

Principle 35

Testimonials

*The real value
of testimonials*

Positive testimonials about your product given by past, satisfied customers is one of the most powerful tools known in marketing, and you can't afford not to incorporate testimonials into all your ads, sales letters, brochures and more.

People will believe what customers say about your product more than what you say

Testimonials are powerful tools of persuasion. Here's why: In the eyes of potential buyers, a testimonial is much like having a trusted friend recommend your product. A testimonial is that part of the ad - perhaps the only part - that doesn't seem like just a little more ad hype. That's because the message of a testimonial is not coming from the seller himself. Customers know that businesses will say just about anything to make a sale. Everyone has a well-developed, "Let the buyer beware" mentality when he or she confront ads and sales pitches. We all naturally and habitually cast a sceptical eye on most ad claims. We are on the constant lookout for deception.

But a testimonial from a "real person" is different. When a potential buyer reads or sees a testimonial from an "ordinary" person, he or she gets the feeling they are receiving an endorsement straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak. And they are! That's the beauty of a testimonial. When an objective, third party individual, who has no financial interest in your company, is willing to put his or her reputation on the line to promote your product, it says a lot about how good that products really must be.

Testimonials "prove" that your product is as good as you say it is. It shows potential buyers that others have already tried and tested the product and found it good enough to go out and brag about it and tell others to buy it. When a customer confronts a



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testimonial, he or she thinks: "Hey, it worked for him, so maybe can work for me, too!" You can't beat that kind of endorsement.

The best testimonials are made by people who are or appear to be in the same demographic group as your potential buyers. This way, the testimonial endorsement appears to be coming from a known and trusted person. Testimonials made by well-known people or admired celebrities are also powerful persuaders.

If you don't have any testimonials for your product or service, go out and get them. Contact satisfied customers and ask them simply tell what they liked about your product, and how they benefited from it. Have them sign their testimonial statement and get their permission to use it in all your marketing mediums. If you can include a picture or live video tape of satisfied customers making a pitch for you, all the better. Keep all of your signed permission editorials on file for future use and reference. And because you must have proof of permission to use another person's statement in your advertising media. Also, get both a first and last name to use in your testimonials. Testimonials that are signed, "Mike K., Glasgow" can easily seem faked or simply made up, (and they often are!) Customers are wise to that.

Even if you are a brand new business and have yet to create a satisfied customer, you should strive to get testimonials you can use. These can come from people you know and who are familiar with your product.

But whatever you do, use testimonials! No marketing vehicle is complete without at least one.