

## *The 4 Cores of Credibility*

Stephen M. R. Covey

For any individual attempting to build trust with another, there is a self-evident prerequisite to doing so: being personally trustworthy. You can't build sustainable trust without trustworthiness anymore than you can build an enduring building without a foundation.

Trustworthiness might sound nice in a Boy Scout setting, but what does trustworthiness mean in the real world, in an organizational setting? It means *individual credibility*. Credibility comes from the Latin root, *credere*, which means "to believe". Individual credibility literally means individual believability.

There are four key elements of individual credibility—four cores—each of which is vital for an individual to develop in order to have the foundation of credibility—of believability—upon which trust can be built.

The first core of credibility is *integrity*. Integrity is what most people think about when they think of trust. When leaders don't tell the truth, eventually their dishonesty will be discovered and it will undermine their believability, their credibility. Most of the massive violations of trust are violations of integrity. Integrity might take months, even years to build yet can be destroyed almost overnight.

The second core of credibility is *intent*. Intent refers to our motive, our agenda. If people do not trust our motive, they will not trust us. Our motive needs to be open (as opposed to hidden) and one of mutual benefit where we care not only for ourselves but for the people we lead or serve. Think about it: when you suspect a hidden agenda from someone, you question or are suspicious about everything they say and do.

The third core of credibility is *results*. Results refer to our track record, our production, our getting the right things done. If we don't accomplish what we are expected to get done, it lessens our credibility. The converse is equally true: when we achieve the results we promised, a reputation of producing gets established. This reputation precedes us.

The fourth core of credibility is *capabilities*. Capabilities refer to our ability to inspire confidence, the means we use to produce results. This refers to our talents, attitudes, skills and knowledge, in short, our competence. A family doctor might have integrity, his motives might be good and his track record might be strong, but unless he's trained and skilled to perform the task at hand—brain surgery—he'll be lacking in credibility.

Each of these four cores—integrity, intent, results and capabilities—builds credibility and a foundation of individual credibility is the starting place for creating and growing trust with all stakeholders.

To learn more about how being a high-trust leader is career critical to you and mission critical to your business, visit us at [www.CoveyLink.com](http://www.CoveyLink.com).