

Increasing Your Business Credibility



Introduction

How people view your business is paramount to whether or not they will engage with you or purchase one of your products or services. It's important to consider what kind of picture your everyday interactions and operations paint in the mind of your customer. Ensuring that you're presenting a cohesive and professional image to your audience ensures that you are holding onto the leads and connections that you make with each person who comes into contact with you.

Each section of this guide provides valuable information on how you can reliably and consistently maintain and protect your business credibility, ideas on how to increase it, and how to empower yourself with a plan that will help you dodge everyday problems. Let's get started!



How to Emotionally Connect with Your Readers

Your most loyal readers will connect with you not just through your content, but through your emotions. An emotional connection with your readers is just as important as the actual content on your website.

How do you connect emotionally with your readers?

Share Personal Experiences and Stories

Share personal stories from your life. Tell them about the time you got rejected by the one you were in love with. Or about the time you staked everything on a business deal and lost it all.

Talk about your big mistakes and your big successes. Talk about where you came from and your dreams of where you want to go.

Talk about what you're doing today and why. Reveal yourself to your readers.

Of course, you'll always want to tie everything back to a lesson or a moral they can learn from the story. It shouldn't be "about" you, but you can share aspects of yourself throughout the process of teaching a valuable lesson.

Pace, Pace, Lead

The "Pace, Pace, Lead" technique first originated from Milton Erickson, one of the three therapists whose techniques were used to form today's NLP techniques.

The "Pace, Pace, Lead" technique was Erickson's primary technique for building trust and emotional connection with his clients. Using this technique, he was able to get even the toughest clients to trust him and open up.

What is the "Pace, Pace, Lead" technique?

Basically, start by pacing, or "following along" with your reader's emotional state. Describe their frustrations, their wants, and their emotional frame of mind to

them so well that they feel like you really understand them.

Then and only then do you try to "lead" them to where you want to go (for example a lesson you want them to learn, a different emotional state, etc.).

Be Genuinely Emotionally Engaged

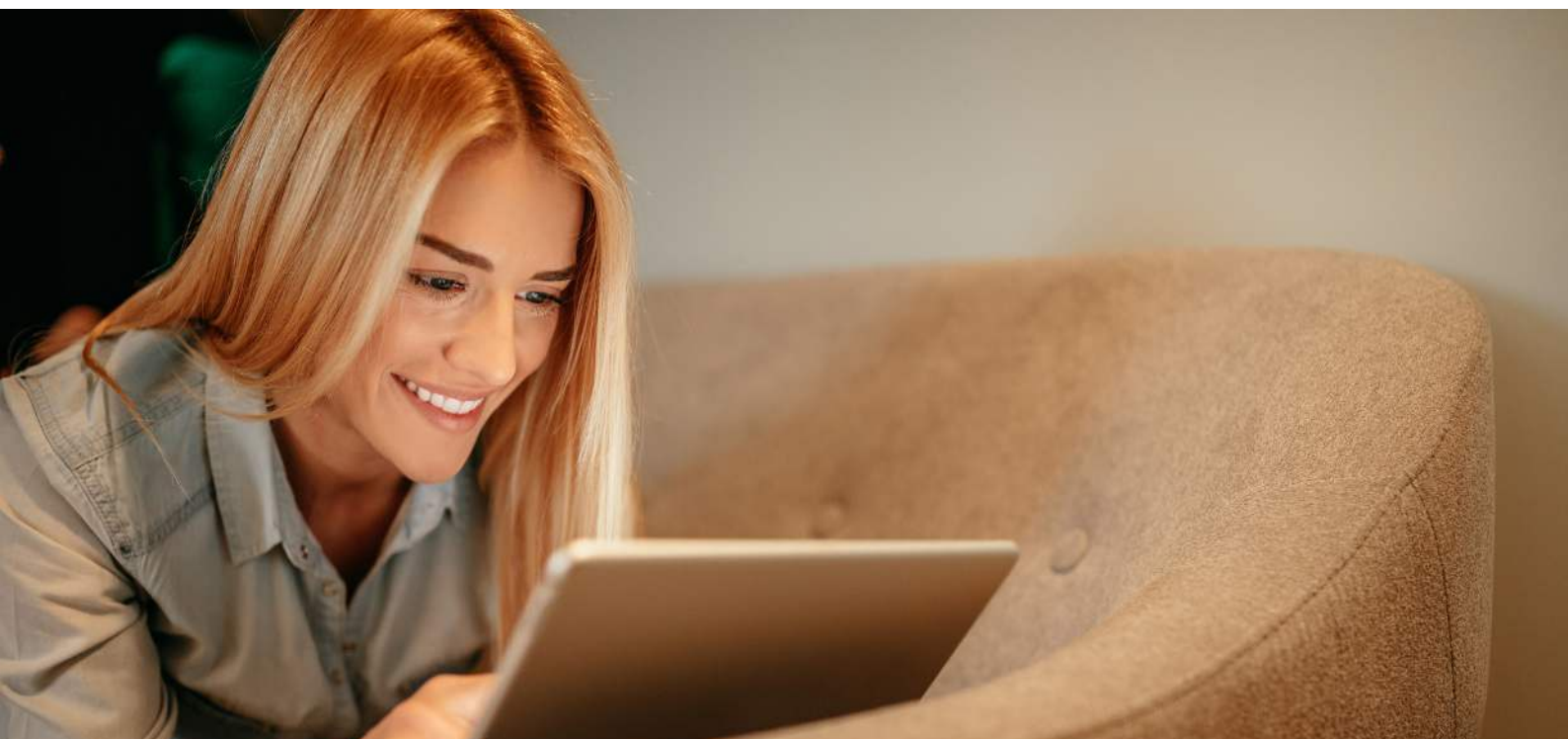
In face to face conversation, your body language and facial expressions convey your emotions to other people without you needing to say a word.

