OPERATIONS INSIDER

LEAN · OPERATIONS · LEADERSHIP

THE MANAGER'S 10-MINUTE RHETORIC CHECKLIST

Prepare the message. Lead the room. Close with action.



ONE PAGE OF PREPARATION CAN SAVE AN HOUR OF CONFUSION.

BEFORE THE MOMENT

01 The Universal 10-Minute Check

Use this before a presentation, meeting, negotiation, or difficult stakeholder conversation.

Minutes 1–3: Direction

- ☐ I can state the objective in one sentence.
- ☐ I know the decision or output required at the end.
- ☐ I have reduced the message to three key points.

Minutes 4–7: Friction

- ☐ I know the most likely source of confusion.
- ☐ I have one anchor sentence I will repeat.
- ☐ I know the boundary that must be protected.
- ☐ I have one question that will refocus the room.

Minutes 8–10: Closure

- ☐ I know what I can trade and what is non-negotiable.
- ☐ I can name the owner and timing for the next step.
- ☐ I have prepared my closing sentence.

> THE STANDARD
> **The room should leave able to repeat the message, name the decision, and identify the next owner.**

PRESENTATION

02 Open, Guide, Close

A concise preparation check for briefings, pitches, reviews, and decision presentations.

Opening

- ☐ State the purpose in one sentence.
- ☐ Name the outcome you need from the audience.
- ☐ Give one line of context, not the full history.
- ☐ Preview the structure in three points.

Body

- ☐ Use what → why → what next.
- ☐ Give each section one key-message sentence.
- ☐ Chunk complexity into small sense units.
- ☐ Use signposts at every transition.

Close

- ☐ Summarize the message in one sentence.
- ☐ State the recommendation and decision explicitly.
- ☐ Confirm owner, timing, and review point.

Fast Signposts

> Today I want to achieve one outcome: ...
>
> The key point is ...
>
> Before we move on, the takeaway is ...
>
> The decision is ...
>
> Next steps are ...

MEETING

03 Drive Alignment

Make the meeting a decision system, not a conversation without an end.

> **60-SECOND OPENING**
>
> **The objective today is ... We have X minutes. We will work through facts, options, and decision. We leave with a decision, owners, and dates.**

Control the Flow

- ☐ Repeat the objective when drift begins.
- ☐ Time-box agenda phases.
- ☐ Park out-of-scope topics.
- ☐ Summarize every 10 to 15 minutes.

Control Participation

- ☐ Invite quiet experts intentionally.
- ☐ Limit dominant voices respectfully.
- ☐ Ask for disagreement early to expose risk.

Create Closure

- ☐ Name the decision clearly.
- ☐ Test for blockers and commitment.
- ☐ Convert the decision into owner, action, and due date.

NEGOTIATION

04 Frame, Explore, Trade, Close

Build an agreement that remains executable after the conversation.

Frame and Explore

- [ ] Separate scope, timing, cost, and quality.
- [ ] State the intention to reach an executable agreement for both sides.
- [ ] Ask what is driving the other position.
- [ ] Summarize constraints and priorities.

Trade and Close

- [ ] Use conditional language: if ... then ...
- [ ] Never give an isolated concession.
- [ ] Speak value, not only price.
- [ ] Summarize terms, owners, and timing.
- [ ] Ask what could prevent delivery.

Conditional Language

> If we agree on volume, then we can discuss better pricing.
>
> If you need faster delivery, then we need stability in scope.
>
> If you want flexibility, then we need planning visibility.

PRACTICE

05 7 Days to Noticeable Improvement

One focused repetition per day is enough to change how you lead the room.

DAY 1	Record a 60-second update and add signposts.
DAY 2	Rewrite one message using the rule of three.
DAY 3	Mark and stress the anchor word in five sentences.
DAY 4	Open and close one meeting deliberately.
DAY 5	Use one focusing move and one softening move.
DAY 6	Use if-then language in a real trade.
DAY 7	Review what improved and what you will standardize.

FINAL REFLECTION

What will I keep, stop, and change in my next leadership moment?