

Build Credibility

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to bolster your credibility with your audience. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Building Credibility through Character and Competence
 - a. Building Initial Credibility
 - b. Building Derived Credibility
 - c. Building Terminal Credibility

1. Building Credibility through Character and Competence

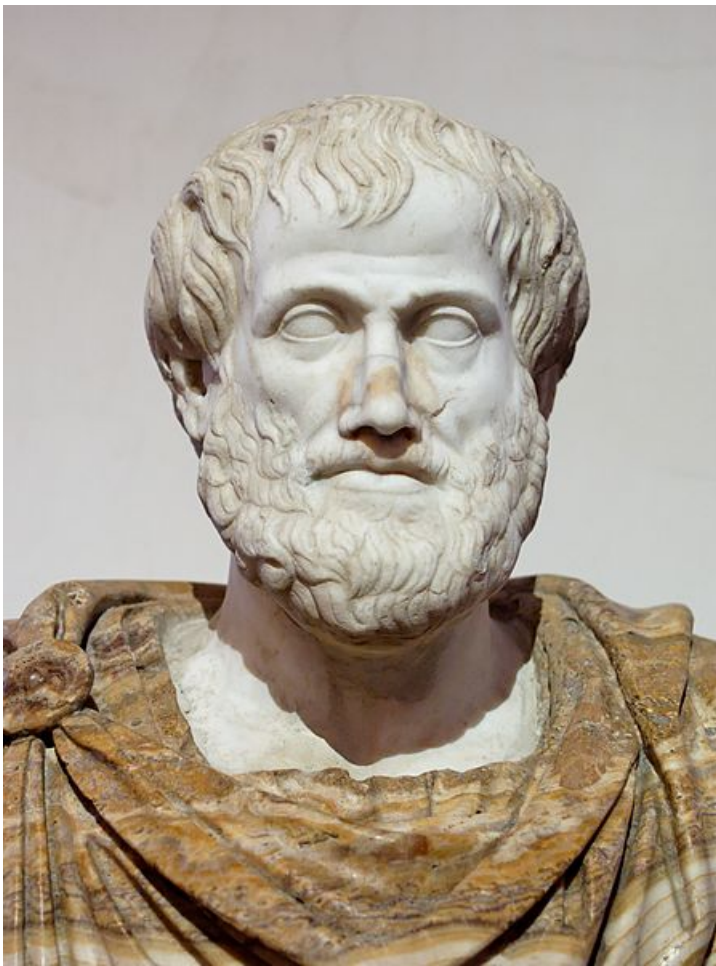
Aristotle, the classical Greek philosopher and rhetorician, established three methods of proof:

- Logos
- Ethos
- Pathos

Logos is the logical development of the message, pathos is the emotional appeals employed by the speaker, and **ethos** is the moral character of the speaker as perceived by the audience. Our focus on **credibility** relates to ethos, the ethical character and competence of the speaker.

To build credibility, you want to focus on three stages:

1. Initial credibility is what the audience knows and their opinion prior to the speech.
2. Derived (during) credibility is how the audience perceives you while delivering the speech.
3. Terminal is the lasting impression that the audience has of you as they leave the speech.



TERMS TO KNOW

Aristotle

An ancient Greek philosopher (382–322 BC), student of Plato, and teacher of Alexander the Great.

Credibility

The objective and subjective components of the believability of a source or message.

Ethos

A rhetorical appeal to an audience based on the speaker/writer's credibility.

1a. Building Initial Credibility

Here we look at who you are as a person; what the audience knows about your expertise and whether the audience thinks you are trustworthy.

You may think about initial credibility as your personal branding: who you are and what your audience knows about you. Your reputation may precede you but if it does not, you may rely on an introduction prior to the speech.

Often a host or moderator will introduce you and provide relevant information about your background. If there is no moderator to provide an introduction, you may include a brief self-introduction about yourself as it relates to the topic and your motivation for speaking. Building initial credibility helps prepare the audience for what is to come during the speech.

1b. Building Derived Credibility

This is where you want to look at how the audience perceives you during the speech. You derive credibility during the speech by what you do. Your credibility with the audience derives from how the audience responds to what you wear, the words you use, your delivery, and in general the way you handle yourself during the speech.

If you use strong supporting evidence and explain it to the audience, you will enhance your perceived competence. If you communicate sincerely and honestly with the audience, you will enhance the perception of your character. If you speak confidently and assertively, while demonstrating a genuine concern for the audience, you will increase your credibility with the audience.

Another important aspect of credibility during the speech is your ability to establish common ground with the audience. You can establish common ground by sharing aspects of your background that are similar to the audience. You may also establish common ground through the selection of examples that you and the audience share in experience.

Establish common ground by creating a bond with the audience that will help the audience identify with you. For example, "I am like you, I share your concerns." The audience is more likely to trust a speaker that they feel they know and who knows them.

1c. Building Terminal Credibility

As a speaker, you want to build a rapport with the audience so they leave with as good or a better impression of you than when you began your speech.

Rapport occurs when two or more people feel that they are in sync or on the same wavelength because they feel similarly or relate well to each other. In a sense, what you send out— the audience sends back.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** They may realize they share similar values, beliefs, knowledge, or behaviors around sports or politics as you deliver your speech and regard you more favorably than before you started your speech.

You can build credibility for your next speech by establishing rapport with the audience. If you are honest and ethical with your audience and share your values and beliefs, you establish a rapport that will carry over beyond the speech.

Ask yourself, "Will my audience trust me?" We are not really talking about a characteristic of the source or speaker, but an attitude in the mind of the listeners. You may have high credibility with one listener or group of listeners and low credibility with another.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **credibility relates to how the audience perceives your character and competence**. You may have high credibility with one group of listeners and low credibility with another. Your **initial credibility** is your personal brand. The audience may know you prior to the speech. If not, have someone introduce you or provide relevant background as a self-introduction.

Building derived credibility involves establishing common ground with the audience by sharing aspects of your background that are similar to the audience, by using supporting examples or experiences that you and the audience have in common, and by creating a bond with the audience.

Building terminal credibility involves establishing a rapport with the audience so they walk away with

a more positive view of you than when you started.

Source: Boundless. "Build Credibility." Boundless Communications Boundless, 3 Mar. 2017. Retrieved 4 Jun. 2017 from <https://www.boundless.com/communications/textbooks/boundless-communications-textbook/learning-to-listen-and-helping-others-do-the-same-5/helping-your-audience-listen-more-33/build-credibility-148-4172/>



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