

Credibility. It's not what you think.

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By Michel Neray

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Look up 'Credible' in Websters Dictionary and you'll find: "Capable of being credited or believed; worthy of belief; entitled to confidence; trustworthy."

OK, so no surprise there.

Credibility gives you permission to speak, and gives the person you're speaking to permission to listen.

Regardless of whether you are in the service business or you sell a hard product, everyone needs to establish their credibility, especially with prospective clients. But if you're a consultant, advisor, or coach, then it's harder for your clients to evaluate the value of your advice and recommendations.

For you, credibility is everything. And if you have it, you can move quicker into a more productive discussion about issues and solutions without having to justify everything you say. You can be more relaxed. You can let your guard down a little.

With your credibility clearly established, you can be more confident to ask for the business.

So far, I'm not telling you anything you didn't already know. What you might not know is what credibility really is in a business context beyond the dictionary definition - how people perceive credibility and how you can establish credibility more quickly and easily.

Ask a traditional marketer what's the best way to establish your credibility and he or she will tell you to list your biggest clients or describe one of your most impressive case studies. If you listen to yourself as you speak to new clients, you might hear yourself talking about your credentials as way to establish how smart you are.

It's true that your client list, successes and testimonials all play a role in credibility, but they miss the mark if you hang your hat on them. Here's why. What is probably going on in the head of the person you're talking to is this: "Wow, that sounds great and I have no doubt that you did an excellent job for

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them, but my situation is different..."

Cost of Entry

Guess what? Excellent credentials, a strong client list, impressive successes with other clients - they're the cost of entry simply to be considered as a possible supplier or partner. They're expected. It would be more surprising to people if you don't have them rather than the fact that you do.

It doesn't even do much to differentiate you from your competition. After all, your competitors are also talking about their excellent credentials, strong client list, impressive successes. And the more talk about the same things, the more you leave your new prospective client with a big 'so what?'

Besides, your prospect may have gotten your name from an existing client or they picked up some of your printed literature or went through your website. As a result, they've probably already checked your credentials and might even know some of your clients.

So what should you talk about to establish your credibility?

Nothing. Don't 'talk' about anything.

The absolute best thing you can do when you meet a new prospective client is to ask questions and then listen.

Remember, the only thing that counts in your prospect's mind is how well you understand his or her situation. And the only way you can demonstrate that is by asking questions - a lot of questions. Simple questions, pointed question, questions that rephrase what the person has just told you, questions that allow you to test your hypotheses about challenges and obstacles the person might be facing, leading questions, questions that hint at what you probably already know you'd recommend if your prospect were already a client.

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In fact, the mere act of asking questions forces your prospect along a line of reasoning that demonstrates you really do know what you're talking about. And when you follow up with suggestions and recommendations, you have all the credibility you need. Why? Because you asked all the right questions!

Like A Surgeon

If you're not ready to accept this approach, imagine that you're sitting in a doctor's office because you have a sore back. Would you be impressed if, five minutes into the consultation, he or she recommended back surgery?

Probably not --- so why should your clients and prospects be 'sold' on your solutions before they are totally convinced that you understand the problem?

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A good doctor will ask questions to reveal other symptoms. "Does the pain radiate downward?" "Is it accompanied by abdominal pain?" "Oh, and are you also experiencing excessive urination, especially at night?"

If the answer is 'no', then the doctor simply moves on to another line of questioning. If the answer is 'yes', the doctor explains how all these symptoms indicate that nothing's wrong with your back. Instead, you have kidney stones!

Not in a million years would you have linked these different symptoms together. Most importantly, it's his or her ability to paint a complete picture of what was going on that really impresses you.

That's credibility.

And it's more than simply focusing on your client's pain - as you might have heard from other so-called sales experts.

Using the Essential Message approach, the pain is just one of several symptoms. By uncovering other symptoms, and by showing how they all link to the real problem, you are establishing enormous credibility before jumping in with your recommendation.

A Real-Life Example

A very senior, seasoned and successful accountant was sitting in the workshop. His arms were folded across his chest, and his face practically had 'prove it' written across his forehead.

You know the type.

Soon after my introduction, he raised his hand and proceeded to tell me and the other people in the workshop why accountants could not do marketing like other companies. I let him speak. He then explained that he had learned a long time ago that if he wanted people at social functions to talk to him, the last thing he should say was that he was an accountant. He'd tell people he was a movie producer or had some other glamorous career. When he was done, all I asked him was to keep an open mind.

About a half hour later, I was talking about how credibility was rooted in our ability to understand the other person's situation. To prove my point, I picked up an accounting publication that had published one of my articles:

"Do people get all excited when you start talking about your business or about accounting in general? Once people at a party find out that you're an accountant, does the news travel around the room with lightening speed until suddenly, you find yourself mobbed with pretty young men and women who all want your autograph, or at least display a sincere interest in your career and hang onto your every word?"

I didn't think so."

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I stopped reading and put the article down. That was it. He laughed, unfolded his arms, and gave himself permission to listen to what I had to say. To quote Webster's, in that moment he deemed me 'worthy of belief'.

And by the end of that day, he pulled me aside and said, 'I'm going to have to figure out how to get my partner into this workshop.'

So next time you're standing in front of a prospective new client, or sitting across from someone at a boardroom table, resist the urge to prove how smart you are. Hold back and just listen. Then ask a few questions. Then listen. Then ask a few more questions. Then offer a tidbit of a recommendation. Then listen. Then ask a few more questions. Then listen.

Then ask for the business.

Create Credibility for Success

By Nichols Dixon

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by: **Nichols Dixon**

Back in my early marketing days, finding the magic ticket to online success was my prime focus. Day after day I became engaged in the journey to find the internet "El Dorado". I did find what I was looking for, nothing more than a fistful of air. The online marketing formula for success was always right in front of me or rather right inside. And yet still so many marketers are out there searching for that elusive ticket to success.

Notice any successful marketer and you will find that their success is built strongly on their credibility. Yanik Silver, Marlon Sanders, Ken Evoy and many others all have credibility which precedes them.

This is why they are all so successful. They focus on creating lasting materials which will work for them in the long term. Many marketers including myself have made that mistake by not doing so, which can prove to be fatal to your business.

In the vast world of the internet, credibility is hard to come by indeed. The internet removes the need for face to face meetings and dialogue, but that does not remove the need for trust and dependability.

How can you create credibility for your online business? You can do so by establishing materials which will be of benefit to your readers and customers. Posting free ads to classifieds and to FFA's is not what I am talking about. These bring little or no results in the long run.

Article writing, ezine publishing and posting to forums are examples of credibility building materials. When used in the proper way they seem to take on a life of their own and can bring wonderful results. And the best thing is that they have the ability to stick around for a long time after you create and publish them.

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All the examples stated are practiced by successful marketers. Some may use all the techniques or they might use one or two. My experience with creating credibility building materials has been wonderful.

A few detractors may point out that using these strategies on a freely hosted website is lacking of credibility, but believe me they work. These techniques have been around for a while and many marketers can attest to the fact that they do produce results.

Give your business a boost by focusing on creating credibility and getting your name in the public eye. Why don't you give it a try ?

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