

Harnessing the Power of Testimonials

By Angela Wu

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Let's say you want to take your spouse out to a nice restaurant. You read the 'dining' column of your local newspaper, and ask family or friends for recommendations.

What they're doing is 'endorsing' a restaurant: 'That was the BEST scampi I've ever had!' is a testimonial to how delicious the food was. You consider their recommendations because they've *had experience* with what you're looking for.

The same principle works online. Glowing testimonials from happy customers can be a powerful enticement to prospective customers. Similarly, a personal endorsement from you can have a significant impact on your sales. Here are a few tips on how to use testimonials ...

=== Send a personally endorsed ad to your newsletter subscribers. Your loyal subscribers know you and trust you. You can use this for any type of product, whether it's your own, a colleague's, or an affiliate product. Remember to be selective about what you endorse; you're putting your name to it solo ad to your list and compare the results against an endorsement in your editorial space, for example.

=== Buy a solo ad from an editor - and use his or her testimonial within the ad. This may help to increase response rates, since the readers (hopefully) know and trust their editor. One way to get a testimonial from her is to provide her with a free copy of your product and ask her to review it. If she likes it, she'll let you know. If she doesn't, then at least you'll get some constructive feedback.

=== Do you sell an affiliate product? Post a personal testimonial on your website. Create a sales page specifically about that one product. Tell the reader how the product has helped you and why you like it. Be specific. Detailed testimonials are far more convincing than a bland, "It's great!". HOW is it 'great'?

=== Use testimonials about your own product on your website and in your promotional material. Create a few different sales pages and test which one gives the best response. Is it the page where you group your testimonials together for 'high impact'? Or is it the page where testimonials are placed strategically throughout the sales letter?

It almost goes without saying that you should always use real testimonials - they have that 'ring of truth', a sincerity that shines through. Make sure all your testimonials are verifiable by posting an email address, phone number, or other contact information alongside them. And, of course, ask permission to use them within your sales material. If you would like a template to help you write a request for permission, try the Instant Sales Letter package at <http://buildyourhomebiz.com/instant.html> .

It may take some work initially ... but it's well worth it. Your 'file' of testimonials is a wonderful way to showcase your product, establish credibility, and improve sales.

Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, an exclusive newsletter for eBusiness beginners. OBB features ongoing tutorials on how to build a profitable Internet business on a shoestring budget. You don't need a million-dollar budget to be successful! Find out how you too can join the thousands quietly earning a living online: <http://www.onlinebusinessbasics.com/article.html>

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