

Stronger, Clearer Testimonial Letters Sell Better

By Marcia Yudkin

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Creative Ways <http://www.yudkin.com/marketing.htm>

Misconceptions about testimonial quotes from clients and customers are rampant, weakening Web sites and printed brochures that fail to use the full power of these marketing tools. For instance, longer is not better, and unsigned testimonials add little credibility, even for a professional service where confidentiality is appropriate.

Here are two blurbs that I found posted on the Web, along with my analysis and revision.

1. BEFORE:

Rudy, Exelrod & Zieff LLP has been very pleased with results of its website developed through Lawinfo.com. Because our firm is easily locatable through the major search engines, we are finding that numerous people are contacting us who otherwise would not. Additionally, Lawinfo.com handles modifications of our website easily and otherwise provides good service. Sincerely,
Alan Exelrod, Rudy, Exelrod & Zieff LLP, www.reztlaw.com

PROBLEMS:

"Numerous people" is vague. I would ask this attorney how many that would be - three a month, thirty a day or what? "Handles modifications of our website easily" is unclear - does it mean that Lawinfo.com makes changes soon after you e-mail them in, or that they have a procedure in place to enable site owners to do it themselves? While this question is undoubtedly answered elsewhere on the site, it can usefully be clarified within a testimonial like this as well. Next, what is meant by "provides good service"? I don't think the "Sincerely" is necessary. Finally, all testimonials should have quotation marks around them to make it explicit that these are the customer's exact words.

AFTER:

"Rudy, Exelrod & Zieff LLP has been very pleased with results of its website developed through Lawinfo.com. Because our firm is easily locatable through the major search engines, we now have more than thirty new clients a month that we would not otherwise have. Additionally, Lawinfo.com posts our e-mailed website modifications within a day, is always up and running and resolves billing issues promptly."

- Alan Exelrod, Rudy, Exelrod & Zieff LLP, www.reztlaw.com

2. BEFORE:

"Kidspiration is fun! Students will think they are playing while they are engaged in language development, concept building, and acquiring a variety of learning skills such as classification and sight word knowledge." - Renee Schorr, Early Childhood Teacher, Winship Elementary School, Brighton, MA

PROBLEMS:

All nine quotes on this site use "will" or present tense, referring to predictions or guesses about results. Not one testimonial talks about real-life, classroom-tested results. Overall, this conveys a strong sense that the product has neither been released nor tested in actual classrooms. Poking around on the site, I learned that is absolutely untrue. The site thus needs to go back to its testimonial writers for real observations or get new quotes from those who have seen the product in action.

AFTER:

"Kidspiration is fun! Students in my classroom believe they are playing while they are engaged in language development, concept building, and acquiring a variety of learning skills such as classification and sight word knowledge." - Renee Schorr, Early Childhood Teacher, Winship Elementary School, Brighton, MA

The above is excerpted from Secrets of Mouthwatering Marketing Copy by Marcia Yudkin, available from <http://www.yudkin.com/mouthwatering.htm> . Marcia Yudkin marcia@yudkin.com is the author of 11 books, including Persuading on Paper and Internet Marketing for Less than \$500/Year.

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