



Testimonials – the 5Ws + the How

Collecting powerful testimonials from satisfied customers should be at the top of your marketing To Do List every day. A stockpile of candid endorsements will fortify your advertising and marketing messages like nothing else.

Why do I need them? Put yourself in your prospect's shoes. She's being bombarded with sales pitches, advertising hype and outrageous claims, and has no time or patience for any of it. So you, along with everyone else clamoring for her attention, have a built-in credibility problem. You know how great your company is, but you've got a mountain of skepticism to overcome. If your prospect hasn't ever heard of your company, the uphill battle for her attention is even steeper.

What constitutes a powerful testimonial? A written (or perhaps recorded) statement from an actual customer, in his own words, describing in detail the benefit received from doing business with you. Ideally, the benefit should directly tie to your unique selling proposition and, better yet, paint a "before and after" picture for the reader. You must have received explicit permission from your customer to use the statement in your marketing efforts, and you should include his name and company or home town. Use his photo for even more impact.

Where can I use testimonials? Any place you are introducing a product/service, describing its merits, or making a claim. Boost the effectiveness of your sales and marketing collateral with testimonials that support your claims. Build your ad campaigns around the unique benefits your company provides, and then back up those messages with client accolades. Use them throughout your web site in relevant context. Include a testimonial on your contact page and near sign-up forms.

Who are the best sources? Your company's long-time or loyal customer list is a great place to start. If you know that your company has exceeded your client's expectations, go ahead and solicit an endorsement. Another idea: Develop a plan to get an industry expert opinion or a celebrity endorsement.

When should I solicit a testimonial? Get in the habit of asking at a point of personal contact, such as a sales or follow up call. If you've received a spontaneous verbal comment or a thank-you, take the time right then to document their enthusiasm. Most importantly, get 'em while they're hot.

How do I get them? Ask your customer for his help, and let them know how much you value him. Make it easy for him, by sending a gracious, appreciative cover letter along with a request form for his comments and signature, and a postage paid envelope. You could also offer to take his comments over the phone and then send him a copy for editing and a signature. You may want to consider asking if your client would serve as an occasional reference. Always thank your customer for their comments.

Start your testimonial stockpile now by developing an ongoing solicitation process, and then invigorate your marketing messages with the most compelling examples. You will create a comfort zone for your prospect when you let your happy customers do some of the talking.

Onward & upward,

Leigh Kramer

Pilot

leighk@helicoptermarketing.com

ph 443.399.4039 ✂ WWW.HELICOPTERMARKETING.COM