With phone conversations, subtle variations in your tone of voice give people cues on how you're feeling, even though they can't see your face.

This phenomenon also exists in writing. Though there are fewer cues to go on, people can sense when you're genuinely emotionally engaged when you're writing.

If you're really passionate about a subject, it'll come through. If you're genuinely angry about an injustice, people can tell. If you actually love a product you're endorsing, people will feel that as well.

Written communication doesn't convey emotion nearly as well as face to face communication, but this human-to-human emotional link can't be ignored, even in writing.





In other words, put yourself in a real emotional state before you start writing. Write during peak emotional moments and don't wait until inspiration has disappeared to start writing. Write when the emotion is there. People can tell and they'll connect with that.

Writing to connect emotionally with your readers takes more dedication and vulnerability on your part. It entails revealing more of yourself than if you were just writing factual articles. But that's what it takes to build a deeply loyal readership.

How to Get More Read Interaction on Your Articles and Blog

Reader interaction accomplishes many things for a website. It helps add user generated content. It also helps pull in more readers. People want to participate and see what everyone's talking about. However, getting reader interaction isn't always easy. Here are a few tried and true strategies for getting more interaction on your articles and blogs.

1. Ask For It

One of the best ways to get more interaction is to ask for it. It doesn't matter if you're writing an article or a blog post. Here are just a few questions or calls to action you can include at the end of your content piece:



- What's your experience?
- Do you have any advice on... ?
- What do you think?
- Have you ever... ?
- What's your favourite?
- Do you remember when... ?

Of course some topics lend themselves to this approach better than others. A blog post on a home cooking site about your favourite soup recipe is likely to get a lot of content. People love to share their favourite recipes. However, a blog post about how to soak lentils isn't likely to get much feedback unless you ask for advice or information about different soaking strategies.

2. Respond to Comments

When you respond to comments you start a discussion. Other people may feel the desire to put their two cents in. If you don't respond to the comments, then the conversation may stop there. If you want to motivate more readers to chime in and offer their opinion, insight and comments, then always make time to respond to comments. It's important.

3. Spark a Controversy or Discussion by Presenting a Potentially Heated Topic

Controversy tends to motivate people to share their opinion. Take care here. If controversy doesn't fit your brand or personality, then consider publishing newsworthy content. Again, people often feel motivated to share their opinion on both controversial and newsworthy topics.



4. Share a Picture or Video

We're visual people. When we see a picture that makes us laugh, smile, cry or get angry, we are motivated to comment on it. Sometimes a picture or a video is all you need. It can say more than any article or blog post. However, other times it's nice to include it with relevant content.

