

How to Get and Use Testimonials

By Angela Wu

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Small businesses don't have the same luxury of 'brand-name recognition' that the big companies have. Thus, we have to work that much harder to earn our visitor's trust. One way to build this all-important credibility is to get and use testimonials from happy customers.

__HOW TO GET TESTIMONIALS FOR AN EXISTING PRODUCT

If your product or service has been available for some time, then it's not that hard to find out how your customers feel about their purchase or your service.

1) Unsolicited Testimonials.

Your customer may be so thrilled with your product that he or she just has to let you know how happy she is. As a courtesy, you may want to acknowledge her message and ask for permission to use her testimonial in your promotions and on your website.

2) Ask.

Don't assume that happy customers will write to you. Be proactive! For example, you can contact your customers and ask them for feedback on your product or service. You can even include an evaluation form with your package to save time. You'll get both valuable suggestions for product improvements, and hopefully some testimonials as well.

I've found that customers will often email me with a question or comment that shows how much he appreciates my product or service. I answer the email thoroughly, then follow up with a request for a testimonial.

__HOW TO TESTIMONIALS FOR NEW PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

What do you do if your product is brand-new? You may not yet have customers, or perhaps your product/service is something that takes time before results can be seen (for example, a dog training tutorial).

1) Get a 'Personal Referral'.

Ask colleagues, subscribers, or previous customers from another product line to attest to your knowledge, integrity, great customer service, or how your other product has helped them.

2) Approach a Colleague for a Review.

Find another 'expert' in your target market (*not* a competitor, though!) and offer him or her a complimentary copy of your product for review. This has two advantages: first, you'll get constructive feedback about your product from someone in your field... and secondly, you may get a testimonial from it.

Testimonials from 'experts' certainly helps to add credibility to your offer. However, try to get customer testimonials as well - it helps to show that you have happy customers, not just happy colleagues. :-)

3) Make a Special Offer to Your Target Audience.

For example, you could offer the first 20 people to contact you a free or discounted copy/sample of your product in exchange for feedback and a testimonial (if they feel it's warranted, of course).

__A FEW PARTING TIPS...

- * Use real testimonials. They have that genuine 'ring' to them.
- * Don't 'polish' or edit to an extreme. Let the testimonial speak for itself.
- * If possible, add credibility by including a name, email address or URL, your customer's state or province of residence, or even the customer's company name, job title, etc.

* Longer testimonials often have more 'impact' than short ones. Many testimonials can easily be edited to read:

'...truly amazing...'

'...gorgeous...stunning...'

On the other hand, a longer testimonial can be far more persuasive:

'I was initially reluctant to order any type of jewelry online ... but I was thrilled when I got my bracelet! It's gorgeous, one of the most stunning pieces I own. Thank you so much for your wonderful catalog, and for your excellent service. I'll be back!'

* Use specific testimonials, whenever possible. Details make a much 'stronger' or more persuasive testimonial. For example, 'I love your book!' is not as effective as:

'It's been six months since I purchased your highly motivating book. I started a new exercise program that I've stuck to now for 5 months and at 46 years of age, I have never been more fit in my life. I feel great, and as an added bonus I've even lost 10 pounds. Thank you so much. I love your book!'

You can find additional tips in the article, 'How to Harness the Power of Testimonials', available at <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/articles/testimonialtips.html>

Don't be shy to seek and display testimonials -- they're a valuable asset for marketing your business, and they help to convert prospects into paying customers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, a practical guide to building a business on a beginner's budget. It's a proven hit with beginners, for the down-to-earth style and loads of instantly useable tips! For details, visit <http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/article.html>

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