

How To Establish Credibility: 4 Strategies Leaders Always Use

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Guidance for leaders and aspiring leaders, interested in career impact

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This [past week](#), Britain's Prince Andrew experienced a complete loss of credibility. He lost his bid to stop a sex-scandal lawsuit. He was stripped of his military patronages and titles, and will no longer be addressed as "Your Royal Highness." The allegations of Virginia Guiffre, who claims that Andrew sexually assaulted her as a minor, have caused epic repercussions throughout the Royal Family. In part, the loss of credibility stems from Andrew's association with disgraced financier, Jeffrey Epstein. As titles disintegrate, the misalignment between words and deeds becomes evident. Although Andrew maintains his innocence, the suspicious associations, un-royal allegations and questionable integrity have created a complete loss of credibility.

Without credibility, it's impossible to lead. Credibility is more than just a title or a certification, it's about integrity. Integrity means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. In fact, the decision to follow your ideas, listen to your vision, or collaborate on a project often revolves around your credibility. And that kind of credibility is at the heart of [every hiring decision](#). So how do you build credibility - where does it come from, exactly? And how can you establish the kind of credibility that will advance your career?

At its core, credibility is about trustworthiness, according to author, [Sandy Allegier](#), in *The Personal Credibility Factor*. A basic human question we are all asking, every day and in every business interaction, is: [can I trust this person?](#) But trust alone is not enough, according to business coach, [Sonali Sinha](#). She writes, on the Soaring Eagles platform, "The other very important component of credibility is the perceived competence of the leader – i.e., people's faith in your knowledge, skills, and ability to do your job and get the job done as a leader".

In order to convey competence, we turn to the past. After all, the past is known. What you achieved in 2019, or last April, is readily available - your past performance speaks for itself, right?

Wrong. The past never speaks for itself; that's why there are job interviews. Financial leaders will tell you that past performance is no indication of future results. If you are looking to work for a new organization, how can you rely on the results of a previous one? What you achieved in Alabama isn't the same as what you might achieve in Arizona, now is it? Building a bridge between the past and the future is the key to establishing credibility. Here's how top performers create new results:

1. **The Past Doesn't Create the Future:** What would change for you if you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that you were credible, trustworthy and competent? What if your credibility was a constant, like a "given" in a math problem? In a math problem, when it's given that $x=5$, you don't try to prove x . Because that factor - " x " - is a given. Consider this as a given: the past doesn't create the future. The fact is, the past reminds us. It does not define us. Dr. Carmen Simon, in her book, *Impossible to Ignore*, says that the past is useful only when it helps us to predict the future. In *To Sell is Human*, author [Daniel Pink](#) points out that no one buys (or hires) your past; they are always buying in to your potential. The experience that creates credibility isn't the experience of the past. It's the experience you're creating for the people that matter to you, right now.
2. **Nothing to Prove, But a Commitment to Demonstrate:** [Brian Tracy](#) says to "Expect to be successful, expect to be liked, expect to be popular wherever you go." Wow. Arrogance is a spectacularly horrible recipe for credibility. This kind of motivational mumbo-jumbo just isn't credible. The strategy of self-expectation is built on unearned confidence. Lying to yourself and trying to believe it isn't a strategy for establishing credibility. Where's the trustworthiness, if you're not [being honest with yourself](#)? Indeed, do unrealistic expectations help anybody to be more credible? No. The fallacy here is a common in goal setting: expect to reach the stars and you just might land on the moon. Unfortunately, there's no oxygen on the moon. Plus, the kind of self-absorbed self-talk needed to maintain this kind of motivational razzle-dazzle isn't helping you to be more trustworthy. It's making you more insufferable. Demonstrate your

skills and talents, in the form of service. Serve others. Let x=5, now solve the problem. Help somebody. Someone on your team. Your boss. Your partner. What you believe about yourself is nowhere near as important as what you do to demonstrate your skills. Sorry, not sorry: your career is not a popularity contest. And we all define success on our own terms. Start discovering how deeper service might be the most credible way to achieve what's missing. And don't just buy into every motivational cliché that's pumped out onto the internet.

3. **How to Really Answer the “Can I Trust This Person?”**

Question: Instead of turning to the past to establish credibility, top performers create the future. There's a more powerful place to look, if you want to establish your credibility, especially in a job interview. Here's that question — *How can you help us?* The answer begins with aligning what you say with what you do. Consider the quote from George Eliot: “What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for one another?” Maybe [life isn't easy](#) right now. Maybe someone at work is making things difficult for you. But credible leaders rise above circumstances, to see service. At its core, leadership is service. How can you help the people you wish to lead? Taking action in the midst of tough times is the mark of someone who is competent, and credible.

4. **Speak in the Language of Creation:** all around us, we see the language of description. That language is evident in white papers and websites, news reports and documentaries. What happens if you shift to the language of creation? You begin looking at things you can create: partnerships, new initiatives, innovations and agreements. The language of creation is the language of credibility. And it begins with these three words: “I hear you.” When we listen to other viewpoints, our own becomes clear. Stop wasting time telling yourself how good you are, or that you are popular. Who cares? Your personal PR might not be credible. But actions speak louder than words. The language of creation is the language of action. Doing what you say is central to your credibility. And people want to know that you keep your word.

Consider that your credibility is a given, you don't have to prove it. Not to yourself or to anyone else. You just need to share it. Don't make promises you can't keep. Don't say what people want to hear; say what people need to hear.

You know what's more powerful than motivation? Demonstration. Stop pumping yourself full of high expectations and concentrate on higher results.

Share your skills, talents and abilities in action, by stepping into the language of creation. If you want to create faith in your abilities as a leader, consider the old maxim, “do the job, get the job.” Be the person you want to be - why wait? - and start demonstrating your capabilities. Do the right thing, even when no one is watching, and you won't have a royal screw-up. Your credibility is waiting for you, right now. Because integrity is always available, anytime your actions and your words align.