

Issue Fifty Five

Getting great testimonials

Great testimonials will build a prospective customer's trust and confidence before they buy. A testimonial is much more than a quote about how 'really great' your product or service is - a testimonial needs to state effectively how and why something is great, from a reliable and relevant source.

You can't afford to wait for clients to offer a testimonial. Even when you have the best product or service this very rarely happens. Be proactive and actively source testimonials from that growing database of satisfied clients. If this fails to produce a glowing testimonial then at least you've gained insight and strengthened customer relationships. They'll appreciate that you go the extra mile.

Step 1. After someone has purchased your product or service, send them an email asking how they're enjoying it. Ask for some direct feedback about their experience. More specifically, ask them several simple questions:

- Were you sceptical before you purchased?
- How was the buying experience?
- Why did you specifically choose our product/service?
- What specific benefits have you had since using this product/service?
- Who would you recommend this product/service to and why?

Step 2. Combine the answers to form a testimonial (75 – 100 words), ensuring all objections and concerns have been covered.



Eighty percent of success is showing up. Woody Allen



Step 3. Ring or email the client to say you really appreciate their feedback and ask if you could base a testimonial on it. 'I'd love to use it in my website and marketing collateral.' If they're happy with your adaptation then request a photo of them for extra effect.

Step 4. Say thanks by sending them a gift or product voucher.

Try to engage with clients whose testimonials will highlight the key aspects of your product or business. Aim to source a range of quotes covering the quality of your product/service through to the brilliant customer service you provide. Focus on your key selling points and make sure your testimonials highlight aspects relevant to your target market.... And obviously if a client does sing your praises voluntarily, repeat the necessary steps to get that testimonial!

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Avoid death by PowerPoint

Next time you're creating an important presentation spare a thought for your audience by making it useful and visually engaging. Even the best of speakers can ruin a presentation with a pointless PowerPoint, so take the time to learn this user friendly programme and improve your next presentation.

- 1. Templates can be the enemy.** Avoid those with unnecessary shapes or patterns for 'effect'. These graphics are probably irrelevant to your presentation and can be quite distracting. Create your own template; keep it clean and simple with fonts that people can read!
- 2. Avoid transitions and animations.** Don't distract your audience from your message. Subtle animations to draw attention to a figure or statement can work well however don't let your PowerPoint be more about the animations than the content.
- 3. The fewer words, the better.** Every slide should have the minimum necessary words and focus on one concept.... Never have paragraphs of text or read directly off the screen. Your PowerPoint should highlight your key points (with images to emphasise) and anchor your presentation.
- 4. The fewer slides the better.** As a rule, limit your presentation to 1 slide per minute or you'll be racing the clock. You can break this rule if your presentation has lots of one liners or image slides - but be aware too many of these in quick succession could confuse your audience.
- 5. Think about your audience.** Bullets work really well if you're presenting to a military-based operation. Bullets on their own probably don't engage children or visual people. The way to display content will depend on your audience. Bullets, less text, more text, big text, bright colours, conservative colours, graphs, charts, animations, photos, videos, music etc...



- 6. Mix it up.** Keep the audience awake with variety. Break up heavy content by injecting humour (where appropriate) or inspiration, images, graphs, music, video clips and/or quotes.
- 7. Share the presentation.** You can supply your audience with simplified 'handouts' (and contact details) OR supply your slides after the presentation. This way the audience won't be distracted flicking through the notes instead of listening to you.
- 8. Test the visibility of your PowerPoint from a distance.** Make sure your screen is a suitable size for the room. You must test the fonts and colours from the back of the room you're presenting in. Things always look different on your computer screen!

Anybody who thinks talk is cheap should get some legal advice.

Franklin P. Jones

An Important Message

While every effort has been made to provide valuable, useful information in this publication, this firm and any related suppliers or associated companies accept no responsibility or any form of liability from reliance upon or use of its contents. Any suggestions should be considered carefully within your own particular circumstances, as they are intended as general information only.





Prioritise your priorities!

In the age of information we're constantly being distracted and stimulated by people, advertising and messages. It's like working with the TV on in our heads! It's time to limit procrastination and filter the white noise.

Implement LOCKDOWN.

Lockdown is a regular period of self imposed isolation. Block out two hours in your calendar, shut the door and put that phone on DND (do not disturb!). Make sure staff are aware that they shouldn't interrupt you unless it **really is** urgent.

