



Building Credible Relationships for HRBPs

GUIDE

What Makes an HRBP Credible?

Building credible relationships is essential for HRBPs to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Credibility enables you to influence, communicate, and collaborate more effectively, ultimately increasing your impact and value as an HRBP. Credible HRBPs build relationships based on a good understanding of the business, lean on their HR expertise to support the business goals, and demonstrate responsiveness to their stakeholders' needs.



Business understanding

HRBPs must align HR strategies with business goals by understanding the company's industry and market in order to make informed decisions considering both HR and business impacts. This also requires financial literacy to propose cost-effective HR initiatives and demonstrate the value of HR programs to senior management.



HR expertise

HRBPs' credibility is compounded when they demonstrate in-depth HR knowledge related to, for example, policies and compliance with labor laws and regulations or talent management, e.g., how to enhance recruitment, retention, performance management, and employee development. It's also important to introduce innovative HR solutions, follow best practices, and address and resolve complex issues effectively.



Decisive action

HRBPs must execute plans efficiently and on time to demonstrate reliability. You must also flex your project management skills by successfully rolling out HR initiatives within scope, time, and budget. It's imperative you demonstrate proactive problem-solving by addressing issues before they escalate and delivering consistent results.

Putting it into practice

HRBPs rely on credible relationships to make a business impact. These relationships are built over time to showcase business understanding, HR expertise, and decisive decision-making.

This means that in every stakeholder interaction, an HRBP has to demonstrate:

- **Why** is this an important interaction or discussion? What have I understood of the business environment that makes this an important stakeholder and engagement to nurture?
- **What** should be discussed or addressed in the interaction? Leaning on my HR expertise, what signs, symptoms, or other data points will impact the business or the stakeholder?
- **How** do they drive action and progress? What are the decisions I need to take and actions that I need to follow up on to reinforce my accountability and responsiveness as an HRBP?

Having a standardized approach to establishing and maintaining key stakeholder relationships can help to embed these principles and build credibility in every interaction.

Building Credible Relationships

These steps provide a structured approach to building credible relationships, starting with understanding the business context, then applying HR expertise to define engagement, and demonstrating decisive action through feedback and follow-through. Each step is accompanied by its respective outcome and links to useful resources for achieving that outcome.



Practical Building Blocks

A clear approach to building stakeholder relationships is a good starting point for building credibility as an HRBP.

However, other considerations, influencing factors, and stakeholders often impact the success of these relationships.

Consider these practical building blocks as you establish and maintain credible stakeholder relationships.



Identifying direct and indirect stakeholders

Explore the stakeholder landscape. Depending on your business, some key stakeholders may not be obvious.

Your stakeholders may include:

- Executives
- Line managers
- Liaisons, e.g., personal assistants
- IT team
- Facilities team, e.g., equipment, parking, office management, catering
- Finance team

While these are not necessarily business partners, these relationships have an impact on the quality of other stakeholder relationships and the ability to successfully build credibility.



Acting with confidence

You must be confident in your views and expertise to be perceived as credible. To build your confidence, seek advice from others, ensure that you are prepared for engagements, and get feedback from a trusted mentor.



Active listening

Pay attention to what stakeholders are saying and show that you value their input. Ask questions to fully understand the context and avoid jumping to conclusions.



Following through

Be consistent in your communication and actions. Follow through on commitments.



Understanding needs

Show empathy for stakeholders' concerns and take the time to understand their perspectives.



Transparency

Be open and honest in your communication, even when delivering difficult news or news of failure.



Cross-functional collaboration

Work closely with other departments to ensure that you can deliver on your commitments and other HR initiatives.



Honing your interpersonal skills

Always look for ways to improve your relationship-building skills and adapt to changing dynamics. Seek and act on feedback from stakeholders.