



TESTIMONIALS: A POWERFUL MARKETING FORCE

If there was ever a more ingenious and simple marketing tool, then the answer is testimonials. Testimonials are extremely potent, but are underrated and not used as often by companies. One problem is the perceived “fear” of honesty from a direct client. What a client says about your overall company, products and services is 100 times more convincing than what you, the business owner would advertise in a brochure or website. Present and potential customers will take the words of testimonials as the basis of whether they will continue or decide to do business with you.

Providing testimonials will do the following:

1. **Current Business in Operation:** Testimonials provide legitimacy to your company. This minimizes customers’ scepticism, transforming their mistrust to trust, and increasing their confidence in your products and services.
2. **Quality of Products and Services:** When testimonials are posted on your website, they prove that you sold a product or service to your client. Furthermore, your client was satisfied and content to take the time to put in a compliment and a word of recommendation about your business to other potential customers.
3. **Decreases perceived stress and fears:** Miraculous as it seems, when people read testimonials they automatically feel more confident in your

company, along with the products and services provided. You should try to make a way for your visitors to become future customers; displaying testimonials is the answer to this!

There are four basic types of testimonials:

1. Customer: This category is the most powerful, and could increase your clientele offers by 30%, with a 3 fold increase in business to business offers.

2. Celebrities: Celebrities are not as convincing or credible as customers, due to the fact that many are paid. The main objective of a celebrity testimonial is to increase awareness.

3. Experts: If you are selling computer software, then a computer engineer from a company such as Microsoft would definitely increase business.

Make sure the expert is very knowledgeable and current in their field.

4. Expert Organizations: This can include a magazine in your profession, trade association, newsletter, etc. Due to the fact that their opinions can not be bought for a price, these organizations are very credible.

So, what makes a great testimonial? Here are some tips.

1. Be Specific. Do not use general statements; put in lots of detail.
2. Complete attributions. They sound and look more credible and professional. For example, Mr. H. Rawlins, President, Bath & Co. Dallas, TX, *but not* H. Rawlins.
3. Use the customer's wording and phrasing. Do not try to rephrase what he or she said, because it will seem less believable.

4. Utilize photos of your clients. Visual imagery sends out an authentic and powerful message, because now you have a face to the words of the testimonials.

The reward, however, is worth the effort. The time spent creating your testimonial program will result in increased sales and profits, a well deserved improved image, more sale and business leads, and an improved cash flow.

Next time, instead of just handing out all of those marketing pieces, why not also hand out a sheet of testimonials to your clients?