



Become a Credible Communicator!

Make Honesty Your Policy

By Craig Harrison

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When you speak, do people listen? You don't have to be E.F. Hutton to command attention and respect in the workplace. But you do have to be credible.

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, for telling people what they want to hear, or parsing words as a defendant might do under cross examination in a court of law.

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 co-workers. 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

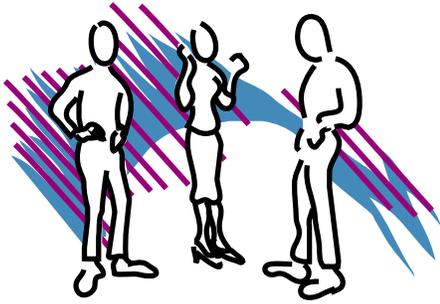
Strive to boost your credibility rating at work and in your professional relationships. You'll know you're succeeding when you hear others tell you they know they can count on you, have confidence in your projections and feel secure in their knowledge you're on the team. Don't be in-credible...strive to be incredible!

In his youth professional speaker and corporate trainer Craig Harrison won a Tall Tales Contest. Now he teaches classes for UC Santa Cruz Extension's business department on credibility, becoming a savvy office worker and facilitating effective meetings. Reach him at 510-547-0664 or through his website

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San Francisco Bay Area-based Professional speaker Craig Harrison's Expressions of Excellence!™ provides sales and service solutions through speaking. For information on keynotes, training, coaching, curriculum for licensing and more, call (510) 547-0664, visit www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com or E-mail Craig@ExpressionsOfExcellence.com for inquiries.



DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION QUOTIENT (CQ)

EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

WITH CRAIG HARRISON

Communication takes many forms.

In a typical work day you may communicate with customers, clients, co-workers (including superiors, subordinates and colleagues), vendors and city, state and federal representatives. Do you communicate with interns or volunteers? On occasion you're also speaking with the media: members of your association or even competitors. How well are you communicating with each?



Each form of communication draws on different skills, each requires different approaches and sometimes even a different lexicon. Forget GQ! These days it's your CQ that matters...your Communication Quotient.



Learning Objectives



- ▶ Develop techniques for delivering an effective report in a meeting
- ▶ Elicit co-worker support for a project by speaking the language of benefits; learn how to make "the ask"
- ▶ Learn to speak one-on-one with a co-worker regarding a problem
- ▶ Build and motivate a work team
- ▶ Learn the ABC's of written communication
- ▶ Handle difficult questions and difficult questioners
- ▶ Discover how to give instructions that can't be misunderstood
- ▶ Master the apology and the recovery



How The Presentation Is Delivered

Definitions, positive and negative anecdotal case studies, illuminating role playing activities and a practical question & answer session all help attendees DEVELOP THEIR COMMUNICATION QUOTIENT.



About Your Presenter

Craig Harrison writes, trains, coaches and speaks about communication and its 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. 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 improve their communication skills.



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