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Why Doing What You Say Matters

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Without influence, you're no longer a leader. Yes, you may have a title or position, but you cannot lead.

By *Dianna Booher*

When it comes to commitments, there are two kinds of people in the marketplace: Those who keep commitments as if their life depended on it—and those who break them as easily as crystal.

By definition, integrity means soundness, sincerity, truthfulness, coherence, honesty, of good moral character. If you're running an organization, dealing with clients, or leading a team, having integrity means following through to do what you say you'll do—no matter if it's hard, costly, or unpleasant.

Today's rock stars, rappers, and politicians often twist the definition somewhat to mean "living true to myself" as in "Yes, I know I made that commitment or signed that contract, but I want something different now!"

Without integrity, your communication lacks substance. Without substance, your communication has no power. Without power, your communication has no influence. Without influence, you're no longer a leader. Yes, you may have a title or position, but you cannot lead. 🐦

3 Danger Zones for Broken Commitments, Poor Communication, and Integrity Lapses



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Make sure your influence doesn't collapse

Ask someone if they're a person of integrity, and they'll assure you that they are. But take a look at their routine commitments and you may have a different perspective. Double-check these danger zones specifically:

What's Free

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Why Doing What You Say Matters: Integrity Means Influence

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Recently, I had two friends email to ask for special coaching “on the side”—a service that I typically bill several hundred dollars per hour to do. I agreed, re-arranged my calendar to accommodate theirs, scheduled the calls, and prepared. Both failed to call. Later, one emailed, “Sorry, something came up.” Haven’t heard from the other.

It’s common practice in pricing products and services that even when you intend to provide a complimentary widget or webinar, you display a retail price to add value and then offer it “free for a limited time” or as an “introductory offer.” Why? People don’t value free things as highly as those they pay for.

For the same reason, event planners print prices on their tickets—and then give them away.

My point: If you get something for free (training, book, conference registration, party invitation), you value it less than if you pay for it. Result: You also dishonor the associated commitment and become a “no show.” Nothing invested, nothing lost. Commitment broken.

What's Easy

If something is easy to do, it's also easy not to do. If the meeting takes very little planning, it's easy to do no planning. If calling the 3 potential donors as promised is easy, then not calling them is also easy. Commitment broken.

What's Common

Rationalizing a broken commitment is also common: "Nobody else shows up for those meetings anyway." "They really expect you to cancel X if things change" "People will understand if I'm late. There's traffic." "This is costing more than I thought. I had some unexpected expenses come up."

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All this “free, easy, and common” discussion is not to dismiss the fact that keeping a commitment can be costly. As the former owner of a training company, I’ve delivered on contracts when I actually lost money—simply because a difficult client kept expanding the scope of a project and refused to agree to a price increase.

I know colleagues who’ve chartered a private plane to arrive at a client site to deliver a keynote because they’d made a scheduling mistake and refused to disappoint a client by cancelling at the last minute.

Having integrity doesn’t mean that you’ll never ask to be released from an earlier commitment if the situation changes. But if you can’t cancel the obligation with your integrity intact, then consider the long-term impact on your reputation. Understand the impact on your relationships and career. Little kinks in the chain of credibility soon break your trustworthiness altogether.

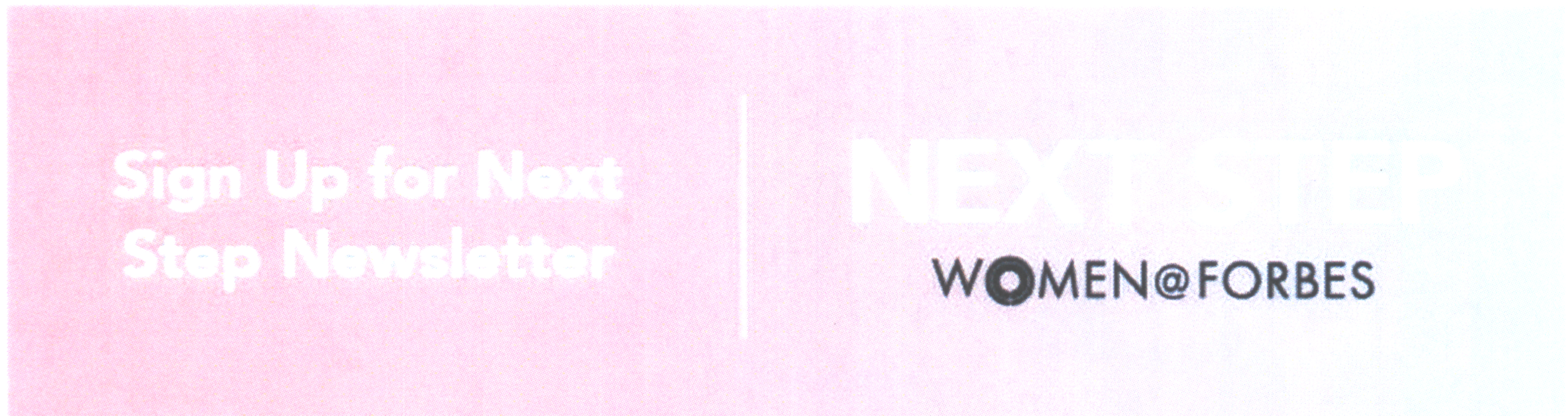
4 Reasons Influence Collapses When Integrity Lapses

1. Influence is the result of having others trust you.
2. Trust comes from communicating the truth—without deception, denial, exaggeration, waffling. Trust means what you say is what you do.

3. Being known as a person of your word represents power.

4. Power translates to influence.

And that's brings you full circle to why doing what you say matters as a leader.



Dianna Booher is the bestselling author of 47 books. Her newest is [Communicate Like a Leader](#). She helps organizations communicate clearly. Follow her at [BooherResearch.com](#) and [@DiannaBooher](#).

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