5. Share a Personal Story

Within the body of your article or blog post, share a story. Take time to share something personal that relates to the content of your article. It doesn't have to be elaborate or long winded. When you share a story, it motivates others to share their story. You can find yourself learning a lot about your readers and prospects when you use this technique.

If you have a blog, reader activity and comments add credibility to your blog. Additionally, they tend to motivate more reader interaction, links and increased traffic. If you have a theme-based website, then reader-generated content can really help you boost your search engine ranking.

How to Get Video Testimonials

Video testimonials instill a lot more trust and credibility than text or even audio testimonials. People actually have a person they can relate to; they can see the expression on their faces and the belief in the product is actually felt. People instinctively know that it's much harder to fake a video testimonial, which makes it all the more powerful.

How do you get video testimonials?

Use Fiverr

One of the easiest ways to get a video testimonial is to use a service like Fiverr. Fiverr is a global online marketplace for freelance services. Fiverr's platform connects freelancers to people or businesses looking to hire.

There are many people on the internet that would be happy to be hired to take a look at your product and give you a video testimonial.

Make sure when you order the testimonial that what they say is legitimate. If they didn't actually build muscle from using your product, tell them not to say so. Instead, they can comment on the incredible depth of the research, your clear knowledge base, etc.

Get Them From Friends

Another simple method is to get your friends to review your product and do a video testimonial for you.



Take your friend out to lunch in exchange. It really shouldn't be a big deal and should take them less than fifteen minutes.

On the other hand, if you have friends that have similar interests, you may want to actually have them use your product and give an in-depth video testimonial. In this case, since they're actually benefiting from the product, giving them the product for free in exchange for fifteen minutes of video shooting is probably a fair trade.

Get Them From Filmed Events

Finally, the more testimonials you can get from actual customers, the better.

But if most of your customers are from online sales, how are you supposed to get them to give you a video testimonial? While some people try to ask online buyers for testimonials in exchange for bonuses or gifts, it's quite rare that someone would actually go through the trouble of setting up a camera themselves, filming a video, encoding it and sending it to you.

Instead, the most effective way to get testimonials from real customers is usually to get it from an in-person event. Host a seminar or workshop, promote it on your list and get a room full of people who are fans of your work. At the end of the event, offer a bonus to anyone who gives a video testimonial.

Don't have a large list? No problem. Just create a small, 10 to 20-person event by promoting on sites like Meetup.com and Craigslist.com. Again, at the end of the event, ask people to give you a testimonial. The more enticing the bonus, the better.

As you can tell, getting video testimonials isn't nearly as hard as most people make it out to be. You can get instant video testimonials for just \$5 from Fiver, you can get them for free from friends or you can get them from loyal fans by hosting an in-person event.



How To Master Storytelling for Maximum Credibility

Storytelling makes sales letters and websites much more entertaining, gives you huge boosts in credibility and will in general significantly increase your sales. What are the elements of a great story? How can you use it to increase your credibility? Here are the most important skills and elements to master.

Start With a Lesson

Every story needs to have a crystal clear lesson. The lesson could be a moral one (e.g. "Don't cheat your customers"), or it could be a technical one (e.g. "What happens when you only pay attention to CTR and not page quality in Adwords").

Whatever the case, the lesson needs to be clear to you before you start to write the story. Never try to put two lessons in one story and never start writing a story before being clear on the lesson.

Your story's lesson doesn't have to be clear to your reader until they get to the very end. But it must be clear to you before you write a single word.

Use Characters They Can Relate To

If you're talking to beginning stockbrokers, will they relate more to a story about an old widow's investment mistakes, or the investment mistakes of a young but rash stockbroker? The latter, of course.

The more you can use characters they can relate to, the better.

Even in a very short story, aim to develop your character as much as possible. The reader needs to be able to get a taste for their personality and their current emotional state in their story.

Every character should want something. They may or may not get it in the story, but the desire itself creates tension in the air. "Will they get it?" is the question that should be on the reader's mind until the end of the story.



The Two Ways to Build Credibility with Stories

There are two main ways to build credibility with stories.

The first is to tell true stories and slip credibility points into the story.

