

## 6 Ways to Enhance Your Credibility In Business

You won't succeed in business if nobody believes in you. Here's how to make certain they do.



Your success in business is directly proportional to how quickly (and how well) you can establish credibility with your customers, investors, and colleagues. A while back, I had a conversation about credibility with [Randall Murphy](#), president of the professional development firm [Acclivus](#). Here's my interpretation of his ideas:

### 1. Be genuine about who you really are.

The days are long gone when customers were impressed by an illustrious corporate name or a fancy job title. Customers are more likely to respect you if you present yourself as an individual rather than a plug-and-play "representative." The moment you pretend to be more (or other) than you really are, your credibility flies out the window. Be authentic, even if all you bring to the table is your enthusiasm.

### 2. Know the legitimate value of what you provide.

When you know--truly know--what your products and services are worth, you're unafraid to communicate both the strengths and the limitations of your offering. You'll refuse to cave to unreasonable customer demands. You'll stick to your firm's policies and procedures, and explain to the customer why they make sense. You'll be strong and confident about what you can contribute, thereby creating credibility.

### 3. Have insights based on research and analysis.

Adding insights to a conversation automatically creates credibility. Insight comes from learning about a firm, the role it plays in the industry, and the customers that it serves. Insight is strengthened when you develop multiple contacts (and thus different perspectives) within the customer's firm. Remember: even

the smartest CEO doesn't know *everything*, and as an outsider, you can bring a fresh perspective to old problems.

#### **4. Listen actively, consider carefully, and respond succinctly.**

People who have credibility don't feel the need to "prove it" all the time. Nothing says "I'm insecure and insincere" spouting pat answers to questions that haven't been asked. Therefore, when a customer speaks, listen with all your concentration, take a few seconds to consider what was said, and only then make a remark, ask another question, or tell a brief story to move the conversation along.

#### **5. Never talk or write in "sales-speak."**

The moment you sound like a salesperson, customers buttonhole you into the "empty suit" category. Whenever you communicate with customers, edit out everything that sounds like a sales pitch (e.g. "money back guarantee"), don't make unsubstantiated claims (e.g. "we have the highest quality"), and avoid marketing biz-blab (e.g. "reach out", "best practices"). Instead, clearly describe how your offering improves your customer's business.

#### **6. Be a catalyst rather than a hero.**

In the comics, heroes swoop in to save the day. In real life, would-be sales heroes fall flat on their faces. Credibility comes not from your heroic actions, but from your ability to "crystallize" problems and solutions. Even customers with a detailed list of requirements usually need a clearer understanding of their needs and how best to meet them. Doing so helps the customer to be the hero, which creates masses of credibility...for you.

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