

# TMZ

# FAKE NEWS



## **Become A Credible Communicator**

By Craig Harrison

Credibility in the workplace means believability. Simply put, do people believe what you say? Is your reputation based on a track record of telling the truth? Are your estimates accurate, your forecasts realistic and your word solid? Or are you a big talker, a storyteller or a spin doctor? Strive to be a credible communicator.

### **The Right Way to Write and Speak**

From the moment you submit a résumé and then interview for a job, the credibility counter is activated. Are your CV's assertions accurate, your chronology factual and your affiliations, degrees and awards correct? Whether spoken or written, our communication must withstand the test for truthfulness.

Whether or not your inaccuracies are uncovered during the interview process, you can lose your job and damage your career immeasurably when you lie, misstate or misrepresent your accomplishments. Pulitzer prize winning authors have been undone, as have supposed war heroes and many a politician, by aggrandizing or completely falsifying one's past accomplishments. You're also susceptible to blackmail when you lie and are then threatened with exposure. As we've just seen, there is no "luck of the Irish" involved when you lie about your credentials, even as the head football coach for the Notre Dame Fighting Irish.



### **Your Word is Your Bond**

People listen to what you say and how you say it. In every job situation you have the opportunity to become known as a person of his or her word. Conversely, you can become known for shading the truth, telling people what they want to hear, or parsing words as a defendant might do under cross examination in a courtroom.

We've all heard of the boy who cried wolf so many times that when a wolf finally appeared, people had long since stopped listening. This boy's credibility had long since turned non-existent. The same is true in the workplace. Whether you cry racism, sexism, ageism or favoritism it's important that there be credence to your claims. You do everyone a disservice if you falsely accuse or ascribe such motives to actions that otherwise occur.

### **Words Are Sticks and Stones**

Beyond misrepresenting your own accomplishments or capabilities, be cautious of assertions made about others. Character assassination can be fatal to careers, and not just the person you're blaspheming. Whether or not you're a manager your words carry a weight to them that affects others. Gossiping about others or even spreading half-truths can flag you as dangerous, untrustworthy and ultimately not promotable material.

One of the keys to success in the workplace is engendering trust from your coworkers. If you are gossiping or betraying confidences you destroy your own credibility — as an honorable co-worker, a safe confidante, and an ally.



### **Take the High Road**

Workplaces provide ample opportunities for you to earn credibility. Every time you make a deadline, do what you say you'll do or are there in a time of need for others, the department of the company at large, your credibility rises.

Times when you defend the honor of co-workers who aren't present, refuse to engage in gossip, or caution others to give co-workers the benefit of the doubt, you are showing wisdom and professionalism, which raises your credibility in the workplace.

Similarly, when you "say the right thing" or "do the right thing" in ethical situations your credibility is enhanced.



### **Tell It Like It Is**

Often employees fall down when it comes to admitting mistakes. The credible communicator can admit errors or mistakes in a forthright and direct manner. Everyone makes mistakes, yet the credible communicator can address them and go about rectifying them, restoring confidence in him or herself. Those lacking in credibility might try to cover up, ignore or minimize their folly, often compounding the error of their ways. Ultimately, it's less important that you made a mistake, than that you fixed it and can assure others it won't happen again.

### **Know When to Say No**

The credible communicator doesn't just tell people what they want to hear. Life would be easy if we could say "yes" to every request we received. Yet realistically, agreeing to something you ultimately can't deliver on is detrimental to your reputation. Develop the fortitude to say "no" when it's the right answer, even through it may not be the popular one. Over the long term, you will be respected for the accuracy of your assessments, decisions and determinations, even if the news isn't music to the ears of all who listen. Sometimes the truth isn't popular or pretty, but a person who is a "straight shooter" is respected by all.

### **Earning Your Stripes**

Strive to boost your credibility rating at work and in your professional relationships. You'll know you're succeeding when you hear others tell you they know they can count on you, have confidence in your projections and feel secure in their knowledge you're on the team. In a world of "fake news" and TMZ, of hacking and WikiLeaks, don't be in-credible...simply strive to be credible!

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# CREDIBILITY

## MAKING HONESTY & INTEGRITY YOUR POLICIES

### WITH CRAIG HARRISON



### It's better to *have* character than to be one!

“Character is like a tree  
and reputation like its shadow.  
The shadow is what we think of it;  
the tree is the real thing.”

— Abraham Lincoln

As a leader, manager, speaker or professional of any kind, CREDIBILITY is essential to your being hired, promoted, followed, respected and trusted. Are you *credible* in the eyes of your co-workers, employees or managers? Are you believable? Promotable? Electable? CREDIBILITY is the foundation upon which you raise children, build businesses and establish a career. In a world that celebrates what's incredible, your goal should be that which is credible.

### Learning Objectives

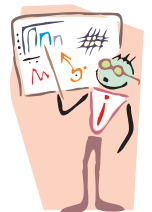
- ▶ Assess who is credible and who isn't, and why
- ▶ Learn ways of establishing personal credibility in the workplace: via your language, attire, presence, listening skills and patterns of performance
- ▶ Master the ability to say no with credibility and how to deliver bad news credibly
- ▶ Understand the art of the apology and how to recover from mistakes to enhance your credibility
- ▶ Understand the role of key gender and cultural differences
- ▶ Discover ways to build your reputation through words and deeds

### How The Presentation Is Delivered

Using stories, examples and historical figures from Bernie Madoff and Joe Paterno to Mother Theresa and George Washington, we explore how credibility is established, enhanced or eroded through words and deeds. Discussions, real life scenarios and a fun credibility game all help attendees assess others' credibility using their own value system.

### About Your Presenter

Craig Harrison writes, trains, coaches and speaks about communication and leadership and their vital role in professional success. His articles have appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he has been profiled by *The Wall Street Journal*, and interviewed by 60 MINUTES, BBC RADIO, *Selling Power* and *Business Week* magazines. Craig has trained corporate, academic and non-profit groups to communicate with clarity and confidence and chaired various boards of directors. As 2004-05 president of the NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION's Northern California chapter, a past president of the INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSOC. (SF-Silicon Valley chapter), and past District Governor for TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL, Craig has helped thousands become credible and confident communicators.



PO Box 5965, Berkeley, CA 94705-0965 USA

Craig@ExpressionsOfExcellence.com

www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com

(510) 547-0664 Direct