For example, teach your audience how to build a successful website by telling a story. In the process, you can "slip" in comments from other people about how unique your process is.

In telling a story about how to be a successful stockbroker, you might "slip" into the story the fact that you beat 95% of the other stockbrokers, then go right back into the story.

There are claims that would sound presumptuous or bragging if said outright, but that can be safely said in a story.

The second way to build credibility? To clearly demonstrate that you know what you're talking about by giving top-notch tips and advice.

Use the story to illustrate an educational point and really give your users something valuable. The credibility doesn't come from talking about yourself, but just really demonstrating that you know your topic.

Storytelling is a powerful tool in any copywriter, marketer or business person's arsenal. It might feel awkward at first, but with a little bit of practice this skill can pay off for the rest of your life.



How to Build a Portfolio

If you're a service provider or a freelancer, it pays to have a solid portfolio. Your portfolio will show potential clients that you have the experience and skills to handle their project. However, one of the challenges to creating a quality portfolio is gaining the experience. Here's how to build a portfolio the right way.

Courses

There are a number of quality skill-building programs online. These programs often offer homework assignments along with professional feedback. This is an exceptional way to create a portfolio. It gives you the opportunity to work with experts in your craft. Additionally, you're able to use the class as a source of credibility on your marketing materials.

Volunteer Work

Volunteer work is another opportunity for you to build a portfolio and to do good at the same time. Many non-profits can benefit from the work of freelance service providers. They get a service for free and you get quality samples for your portfolio. It's great when you can reference something and show potential customers where they can find your work online too. It's instant credibility.

As you build your client base, ask clients if you can use your best work in your

portfolio. They're most often quite proud to be shown off and it's good exposure for them as well. Display your work in the most professional manner. If you have print samples, scan them onto your computer and save them as an image. Don't just link to sales pages and content because those links will change. Actually, save the work you've done as an image or a document so your prospects can see your work first hand.

Have confidence in your work, whether you're just starting out or have a portfolio full of professional samples. Confidence and the courage to take a few risks will help you build a portfolio the right way.

How to Play Up Your Business's Strengths

In order to get others to listen to what you have to say, you need to be able to convey what makes you credible. To keep others from getting turned off, however, it can't sound like you're bragging. Top copywriters and marketers are able to weave massive amounts of credibility into their copy, without ever sounding like they're bragging. Here's how it's done:

Use the Art of Storytelling

There's a lot you can say in the context of telling a story that can't be said otherwise.

You could tell a story about how you and your



friend, the former CTO of Google, came up with a brilliant concept for helping employees increase productivity. You share what the technique is, share the results and teach it to your audience.

If you hadn't used a story, it would have sounded presumptuous to say that you're friends with the former CTO of Google. But in the context of a story, it just becomes a useful tidbit which still carries with it a lot of credibility.

Sprinkle Rather Than Pour

Instead of trying to dump all your credibility factors on your audience all at once, learn to sprinkle.

Drop a fact here, allude to another factor there. Mention an incredible result in one blog post, then move on. Briefly touch on an influential friend on another page and don't make a big deal out of it.

In other words, just drop subtle hints that you know what you're talking about, then move on. Don't try to prove anything and don't "pile on" credibility points.

The one exception is your bio page. When people are reading your bio page, they explicitly want to know about you and who you are. In your bio page, go all out and share all your credibility factors, along with other facts about yourself they may want to know.



Use Images

If you've ever been in the press, put the press logos on your site, saying "As Seen On ..."

If your site is SSL secure, put on the SSL logo. If it's BBB approved, put on the BBB approved logo.

If you have before and after photos, put on the before and after photos. If you have a photo of a check, use the photo rather than saying how much money you made.

Photos not only build more credibility, but have a way of slipping under the radar. It seems cocky to tell someone you met the president, but posting an image of you shaking the president's hand on your website will seem impressive rather than boastful.

Unless you make it clear why you're credible, people won't listen. But it's important that you share this credibility in an under the radar manner, rather than an in your face manner. Now you know how.

Five Trust-Hindering Mistakes to Avoid

Trust is much more easily destroyed than it is built. Building trust is like building a sandcastle - it's incredibly beautiful when it's built, but just one mistake could wash it all away.

