



## 6 TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR PROFESSIONAL CREDIBILITY & EXPANDING YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

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“Other people’s opinion of you is none of your business” may be a popular saying, but your professional credibility and reputation are actually very important and require active management.

As defined by the Cambridge Dictionary, reputation is “the opinion that people have of someone or something, based on past behavior or character” and credibility is “the fact that someone can be believed or trusted.” Does your professional reputation and credibility currently represent who you believe you are or want to be? If the answer is no, there are steps you can take to change that.

Here are 6 tips for managing your professional credibility and expanding your professional development opportunities for years to come:

Periodically pause, reflect and identify things you do that may be damaging your reputation — and thus holding you back from greater opportunities. For instance, are you always running late or turning in work past the deadline?

**SELF-ASSESS** **1**

## **2** CONDUCT AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL CREDIBILITY

Knowledge is power, and when combined with actions, it can bring about change. Ask 6-10 people to share the following from their perspectives: your strengths, challenges and opportunities. Be sure to ask people at your place of employment, organization or business (internal) and partners, clients, and fellow board or committee members (external).

You can do this in a brief survey or in person. To get honest answers, share your motivations for asking, and assure people that unflattering feedback will be well received (there are resources online to improve your ability to handle negative feedback, if needed). Get comfortable being uncomfortable.

Identify and list what contributes to the issues you've identified through self-assessment and your conversations — and how you will work on these issues. For example, are you unreliable? Do you mean well but commit to things, then under deliver? Maybe you have too much on your plate. If that is the case, work on saying yes only to the things you can do well and on managing your time so you avoid a “credibility gap.”

## IDENTIFY THE ISSUES YOU WANT TO WORK ON

# 3

## 4 DIVIDE AND CONQUER

There is no Band-Aid approach to growth; you will see the fruits of your labor through consistency over time. There is so much to learn and you cannot tackle everything at once, but this can be exciting. Start somewhere and commit to invest in yourself.

It is important to be consistent to gain trust and build professional credibility, and consistency takes practice. Otherwise, you will be known for being great only sometimes, and that may be damaging to your career.

## PRACTICE CONSISTENCY

# 5

## 6 BE ACCOUNTABLE

You are only human and will undoubtedly make mistakes. When you do, acknowledge that you have, correct what you can, learn from the experience and rebuild trust. If you continue to make the same mistake repeatedly, the behavior at the root of the mistakes will become part of your professional reputation, and what people begin to expect from you.

Committing to your professional development, practicing self-reflection, actively troubleshooting and building trust through consistency will together pay off in the long run and open doors that you would not have imagined.