

Handout and Exercise

Becoming Credible



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How you can become credible

Credibility is:

- the quality of being believable or trustworthy
- the foundation of an HR's professional relationship with an organisation
- hard to win and easy to lose
- based on the perception of the recipient
- contextual i.e. credibility in the workplace does not automatically give an individual credibility outside of work.
- independent of formal power relationships and organisation structure
- both individuals and groups have credibility.

5. Proactively and consistently

4. Consistently

3. Regularly

2. Occasionally

1. Never

	Description	Your Scores	Your Audiences' View Score				
			1	2	3	4	Average
1	■ I keep my promises and commitments and deliver on them						
2	■ Having a reputation for success based on a track record and perceived value						
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowing your audience ■ What is important to them, their language, their world, their drivers ■ What their limits are e.g. for social interaction, change ■ Work with them, not separate from them 						
4	■ Personal honesty - Tell the truth and if you can't tell the truth, say you can't and give a reason						
5	■ Knowing yourself, your personal limits ('where to draw the line'), your beliefs, principles and what you stand for						
6	■ Having greater knowledge or experience than your audience						
7	■ Appropriate use of language to inspire others, be positive and assertive, and impart knowledge						
8	■ Knowing credible others						
9	■ Being seen to be in control and have a plan / answers in a situation of high uncertainty e.g. rapid change						

The Credibility Matrix

In the matrix below place the number for each item listed above, at the intersection of how you perceive your score and how your audience might perceive it. For example, if you put a “4” in the “Your View” column and a “2” in the “Your Audiences View” column, you would put the item number in the upper left-hand quadrant.



When you’re finished placing item number for each item in your list, notice where the numbers seem to be clustering. Do you tend to have a large difference between your view and your audiences or are the perceptions similar?

- Where there is a similar high perception of an item (i.e. **Credible Partners**), these are strengths that you need to reinforce and build on.
- Where there is a similar low perception of an item (i.e. **Non Value Adding**), these areas are weaknesses and you need to strengthen them.
- Where there is a large difference in perception and your view is high (i.e. **Out Of Touch**), these strengths need to be better communicated to your audience.
- Where there is a large difference in perception and your view is low (i.e. **Getting the basics right**), these are personal strengths that although you may not value, your audience does. You need to use these as a foundation for building other credibility items.

Typically, many results fall into the **Out of Touch** Box, where credibility gap is derived from the lack of awareness of the individual’s previous successes and experiences.

NB: Where there is a large difference in perceived strength, you may wish to seek independent verification before building an Action Plan.

Credibility Building Tactics

If you scored between 0–3 for any of the items, consider the following credibility-building tactics:

Promises and commitments

- Take small steps and easy wins to build your “credibility bank”
- Set clear expectations and measurable outcomes
- Ensure clear understanding and agreement
- Reinforce expectations regularly
- Keep the audience updated on the current status whenever possible
- Under promise and over deliver
- Celebrate success!

Previous successes and experience

- Communicate and refer to previous successes and experiences
- Publicise your successes to a wider audience e.g. industry journals
- Relate previous success to what your audience values
- Share learnings, good and bad
- Treat current commitments as potential future successes

Know your audience

- Use 2 way communication techniques
- In the beginning, ask simple questions. This will be expected and it easier than not knowing at a later stage
- Learn and use your audiences language
- Relate your successes and experiences to their experiences / issues / drivers
- Learn your audiences limits – personal, group, cultural

Associate with credible people

- Credibility will come from both you and your function / group
- Ask credible people to support you and communicate your previous successes
- To maximise your personal credibility, you have to ensure the group maximises their credibility
- Obtaining visible senior management commitment to agreed actions

Be personally consistent

- Know what you stand for
- Know what you will not do
- Be prepared for (and make) hard decisions based on your principles and beliefs
- Apply these principles consistently and be clear about why they apply

Know where you add value

- Understand what you have (knowledge, skills, resources, time) that your audience wants
- If you are unable to ascertain your ‘value’, admit it and seek to support in other ways
- Learn new skills and knowledge at every opportunity

Use appropriate language

- Having the necessary skills, experience and attitude has no value if you are unable to communicate them in a way that your audience finds appropriate
- Appropriateness includes the type, and style of language, your pitch and tone, and nonverbal aspects such as body language

Instability brings opportunity to show value

- Where your perception of the situation differs from your audience i.e. you perceive greater uncertainty than they do, you need to educate your audience by relating your views to their experiences
- Where there is instability, credibility is increased if you can demonstrate a way to resolve it

Be as honest as you can

- Be truthful wherever possible
- If you can't tell the truth, say why
- Do not give misleading answers

Building Credibility Action Planner

List any issues or weaknesses you have identified with your perceived credibility. Then list the actions you need to take to improve those areas.

Perceived issue or weakness	Actions required

Your Credibility Bank

The Credibility Bank is a visual method of thinking about either your personal or function credibility.

Stakeholder Group / Individual:

You have a credibility bank with every stakeholder connected to your role (both internal and external). Their perception is the sole decision maker on the size of your 'credibility balance'.

Credit Limit ('what you bring from your past')	Deposits ('what you've added to your Credibility balance')	Loans ('what you've promised to deliver in the future')	Withdraws ('what you've taken out through inappropriate actions')

Are you managing your bank account? Are you able to manage your credibility balances?

About CourageousHR

At CourageousHR we work with HR Professionals like you to help you create innovative people solutions and courageously apply them. We help you to bridge the gap between academic vision and consulting rhetoric to guide and inspire you and your HR Community to move from being 'followers' to leaders.

Our passion and thinking comes from our experiences, research and a belief that 'tomorrow doesn't have to be the same as today'. Our reach is global and we happily work with clients throughout the world and across a wide range of industries