

Credibility gap sees capable B2B businesses overlooked

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 10, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Nearly half (45%) of senior decision-makers say capable suppliers fail to win new business because they struggle to prove their credibility, according to new research from strategic communications consultancy, [Emmett & Churchman](#).

A further 19% say capable suppliers never even make their shortlist because buyers do not know enough about them.

The findings, published today in [The Trust Advantage 2026 report](#), expose what Emmett & Churchman calls the Commercial Credibility Gap, the distance between what a business knows it can deliver and what a buyer can confidently recognise, believe and defend. The research combines a survey of 200 UK senior technology decision-makers with in-depth interviews with 19 senior business leaders responsible for high-stakes commercial decisions.



Lorraine Emmett, Managing Director of Emmett and Churchman

The senior leader interviews revealed how credibility is tested in real buying decisions, from generic pitches and unsupported claims to supplier behaviour during commercial negotiations and whether buyers have enough evidence to defend their choice internally. It found that credibility becomes increasingly important as risk rises, with 86% of those surveyed saying trust and credibility matter more when the stakes or perceived risks are higher.

Reputation also has a significant influence before a supplier ever reaches the room. Asked what most determines which businesses make an initial shortlist, 42% cited strong market reputation, followed by visible expertise (34%), relevant case studies and trusted recommendations (both

29%), and independent validation (28%).

But credibility can unravel even after a capable supplier has made the shortlist. Asked where technically capable suppliers that are considered but not chosen most often lose out, 31% of respondents cited commercial discussions, compared with 22% who cited detailed technical evaluation.

For challengers, the research does offer some encouragement, with 57% of respondents saying they are likely or very likely to choose a lesser-known supplier over an incumbent if they trust the challenger more, while a further 30% say it depends on the context.

Lorraine Emmett, Founder and Managing Director of Emmett & Churchman, said: "Businesses often assume that if they are good enough, buyers will eventually recognise it. Our research shows why that assumption is commercially dangerous.

"Buyers cannot see everything you know to be true about your business. They need evidence that helps them recognise your expertise, believe your claims and ultimately defend choosing you.

"That means your biggest competitor may not be more capable. They may simply be easier to believe."

The research also identified the behaviours most likely to destroy trust. Over-promising or making inflated claims without proof topped the list, cited by 40% of respondents, followed by inconsistent or unclear messaging at 38%.

Emmett added: "Commercial credibility isn't something marketing can build on its own. Buyers judge the whole business: what its leaders say, the evidence behind its claims, the expertise of the people they meet and how sales and commercial teams behave when challenged.

"If those signals don't add up, confidence starts to break down. Closing that gap requires leadership, sales, marketing and delivery to give buyers a consistent and credible reason to choose you."

The Trust Advantage 2026 is available at: <https://emmettandchurchman.com/trust/>

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