Worksheet: Respond to Pushback and Maintain Executive Presence using The LARA Method: Listen, Affirm, Respond, Add

	LISTEN →	AFFIRM →	RESPOND →	ADD
What it means	Let the leader finish. Don't interrupt, defend your data or show negative body language. Notice what worries the leader along with any underlying values or interests. Take notes.	Name the valid concern beneath the leader's statement or strategic priority. This helps you build common ground and connect. Note: Affirming is not agreement; it acknowledges what is valid or shared, which creates trust before the response.	Give a relevant fact, metric or precedent addressing the pushback. Be respectful, relevant and objective — not argumentative.	State the decision condition or next step to show that you want to continue the conversation. Is there a flexible option or safeguard for moving forward?
Starter language	Pause before you answer.	"That is a fair concern about ..."	"What we know is ..." (Avoid confrontation: Use "I" or "we" statements and not "you" statements.)	"Before we proceed, we need to ..."

Directions: Think of the prework you did: that same upcoming written communication or presentation you used to AIM for Impact, Lead with the Bottom Line, Identify the Leader's Priorities and Likely Questions, and Do the Buildout in Clearly Defined Sections. Now use The LARA Method to respond to pushback: First, think of something your leader might say to push back on what you say. Write one realistic pushback in your leader's voice that embodies skepticism or resistance. On the next page, apply The LARA method to respond to the leader's pushback and maintain executive presence.

LEADER'S PUSHBACK:

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_____

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APPLY THE LARA METHOD TO THE LEADER'S PUSHBACK:

In the time allotted, make brief notes, not a full script, for each LARA step.

LISTEN

Your response:

AFFIRM

Your response:

RESPOND

Your response:

ADD

Your response: