

Trust Skill 3 Confidence

According to Jay Conrad Levinson of *Guerrilla Marketing* fame, confidence is the number-one reason people are persuaded to buy. Confidence triggers trust.

Demonstrating confidence in everything you do increases others' abilities to place their trust in you. I've seen plenty of people of only average to mediocre ability persuade and influence more effectively than others who were more naturally gifted simply because they exuded greater confidence. The people we admire and look up to the most are usually the type of people who know what they want and how to get it. Can you think of a time when you went to buy something and your sales rep seemed uneasy? I'm sure you felt less eager to buy, even if you originally fully intended on making the purchase.

People who lack confidence will always struggle to effectively influence others. If you're perceived as doubtful or underconfident, your audience will feel that way, too—about your product, about your idea, or about anything else you might ever try to present to them. Don't panic if you don't feel full confidence 100 percent of the time. Complete confidence in oneself takes experience, time, practice, and patience.

People who lack confidence:

1. React defensively to criticism.
2. Are not honest about their own abilities/limits.
3. Shun the advice/input of others.
4. Tend not to learn from their mistakes.
5. Set unrealistic goals, and have unrealistic expectations.
6. Use problems as an excuse not to try.
7. Blame others for things that go wrong.
8. Avoid new challenges and play it safe.
9. Repeat self-defeating habits over and over again.
10. Expect the worst, and often get it.

Since confidence is so critical, it is important to understand what hinders it. This can be summed up in one word: fear. All doubts, questions, concerns, insecurities—

can ultimately be traced back to fear in one form or another, whether it's deeply hidden or right out on the surface. You need to make sure that your confidence and your commitment to success are bigger than your fears. What does your audience sense? Are you afraid to pick up the phone and talk to people? The desire to overcome your fear needs to be bigger than the fear itself. When you are afraid, that fear will breed doubt and suck the energy right out of you. While it is okay to have fear, you must be able to handle and manage that fear. Consider the following factors that inhibit our confidence and feed our fears:

- Lack of belief
- Replaying failures
- Destructive thoughts
- Worry
- Negative attitude
- Indecision
- Hesitation
- Mood

You may be wondering, "If a persuader seems overly confident, can't that also hurt the ability to persuade?" The answer is a resounding yes. It is important that you do not come across as cocky or arrogant. How can you tell the difference? It's all about the intention. Confidence is motivated by a sincere desire to serve—you can help make a difference, and you know you can do a great job. You know that you have the tools, resources, ability, and inclination to do the job that's required of you. In contrast, cockiness is driven by a need to serve yourself, instead of serving others. Deep down, cockiness actually reveals insecurity—the very opposite of confidence. The distinguishing feature seems to be intent. Cocky individuals seek approval, recognition, and honor from all the wrong sources, in all the wrong ways, and for all the wrong reasons. They are really looking for pats on their own back. Cockiness is self-centered, whereas confidence is people-centered. Cockiness is about the persuader and confidence is about the customer.

Cocky or arrogant behavior usually elicits these types of complaints:

- He acted like he owned the place.
- She treated me like a child.
- She did not listen to what I wanted.
- He didn't ask permission to . . .
- He blamed others.
- She did not own up to her mistake.
- He never answered my question.
- She always has to be right.
- He is arrogant and condescending.

If your audience senses any pride or superiority, the game is over, just the same as if you were not confident enough. It simply doesn't matter if you say and do all the right things. If you turn people off, it's a lost cause. If they don't like you, they will not allow themselves to be persuaded by you. Here are some additional ways you can avoid the trap of seeming overly confident:

- Always be genuinely open to feedback or criticism.
- Be willing to listen—don't always be the one talking.
- Admit when you're wrong.
- Be honest about the strengths and weaknesses of your product and competing products.
- Never interrupt.
- Ask questions to demonstrate care and concern *and* to be sure you clearly understand your audience's needs and wants.

- Use external credibility (testimonials, endorsements, referrals, etc.) instead of “tooting your own horn.”

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