

## **What is Credibility? How do we define credibility? (wait for answers)**

**Credibility** is the quality of being believable and worthy of trust (dictionary.com).

As an effective leader you want to be credible and seen as someone who can be trusted.

Research shows that only 49 percent of employees trust their senior management, and only 28 percent believe CEOs are a credible source of information. This is an alarming statistic. Trust goes hand in hand with credibility. Credibility is something that all leaders and potential leaders must aspire to obtain.

Fire department situation....early promotion.....no credibility.. 1<sup>st</sup> lever leadership to start.....

## **So how do we obtain credibility? (wait for some answers)**

Establishing credibility as a leader isn't something that happens instantly. It's a process that involves time, effort, and patience, but it's totally worth investing in for successful leadership. Credibility positions leaders as a highly dependable source of expertise, information, and decision making.

A credible leader focuses on creating win-win situations for all.

Credible leaders walk the talk and make their actions speak louder than their words--they deliver what they promise. Leaders with established credibility are respected and trusted. Here's a list of habits that credible leaders practice every day of the week:

### **1. They are respectful**

Credible leaders don't insult, manipulate, or humiliate anyone publicly or privately. These leaders are aware that respect is key in gaining people's loyalty and respect in return.

### **2. They are honest**

Credible leaders are transparent with their actions and have no hidden agendas. These leaders foster an honest environment where unethical behavior isn't tolerated.

### **3. They are educated**

Credible leaders are continually learning to expand their knowledge and expertise. These leaders lead by example and recognize the importance of ongoing education to help them achieve what is required and more.

### **4. They are competent**

Credible leaders possess much more than a basic understanding of their field. These leaders are experts at developing multiple solutions to problems and situations they are faced with.

### **5. They are accountable**

Credible leaders take full responsibility for their actions and decisions. These leaders accept when they make a mistake and do everything that is needed to amend it in a prompt manner.

### **6. They are loyal**

Credible leaders remain true to themselves and watch out for the interests of others. These leaders are supportive and really care about people--this is what helps gain reciprocal loyalty.

### **7. They are trusting**

Credible leaders are confident about the abilities of people and know how to delegate effectively. These leaders acknowledge that people become more engaged and committed when they are trusted.

**What to do:**

Here are some thoughts on building leadership credibility as you go about your day to day business. Some of these are related to your own self-development, others relate collaboration with the other person.

### **1. Have an Biblical value system**

Credible leaders almost always have a solid value system. For Christian leaders it is vital to have our values closely aligned with the Scriptures.

### **2. Promises...Promises**

This is quite simple. Do not promise anything that you cannot keep. Look at it differently, only promise what is in your control. Nothing makes a leader lose credibility faster than an un-kept promise. The feeling of being let down is quite irreparable. This is best avoided by making only those promises that can not only be kept, but which are entirely within your control.

### **3. Be a finisher**

Be seen as someone who delivers results, and finishes tasks. Some leaders get very excited when they begin new initiatives.

We have this person on our church...every two years she wants to engage in a ministry....

They set up ceremonial kick-off meetings, do a big rah-rah and then as the reality of execution hits, they slowly begin losing steam. Self-doubts and fatigue creep in and they then look for the next initiative.

You want to take pride in your ability to finish the tasks you take up, and be accountable for those. Be seen as someone who takes on unpleasant and difficult tasks with the same zeal as taking on the pleasant and easy ones.

Even while selecting the options, look for the one with the most benefit, even though it may not be the easiest or the quickest option. Steer clear from the “path of least resistance”.

#### **4. Make decisions and then be accountable for those**

Take responsibility for your actions and be accountable for the decisions you make on behalf of the team. Every once in a while a decision could go wrong and you would be questioned. That’s when the credible leader takes full ownership and owns up to the decision. The easier option could be to divert attention, deny the decision or look to pin it on someone else. By taking full ownership and being accountable, you establish credibility.

But first of all, a leader has to make decisions. Wavering and hesitant leaders do not inspire confidence and consequently find it difficult to establish credibility.

#### **5. Win the loyalty of your team-mates**

In “winning loyalty”, we’ve seen quite a few tips on winning over loyalty of your team-members. Most of those tips also help in building credibility

#### **6. Stand by your team-mates and fight in “their” corner**

Nothing makes a team-member more loyal than to see their leader stand solidly behind their actions and even fight for them. The longer and more intense the fight, the tighter the bonding, trust and resulting loyalty. The higher-up in the hierarchy the person you are fighting against, trying to build a case for your team-member, the greater the awe, trust and feeling of togetherness that you will build with your team-member.

#### **7. Become a “go to” person**

Most achievers I know do have some self-doubts. Whenever they craft something, they would like to get an opinion from someone before they release it to their audience or the world. These are people who stand by a certain quality of their deliverable, and continue to want to maintain that high standard. So they like to get a second “set of eyes” looking at their work, kind of like a quality control check, before final release.

Try to be that “go to” person. A go to person is someone whose review can be relied upon. The person who does a good, honest and thorough job of reviewing someone else’s work. The person that can provide valuable and actionable feedback. The person that does not shirk from providing a critical feedback, along with a workable solution. The person that makes the creator go, “now why didn’t I think of that?”

And as always, while providing feedback, make it about the task and not about the person.

## **8. Be a mentor**

Effective leaders can also build credibility by being a mentor to budding achievers. Every person experiences a tightening of the stomach at some point or the other, while taking major decisions. Whether it is investing your hard-earned money, starting a new business, decision to switch jobs or simply contemplating a different career path, one needs a sounding board to look at the situation from a different angle.

A mentor helps the person break-down a problem and clearly see the issues. The mentor ideally is a good listener, knows the person well and is wholeheartedly interested in the person. Most of the time the mentor simply has to listen and ask pertinent questions. Spending time with the person listening to his or her aspirations, problems or thoughts sends a very positive signal and enhances the mentor’s credibility.

## **9. Ensure high quality**

To quote Orison Swett Marden, “the quality of a man’s work shows the quality of the man. Work should be a matter of conscience and question of character, not one of remuneration”. Swett Marden goes to the extreme in saying that as soon as a man can do a slipshod piece of work without being troubled about it, he will quickly begin to deteriorate. Conversely, when you begin stamping a high quality on your deliverables, you gain a certain reputation and that helps in establishing credibility.

## **10. Look out for others**

I have a terrific colleague at work that has a keen eye for names on the distribution list on emails and meeting invitations. Many times he has alerted me when I missed someone important on an email (in which my friend was copied) or meeting invitation.

Small actions such as these, gives the folks around you the feeling that you are watching out for them.