

THE TRANSPARENCY EDGE

How Credibility Can Make or Break You in Business

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The Web site for this book is at www.transparencymage.com.

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MAIN IDEA

In the wake of numerous high-profile business and accounting disasters, transparency – a “what-you-see-is-what-you-get” code of conduct and leadership style – delivers clear and compelling business advantages. Specifically, a transparent management style:

1. Increases your company’s credibility in the marketplace and amongst the pool of potential employees.
2. Builds loyalty, especially amongst those who have to report directly to business managers who operate in a transparent manner.
3. Helps you gain the trust and confidence of your superiors.

Successful transparency in business, however, doesn’t mean to simply “let it all hang out”. Rather, a survey of more than 2,300 executives in a number of industries highlighted nine key behaviors which determine the level of credibility in leaders:

To Build Your Credibility Through Transparency	1	Visibly demonstrate through your actions and decisions you are unerringly honest
	2	Gather good intelligence by asking others for their opinions and feedback
	3	Be composed and predictable – especially in situations of great stress and challenge
	4	Be authentic and genuine enough to let your guard down when appropriate
	5	Keep your promises at all times and match your words with your actions
	6	Deliver sensitive, controversial or plain bad news well
	7	Use handling mistakes as a great opportunity to enhance your credibility
	8	Show respect for others and avoid destructive comments, blame or criticism
	9	Demonstrate convincingly that you care about the people you lead personally

1. Visibly demonstrate through your actions and decisions you are unerringly honest Page 2

Honesty is like the hub on the wheel of leadership. Whenever you decide not to share what you do know, tell your followers why. Quite simply, people who act honestly don’t have hidden agendas which complicate matters or cause problems.

2. Gather good intelligence by asking others for their opinions and feedback Pages 2 - 3

Asking others their opinions shows respect and demonstrates you value their input. When leaders ask for input or feedback on their performance, it becomes easier to align intentions with reality – which is important for transparency to exist.

3. Be composed and predictable – especially in situations of great stress and challenge. Pages 3 - 4

How leaders conduct themselves during times of challenge is a litmus test of their credibility. Business transparency does not require that leaders “let it all hang out”. Instead, predictability and calm assurance builds trust in followers.

4. Be authentic and genuine enough to let your guard down when appropriate Page 4

Authenticity is an important part of leadership transparency. There are times when revealing personal information in the context of work will be helpful. Choosing those moments, good leaders build the quality of their work relationships.

5. Keep your promises at all times and match your words with your actions Page 5

Place a very high value on any commitments you make. If you have a good track record for matching what you say with what you do, people will be more tolerant when you’re forced to reconsider your promises in light of changed circumstances.

6. Deliver sensitive, controversial or plain bad news well Pages 5 - 6

Delivering bad news to employees, investors or your peers can be tricky. If you can do this well, however, bad news offers an opportunity to enhance your credibility. The key is to deliver bad news in such a way that trust increases and relationships grow.

7. Use handling mistakes as a great opportunity to enhance your credibility Pages 6 - 7

How you handle mistakes when they arise is actually more important than getting things right the first time. The way you end up handling mistakes visibly demonstrates your commitment to honesty far more eloquently than anything you could say.

8. Show respect for others and avoid destructive comments, blame or criticism. Page 7

The use of divisive or inappropriate language can detract from your credibility level as a leader. To avoid this, always employ language which avoids fixing blame, criticizing, an “us-versus-them” attitude or talking down to others.

9. Demonstrate convincingly that you care about the people you lead personally Page 8

Leaders show they care by recognizing their followers, understanding them and by helping them grow and develop personally. Good leaders say: “Follow me, and I will do whatever is needed to help you be a great success”.



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