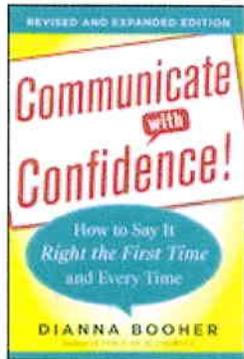


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Creating Credibility: Ten Tips for the Workplace



By Dianna Booher, Guest Blogger

Words have to match actions. In addition to meeting your deadlines and hitting all your goals, it's vital to establish trust in your word -- to build your credibility. In both verbal and written communications, including everything that you publish through social media, a lack of trust will lower your credibility. And once you've lost it, it's all but impossible to win back.

No matter where you are in your career, follow these rules to establish and maintain your credibility.

Show Concern. People will care about you, and more importantly trust you, when you care about them. People want to know that they have a sympathetic ear in you. Even companies in reputational crisis mode know the first reaction must be to show sincere concern over individuals in question.

Demonstrate Cooperation with Good Intentions. To be credible, you must demonstrate that you are acting in good faith to the best of your knowledge and ability. People must believe that you want to cooperate to help them achieve their personal and career goals. They will forgive you for poor judgment, but they will rarely forgive you for poor intentions.

Admit What You Don't Know. When people smell blood, they start to dig. It's human instinct to push when they feel they are being bluffed, especially when you're trying to gloss over spotty patches in knowledge, memory, experience, or something else. Admitting ignorance is a simple principle -- easy to remember and easy to accomplish -- but can be a difficult pill to swallow. Nothing makes people believe in what you *do* know like admitting what you don't.

(For tips on public speaking, read "[Confront Your Fears and Communicate](#).")

Be Complete. Are you telling all you know? You need to recognize the difference between lies, half-truths, omissions, and cover-ups. True but incomplete statements can lead to false conclusions; literal truth, when offered without complete explanations, can lead to literal lies. Knowing smiles accompanied by long silences can elicit wrong conclusions. Lying happens in numerous ways. Intentions stand center stage here. Ultimately, questionable intentions cast doubt on character.

Stay Current. Give up outdated data, opinions, and stereotypes. Given today's information overload, data more than two or three years old can't support your decisions. Correct but outdated statistics soon become incorrect.

Be Clear. Sometimes the better we understand something, the worse we are at explaining it; our familiarity makes us careless in describing it. It's difficult to remember a time when we didn't know something that has become second nature to us. Ambiguity creeps in when we least expect it. Meanings depend on context, tone, timing, personal experience, and reference points. The best test of clarity is the result you see.

Keep Confidences. What happens when a boss or confidante tells you, "This information is not to leave the room," and it instantly does? And *you're* the carrier pigeon? When people know you break confidences -- that you share personal, confidential matters -- they fear you. Breaking confidences speaks volumes about your character. People who observe your ability to keep your promises and your confidences will begin to trust you with their real feelings.

Avoid Exaggeration. Did you wait on the phone for five seconds or five minutes? Did the supplier raise the rates by two percent or ten percent? Did the scores dip to 30 or to 10? Spinning a story can put you on a slippery slope. Exaggeration makes for great humor, but it's a credibility killer.

(For more tips on effective communication, read "[The Listener Wins](#).")

Accept Responsibility. If you were involved in the decisions, actions, and results, or had some control over a situation that didn't end the way others wanted it to, own up to it. Shirkers suffer credibility gaps.

Be Sincere and Genuine. People who pretend to be sincere can pitch an earnest plea, look at you with pleading eyes and a straight face, and promise the world. But genuineness comes from character and is therefore harder to generate on the spot. You either are or you aren't. What you experience is what you share. What you value is what you give. What you say is what you believe.

*Dianna Booher is the CEO of Booher Consultants, a communication training and consulting firm, and the author of the newly revised and expanded bestselling classic "**Communicate with Confidence! How to Say it Right the First Time and Every Time!**"*

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