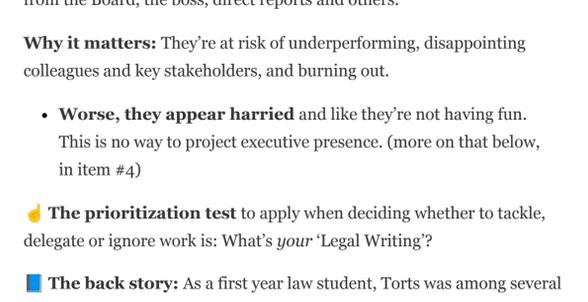
- **To you:** this was an inevitable and predictable course correction back to traditional workplace practices.

- **To them:** This is yet another example of profits over people.

**Thread the needle:** Listen and let people speak. Hear and affirm them. Be prepared and ready to explain how these changes will help them and all of the organization's stakeholders.

👉 **Finally, don't do this,** [per NYPost](#): “*Goldman Sachs yanks free coffee perk as layoffs loom*”

## 3. What I learned about prioritizing in 1L Torts class



★ **I help talented leaders** become high-performing executives. Many start out struggling with how to prioritize among the endless demands from the Board, the boss, direct reports and others.

**Why it matters:** They're at risk of underperforming, disappointing colleagues and key stakeholders, and burning out.

- **Worse, they appear harried** and like they're not having fun. This is no way to project executive presence. (more on that below, in item #4)

👉 **The prioritization test** to apply when deciding whether to tackle, delegate or ignore work is: What's *your* 'Legal Writing'?

📖 **The back story:** As a first year law student, Torts was among several yearlong classes.

- Early in the second semester, Prof. Diamond was surprised during one session when two students he called on passed.

- This had never happened and he asked for an explanation.

- **Response:** students had spent all of the prior night completing their “Legal Writing” assignments.

👉 **A strong reaction:** Prof. Diamond winced like he'd opened up a refrigerator to some forgotten, weeks-old fish leftovers.

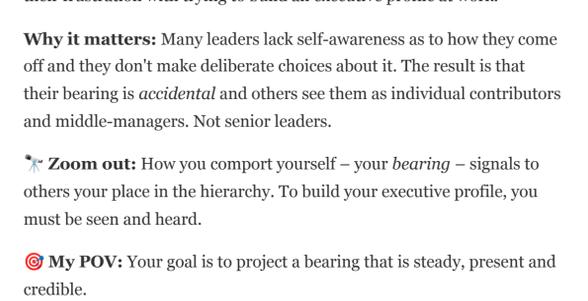
- “How many credits is Legal Writing, he asked? One credit, we replied.

- “How many credits is MY class?” he followed. We didn't need to answer aloud that the answer was six.

**The clear message:** An 'A' in Torts was six times as valuable as an 'A' in legal writing. A 'B-' in Legal writing wasn't particularly damaging to a GPA.

- Prioritize accordingly!

## 4. March pro tip: Elevate your bearing



💡 **What I'm hearing:** Up-and-coming executives frequently share their frustration with trying to build an executive profile at work.

**Why it matters:** Many leaders lack self-awareness as to how they come off and they don't make deliberate choices about it. The result is that their bearing is *accidental* and others see them as individual contributors and middle-managers. Not senior leaders.

🔍 **Zoom out:** How you comport yourself – your *bearing* – signals to others your place in the hierarchy. To build your executive profile, you must be seen and heard.

🎯 **My POV:** Your goal is to project a bearing that is steady, present and credible.

**The essential behavior categories** are Look, Sound, and Content.

1. **Look** – How you look is the most “communicative” part of your behavior. Strive to look focused, refined and open.

2. **Sound** – How you sound is the second. Strive to sound unhurried, interactive and prominent. Time = authority.

3. **Content** – Choose language that is purposeful, inductive and big picture.

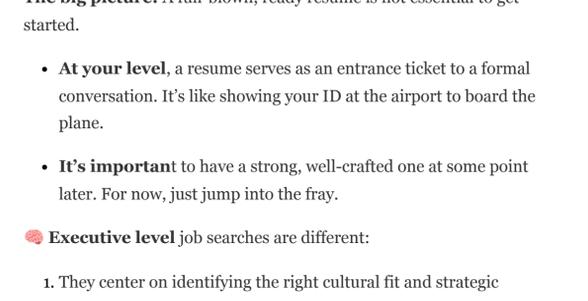
🎭 **Bearing projection trick:** *Emulation*.

- Observe someone whose bearing you admire and model it for yourself.

- Rather than thinking, consciously, channel the person.

- Be an actor getting into character.

## 5. Career Corner: Your resume is fine



🌱 **Lots of people** I know put off serious networking until they get their resume in shape.

**Why it matters:** They delay getting out in the market and may miss out on some key relationships and opportunities.

**The big picture:** A full-blown, ready resume is not essential to get started.

- **At your level,** a resume serves as an entrance ticket to a formal conversation. It's like showing your ID at the airport to board the plane.

- **It's important** to have a strong, well-crafted one at some point later. For now, just jump into the fray.

🎯 **Executive level** job searches are different:

1. They center on identifying the right cultural fit and strategic alignment with the organization's goals, vision, and values.

2. The position itself often requires a more comprehensive evaluation process that may involve multiple rounds of interviews, reference checks, and assessments.

3. Candidate identification frequently relies on networking, recommendations, and referrals from trusted sources to identify and vet potential candidates.

💬 **Consider asking a recruiter** to do the heavy lifting writing your resume, if you're not convinced and still stuck. It's in their interests to get you hired.

👉 **Go deeper:** My take on the benefits of using recruiters, [here](#).

👍 **Thanks** and I wish you all the best!

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💡 **Parting wisdom:** “*No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you.*” Althea Gibson

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