Here are five of the most common yet deadly trust-hindering mistakes to avoid.

1. Selling Too Loudly

Some sales letters give the impression that they're "screaming" at the reader to buy. While great copywriters can make this style of copywriting work, for the vast majority of people, this style will more likely turn visitors off than actually generate sales.



2. Not Acknowledging Objections

If there's a glaring objection in your product or offer, address it upfront. Don't pretend it's not there.

For example, if you're selling a herbal supplement that's effective but causes gas for a couple weeks, acknowledge it. Customers will probably read about that in reviews and forums anyway. Address the objection and make it seem like less of an issue by comparing it to the benefits.

3. Not Having a Professional Design

Do ugly sales letters out-pull well-designed web pages? For a single-time sale, the answer is often yes.

But in the long run, if you want to get people to trust you and buy from you again and again, having bad-looking sales letters and websites will hurt you rather than help you.

You can create really spectacular-looking websites, without a dip in conversion. All you need is a great designer and a little bit of split testing.

4. Making a Claim You Can't Prove

Don't claim that you can teach someone how to make \$10,000 a month if you can't prove your claim. Never make a claim that's bigger than what you can prove.

Even a smaller claim that's less impressive will generate more conversions than if you made a huge claim that you can't prove.

Make a claim that's reasonable and let the customers decide for themselves whether or not to buy. Of course, you should still use powerful language and

write great copy, but at the core you always need to be clear and honest about what you're offering.

5. Not Paying Attention to Brand

Your brand affects your traffic and your conversions. It's an often overlooked element by many marketers.

Don't underestimate how much people might know about you before they land on your website. There's a good chance they'll know about the quality of your product, your credibility as a person and what other customers have experienced - all before they land on your site. You can bet that'll influence their decisions.

Pay attention to your brand. Release top-notch products and provide first class service. It might not seem like it'll pay off in the short term, but in the long run it'll make all the difference.

These are five of the most common trust-hindering mistakes to avoid. Avoid these mistakes, diligently build trust and your conversions will rise as a result.



How to Get Testimonials and Use Them

Testimonials are an exceptional selling tool. They tell potential buyers that you're trustworthy. They tell potential buyers that your product or service fulfills its promise. Testimonials tell potential customers that you have credibility. And they tell potential customers what they want to hear – that you really can solve their problems.

Testimonials are an effective buying trigger because they offer information about your product or service that you just can't offer yourself. It's like a personal recommendation, and it's worth the effort to get quality testimonials and to use them.

How Do You Get More Testimonials?

It's quite simple, actually. You ask for them. Most people are afraid to ask for testimonials. They feel it's pushy or they fear being rejected. The truth is, most customers are happy to give them; they just don't think about offering. Think about when you have a good or bad experience with a company. If you have a bad experience, you want to shout it from the rooftops. You write reviews; you tell your friends and associates. Maybe you even write a complaint to the company.

When you have a good experience, you say thank you. Generally, we don't talk as much about the good news as we do about the bad news. However, if someone asks us, we'll go on for hours about our positive experiences.

So in order to get more testimonials you have to ask. You'll of course ask all of your happy customers. However, consider also asking experts in your industry to provide a testimonial. Send them a free product or offer a service, then collect the testimonial. It'll have more power because it's coming from someone people like and respect. Can you imagine what a ringing endorsement it would be if Martha Stewart wrote a testimonial for your home organization business?



Be Prepared

Many people just don't know what to say, so consider being prepared with a pre-written testimonial. If they agree that they stand behind the information, they just need to provide a signature and a link. You can then post the testimonial and consider it valid.

Position Your Testimonials Well

There are some key places to position your testimonials. One such location is on your sales page. The testimonials will serve to support a prospect's buying decision. You can also use them in your newsletter and in email communications. Consider also creating a separate page on your website with testimonials. Place the strongest and most compelling testimonials prominently where they're sure to be read. To your success!





How to Use Studies and Statistics to Increase Credibility

Studies and statistics can lend credibility to your product or service like no other proof element. People have a deeply built-in, almost reverend, respect for conclusions which are scientifically reached by recognized experts.

Here's how to use studies and statistics to increase your credibility.

