

Has Your Credibility Banana Turned Brown?

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“To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable, we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful.”

Edward R Murrow, journalist and news anchor

Credibility is everything in the influence game. As a salesperson or someone who supports sales, you build your reputation and achieve success based on your credibility. It often takes a long time to build credibility, but it can be lost in a nano-second if one isn't careful. There are six ways you jeopardize being seen as someone who is trustworthy, credible.

1. **Not delivering on what you promised.**

The old adage of “over deliver and under promise” is something to be remembered. If you say a service contract covers certain items, be sure it does. If you say equipment will be overnighted at no charge and it arrives three days later, your reputation is blemished. The bottom line is- be certain of what you say!

2. **Shifty eyes.** From the client's perspective, you need to look them in the eye as you explain key points. Solid eye contact signifies honesty. A lack of it indicates you are most likely not telling the truth or hiding something. Don't risk losing eye contact by reading from the screen or looking at your notes.

3. **Filler or “weasel” words.** “Um's, ah's and you knows” sink your ship. The client just wants you to have a straightforward conversation with you. Not being able to explain your plan without hedging indicates you probably don't know your stuff. Pause often to allow yourself time to think, and you will eliminate filler words.

4. **Vocal issues.** Your voice has a lot to do with how you are perceived. A clear, confident voice is critical. Fast talkers make the client uncomfortable. Listeners may conclude you are trying to pull the wool over their eyes. A

voice without any enthusiasm is equally bad. A monotone indicates you are indifferent to what you are proposing.

5. **Fidgeting.** If you seem nervous because you are shifting in your chair, playing with your ring or pen, the client will pick up on it. Nervousness is contagious. It scares people. Nobody wants to do business with someone who doesn't seem like they have it all together.

6. **Tough questions.** Customers will have questions and objections so you need to be ready for them. If you haven't taken the time to prepare, you most likely will blow the opportunity to close the deal. Often, customers look at how well you have answered the “hard” questions to determine whether to give you a “thumbs up or a thumbs down.”

Customers want to trust what you tell them. However, they are cautious about making a mistake. They often look for “tells” that indicate you are not confident, not trustworthy and not credible. Pay attention to how you might be perceived and remember every engagement is an opportunity to build credibility.

Question: What issues have you seen that affect credibility in your job? What has worked for you? We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.

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