



HOW TO BUILD YOUR CREDIBILITY IN 4 SIMPLE STEPS

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The ability to establish credibility is fundamental to anyone in business. At meetings, presentations and conferences you may be tasked with securing the commitment of an unfamiliar audience. Credibility influences the relationships that we are able to build, the level of co-operation that we are able to secure and the way that we are perceived as a skilled professional.

Is there a recipe for generating credibility quickly? The speaker introduction at your first point of interaction constitutes an important starting point. Delivered proficiently this enables receiving counterparts to understand your areas of expertise, the experience that you can draw upon and ultimately the reason why your words are worthy of consideration. Consider 4 important characteristics when selecting your words.

1. Relevant

The content included in your introduction will need to be crafted with relevance to the

topic at hand. Surprisingly, many miss an opportunity to build momentum as an interesting speaker by failing to embrace this. Ask yourself the questions:

- What makes me qualified to speak on this topic?
- How can I articulate both the breadth and depth of my experience?
- Should references to specific projects or examples be made?

An effective introduction
embodies a set of
fundamental characteristics:
Relevant, objective, tangible and
concise.

Avoid the practice of reciting a 'standard' introduction in every situation. The importance of customizing your approach should not be under-estimated. This is particularly important for those with a wide

base of experience. When introducing myself to clients in the automotive and technology industries, for example, I find myself adapting my content quite significantly to connect with the specific needs and interests of my audiences.

2. Objective

Make your introduction objective rather than selling-oriented. Presenting an exaggerated view of capabilities leads to the setting of unrealistic expectations that may be difficult or impossible to fulfil. Mature individuals have heard many people brag about what they can do. Factual, descriptive, evidence, on the other hand, provides the receiver with a clear basis to make their own evaluation of who you are and what you can do.

3. Tangible

An introduction that is vague or fluffy is likely to be ineffective. A more tangible approach is achieved by quantifying expertise and experience.

- Experience can be quantified by specifying the number of years working in a particular domain.
- Expertise in a specialist field or technology can be quantified through reference to qualifications or certification by a recognized body.
- If you are working in a broad professional field, e.g. financial services, you will need be specific regarding your area of expertise before your potential contributions can be understood.
- References to relevant work that you have done generally command a high degree of attention.

"I bring 9 years of experience working as a project manager in the financial services

industry, specifically with risk management solutions. I am PMI (Project Management Institute) certified, and I have just returned from South America where I lead a transformation project for one of the leading banks there."

4. Concise

The ability to communicate concisely and deliver clear, emphatic content in few words is an admirable quality of a skilled speaker. Coupled with the prudent selection of vocabulary it can be very powerful. Consider the length of your introduction and the amount of content to include. When embarking on a longer term collaboration it may be appropriate to take some time elaborating your introduction,

but even in a meeting when participants make short round-the-table introductions it should be possible to articulate the nature and depth of your experience in just few words.

"Stuart Jones, 20 years working in telecommunications with a focus on operational processes and automation..."

Next time you make a personal introduction, whether at a meeting, conference or interview, choose your words wisely. Will your content be objective, tangible, relevant and concise?

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Samir Parikh is a principal business consultant, practice manager, and consultancy CEO with over 25 years of industry experience. In 2000, Samir founded *SPConsulting* a global management consulting firm specializing in organizational strategy and change management.

With a track record of projects conducted in more than 50 countries the firm works closely with companies that are transforming into consulting-based organizations, delivering solutions and professional services in highly competitive environments.



FURTHER READING

Samir is the author of *The Consultant's Handbook*, published by John Wiley & Sons. This book provides a comprehensive guide for the practical implementation of consulting skills by professionals working in consulting and professional-services-related disciplines.

The book contains additional guidelines, examples and use-cases to support readers in implementation of consulting techniques, as well as practical tips and lessons-learned from real consulting engagements.