Brainstorm a List of All Applicable Studies

Think of all the possible related statistics and studies that could positively reflect on your business, product or industry.

Let's say you're in the fishing rod business. Here are a few possible studies or statistics you might want to look up:

- The benefits of fish, fish oils, etc.
- The mental benefits of fishing
- Statistics on the benefits of Vitamin D (being in the sun while fishing)
- Health benefits of specific kinds of fish (then you can sell rods that help catch those kinds of fish)
- The effects of fishing on shoulder muscles
- Case studies of fisherman making money in their spare time

This is just a small fraction of a possible list. You should literally be able to come up with a list of up to fifty different kinds of statistics or studies to research for any given topic.

Finding Applicable Studies

Now that you have your list of possible studies to use, use Google liberally to find all the different studies, statistics and case studies you can find.

Compile all these in a spreadsheet. Label them by results and source.

This whole process should take about a day. By the end of the day, you'll have a whole list of different statistics and studies related to your product or service.

Take the most compelling of the studies and use them in your websites and sales letters. A single great statistic or study can build so much excitement or credibility that it could turn an unprofitable sales letter profitable.

How to Get an Actual Expert to Endorse Your Product

Most professors, researchers and doctors want to get their name out there. Don't underestimate academia's willingness to help out in exchange for even a tiny bit of recognition.

If you're selling a product that researchers see as valuable, they'll often be willing to help you out at no cost at all. A testimonial, a case study or even a full-out endorsement can drastically increase your conversion without you spending a dime.

All you need to do is pick up the phone. It might take calling a few different professors and/or researchers to get someone who's willing to work with you.



You can also pay a doctor to testify for your product. There are several websites on the web that specialize in contracting celebrity endorsements. They'll be able to help you with finding an expert to help you.

Congratulations - you've now learned how to use one of the most powerful tools for building credibility! Start by brainstorming a list of twenty to fifty different "angles" to build credibility using studies or statistics. Spend a day researching them and use the most powerful ones. To go even one step further, employ actual experts and researchers to testify for your product.

How to Get More Clients Fast

If you're a service provider or coach, you may be looking to grow your business quickly. After all, the fuller your schedule, the more you can be sure you're financially secure. To get more clients fast, there are three sure-fire ways to go about it.

Referral System

Referrals are when someone, generally a happy client, tells another person about your business. As a service provider or coach you can have an informal referral program or a formal one. An informal referral program is pretty easy. You simply ask your current customers if they know of anyone who could benefit from your services. They may send people your direction or give you a few names to contact. Many businesses grow this way.

A formal referral program is a reward-based program. Anyone who refers a new customer to you would receive a reward. The reward could be a discount on your services or it could be a freebie. For example, if you're a writer you might offer anyone who refers new clients to you a free ten-page report or \$25 off their next order. A formal referral program requires that people sign up for the program. You might send a monthly newsletter to members to remind or motivate them to refer new clients.

Regardless of the system you choose, referrals work quite well to get more

clients fast because they're coming from a trusted source. If you ask someone where to go to eat and they tell you the name of a restaurant they like, you're more likely to go there than to an unfamiliar place because it's been recommended to you. You trust the information.

Affiliates

The second way to get more clients fast is to start an affiliate program. Affiliates are people who agree to promote your services in exchange for a commission. It requires a bit more work than a referral program; however, it can be extremely effective. Affiliates market your business for you and they drive traffic to your website. For every new client, they earn a paycheck. It's a good system. To help them succeed you may provide them with marketing content, advertisements and other information to use on their website.

Partnerships

The third and final way to get more clients fast is to forge a partnership with other complimentary businesses. For example, if you're a writer you might partner with a website designer. Their clients will need content for their website and your clients may need a website redesign. It's a win-win situation.

To get more clients fast, take advantage of your current assets. What partnerships can you forge, and what clients can you ask for referrals and recommendations?

Conclusion

Now that you have learned how important your credibility is and understand more about how to maintain a good business image, it's important to develop strategies that will help you safeguard how you appear to your customers.

Use this guide whenever you need it to ensure you are continually growing and protecting your business' credibility. When a business is regarded well by its customer base, there's always a greater margin for success.



TAKE THE Risk OR Lose THE Chance



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