



How Much Is Your Reputation Worth?

by Mike Hawkins
mike@alpinelink.com



There is little that is more important to me and my business than my reputation. My reputation is why people hire me. Certainly people don't hire me because of my fancy advertisements, marketing gimmicks, or outlandish claims because I don't make them. They don't hire me because of my discounts or free services because I don't offer them. They hire me because I have a reputation for delivering results and exceeding expectations. I can't think of anything more important to my business and my future than my reputation. I wouldn't trade a great reputation for anything.

How about you? What is your reputation worth? What would you trade it for? People don't realize it, but they regularly disappoint others and tarnish their reputation. They commit to outcomes and schedules they can't meet. They rush their work and take quality-compromising shortcuts. They avoid taking responsibility. They don't follow up. They are unresponsive. They show up late and leave early. They gossip and boast. They blame others for their own mistakes. They put their selfish interests first. And the list goes on. People regularly act in ways that tarnish their reputation.

Think about what you do that damages your reputation. Consider their long-term consequences. Realize that no amount of short-term money, fun, or glory is worth it. Your future earnings, promotion opportunities, and overall likability depend on your reputation.

Here are five principles to maintaining a great reputation:

1. **Give your best.** What you do doesn't have to be perfect, but it should be your best. Whether giving a presentation, managing a project, writing software, or leading people – do it to the best of your ability. Don't settle for mediocrity when you are capable of excellence. Continually develop and grow your skills. Realize that everything you do has your signature on it and reflects on you.
2. **Treat people with respect.** From the maids who clean your hotel room to the CEOs of your largest customers - they all deserve your respect. Make respect something you freely give to others, not something they have to earn. Be known as the one who consistently appreciates and encourages others. Be the one who everyone enjoys being around because you make them feel good.
3. **Fulfill your commitments.** Don't agree to something you can't do. Don't make promises you can't keep. Be creative and find ways to say "yes" when you can, but say "no" to that which you know you can't do. It is better to disappoint people by not making a promise than to disappoint them by breaking a promise. Set expectations you can meet and exceed.
4. **Help others.** Don't merely do your job. You are part of a team. Help others do their job. You're not successful on your own and neither are others. Return the favors that have been given to you. Pay them forward. Be a team player. Be known as someone who always helps the team. Don't wait for people to ask for your help. If you see someone in need, help them.
5. **Establish and live by honorable values.** Identify the values and principles by which you expect to work and live. Let them guide your decisions, behaviors, and attitude. Don't compromise them for the sake of convenience or comfort. Don't sacrifice them for money or pleasure. Be known as the person who maintains a higher standard and can always be trusted.

Follow these five principles and enjoy the great outcomes that come with having a great reputation.

Article written by Mike Hawkins, award-winning author of *Activating Your Ambition: A Guide to Coaching the Best Out of Yourself and Others* (www.activatingyourambition.com), and president of Alpine Link Corp (www.alpinelink.com), a boutique consulting firm specializing in leadership development and sales performance improvement. For other articles on reaching your peak potential, visit www.alpinelink.com/Leadership_Sales_Management_Consulting_Papers_Tools_Templates.aspx.