You'll plough through work quickly with a higher standard. And when time is up or the job done, reply to your emails, return necessary calls and revel in your achievement. Lockdown works best with regular intervals!

Multitasking is a myth.

Humans are like computers: when we open two programs, things run slower. Next time you jump tasks or decide to work on another project 'simultaneously' ask yourself if it's because it will produce effective results or because you're bored or you've finished the easy part? We all need diversity but flicking between many tasks is messy and unproductive.

Boycott your email.

Take your automatic email pop up off so you're not distracted every time you receive an email. Realistically if the emailer doesn't follow up with a call immediately then it can wait a couple of hours.

Go to your **Outlook Tools** and select Options - Email options (on the preferences tabs) - Advanced email options, and untick the 'Display a New Mail Desktop Alert' ... (you can also make rules so emails from specific contacts still pop up).

Are your 'rubbish' emails reaching system critical? If each morning you're sifting through the online store newsletters to find your emails then it's time for an 'unsubscribe-athon'! Click that unsubscribe button at the end of the newsletter and follow the prompts to complete the process.

Seek support in your quest to be efficient.

Make sure your colleagues use email effectively. Email communications should be short, to the point and easy to digest. Emails should be used only when a conversation is not possible or necessary.



Dealing with a dissatisfied customer

A complaint is an opportunity to turn a disgruntled customer into a loyal customer.

- Act FAST, don't stew over the complaint
- Be a good listener and keep your cool
- Be positive in your response, the tone of your voice or correspondence must always remain fair and professional
- Offer several solutions and resolve the problem to THEIR Satisfaction, not yours

Your brand can easily be damaged by one dissatisfied customer. A happy customer tells one friend. An unhappy customer tells everybody! A complaint that is resolved effectively can result in a loyal customer with revived trust in your brand and fresh confidence to buy again, knowing that complaints will be dealt with promptly.

Remember, the customer is always right. When you receive a complaint, make sure to review the necessary processes, without pointing fingers at staff. One small change could produce a big improvement.

Increase your online sales

Improve your traffic!

To make sales you need visitors. Is your website actively in the public domain? Using flyers, advertising, supporting an event or charity, giving out business cards, the use of smart packaging, referral sites, and business directories are some simple ways to put your brand and website address out there for potential customers to see.

The next step is encouraging your site visitors to linger and engage. To do this your site must load quickly, without flashy loading pages. And the content should direct people throughout the site.

Are your contact details visible on every page? Some people prefer to pick up the phone and talk to a human, others are happy burrowing into your site.

Is your content easy to read and helpful?

Highlight benefits in your headlines. One way is to establish a problem and show how your product can resolve it.

Less is generally more. Pages of paragraph text are hard on the eye. Use bold, italics and highlighting (sparingly) with subheadings to break text up. Vary the length of your paragraphs and experiment with bullets to convey messages efficiently.



Use photos, images and videos to boost your product's desirability. A Picture paints a thousand words. A video paints a thousand pictures!

Have a clear call to action! Tell your customers to purchase now.

Do your systems make it easy to purchase?

- Do you offer a variety of payment methods?
- Is the order/delivery process clear and efficient?
- Does your follow-up process strengthen customer relations and therefore produce testimonials?
- Does your purchase process encourage repeat business?



Netiquette

Replying to emails on your iPhone or Android

It's very easy to confuse emailing on your phone with texting but you need to remain professional in your response, especially as the receiver will view this in their Outlook. Avoid abbreviated words, 'thanx, talk l8r' doesn't exactly say professional. Also, make sure to sign off as usual.

You can edit your iPhone sign off to avoid 'Sent by iPhone'. Simply open your settings, click on 'mail, contact, calendar' and scroll to 'signature' to edit.

FYI...

Employment Agreement: An agreement between an employer and an employee stating the terms and conditions of employment. It is mandatory that each employee has an employment agreement and that the employer retains a signed copy of this agreement.

Collective agreement: A collective agreement is an employment agreement that is negotiated by a union, covering a group of employees.

Be sure to read each article with the mindset 'How this could apply to our business'. Thinking of it that way will guarantee that you get value. Also make copies for each team member. To really make sure something positive happens, work with us to talk your team through ideas.