

Testimonials Will Boost Your Sales – If You Can Get 'Em

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**Testimonials Will Boost Your Sales – If You Can Get 'Em**

**By Armand Melanson**

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By Armand Melanson

It's a proven fact that testimonials radically improve sales. That's why every single infomercial & marketing website is peppered with them. They build the essential CREDIBILITY that is required for the buy response. Are all these testimonials real? Definitely not. And that's because testimonials are not easy to get.

Think about it. You buy a product from someone. At that point, the seller has already made their money from you. Even if what they deliver is far beyond your expectations, you are not likely to go out of your way to let them know about it. You have your own agenda & your own set of goals to achieve. Who's got time to go around slapping everyone on the back for a job well done?

So the notion of "unsolicited testimonials" is a rare one indeed. In fact, 95% of unsolicited testimonials are highly solicited. And we'd all do well to copy the method the big boys use to get their testimonials.

Let's take, for example, Marlon Sanders. This guy is one of the e-marketing giants. I bought one of his products & he put me on his autoresponder newsletter. I also signed up to resell his products. Here's what I got within 1 month of signing up:

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>> Dear Arm,  
>>  
>> I need your opinion

yadayadayada with a bunch of questions & then this:

>> 11. May I have permission to quote your comments in  
>> marketing and promotion? I will NOT quote your address  
>> or phone. Only name, city and state.  
>> yes[ ] no[ ]

Did you get that? This is how the big players get their testimonials...

Here are some techniques you can use to get testimonials:

===> Always offer an incentive for participating in a product survey.

If you don't offer something in return, most people won't even think about doing your survey. The better the incentive, the more motivated your prospect will be.

Marlon offered a free version of a new product. I bet that product will get test marketed to all the people who took the survey & then they'll be asked to take another survey. With that data, they'll tweak the product to correct the problems encountered in the test group. The they'll really launch to the public. Brilliant!

But not everybody has a family of related products to offer. So here's what I recommend:

===> Use free eBooks as an incentive to participate.

Free eBooks are all over the net & some of them are really valuable. If you are selling a digital product, embed the survey offer in the product. If selling hardgoods, provide written instructions in the packaging on what the incentive is & how to access the survey. The offer can be like so: "To get X benefit for free, go to Y URL & take our product survey". Make it simple & easy to do.

As well, whenever you make a sale, you should be putting the buyer on an autoresponder series. 2 or 3 weeks into the series,

have the AR fire off the same survey offer.

There are several ways to do the survey. Marlon chose email. I prefer a webform. Here's how the webform works:

Every webhost offers FORM/CGI mail in order to have forms send email to a designated email box. Set up your survey form using your HTML editor & have the form submit the data to whatever email box you want to receive the survey data. If you want to see a sample, go to [http://www.lessworkmoremoney.com/survey\\_example.htm](http://www.lessworkmoremoney.com/survey_example.htm).

You want to capture some basic feedback about your product & more importantly, give the user a chance to tell you what they like about the product. FORM/CGI Mail offer some cool features.

The most important ones are:

====> a redirect to a thank you page

This is where you put the link for downloading the eBook incentive.

====> a required field option

Use this to make sure that your key fields have data. Many people will try to zip through the form without entering real data just so they can get the download. So make email address & the general comments required. You can use JavaScript to do this as well – whatever works best for you.

When the form gets submitted, here's what you would get:

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by (-----@msn.com) on Monday, August 6, 2001 at 16:42:30

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Q1: rating of this product

A1: excellent

Q2: comments

A2: This is the absolute best ebook I have ever purchased. I am very impressed with all the additional information in this ebook. A must own for anyone serious about an online

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business!

Regards,  
Joe W, Cofounder – JJmerchandise

Q3: other products

A3: better

Q4: sections rating

A4: dropshipping business plan and e-product guide

Q5: GUI

A5: excellent

Q6: SE

A6: I found lessworkmoremoney.com thru a newsletter.

Q7: recommendations

A7: none

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If you are not comfortable with setting up a web form, then use email. Setup an autoresponder which will kick off an automatic email with a link to the download when people submit. Here is a sample form:

To complete the survey, follow these instructions:

- 1) Click the "REPLY" button in your email program.
- 2) Type your responses between the brackets.
- 3) When finished, click the "SEND" button.

Once we receive your comments, the free gift will be on it's way!

To answer, type an X between the two brackets like this [X]

1.What is your overall rating of this product on a scale from 1 to 5 ( 5 being the best)?

[ ]1 – poor

[ ]2

[ ]3  
[ ]4  
[ ]5 – excellent

and so on...

Whether via email or webform, make sure you automate the process so that it all happens without human intervention. You don't have time to be manually emailing people & with autoresponder software, you don't need to.

You may be asking yourself how to sell any products in the 1st place if you need testimonials to sell your product & you need to sell your product to get testimonials (makes me dizzy just thinking about it)? You make 'em up of course ==> NOT!!!

You setup your website to sell, but you test market your product initially. Offer it at a reduced price or even for free. Offer powerful incentives to get people to try the product. If you have an opt-in email list ( YOU HAVE TO HAVE ONE) & it is pulling in some subscribers, offer them (via email) an incentive for participating in a product survey. If your survey feedback tells you that your product stinks, then improve it &

re-start the cycle.

This should happen throughout the life of the product. Once you have a few testimonials under your belt, pop them onto your website & set your price to what you really want. But keep prompting for testimonials as long as you sell the product.

==>MARKETING TIPDON'T BURY THE TESTIMONIALS ON A LINKED PAGE!!!

Make sure you embed short excerpts from your testimonials in the main page. Use them to add credibility & punch to your overall marketing copy. You should also have a link to the full text of testimonials if they are not displayed in full on the main page. Ken Evoy has a great method for displaying testimonials using a drop down form. Check it out at [http://myss.sitesell.com/nomore\\_9to5.html](http://myss.sitesell.com/nomore_9to5.html)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Armand Melanson is an emarketing consultant & author. For free marketing tips & articles you can re-use, visit him at <http://lessworkmoremoney.com>

## **Harnessing the Power of Testimonials**

**By Angela Wu**

### **Harnessing the Power of Testimonials by Angela Wu**

Let's say you want to take your spouse out to a nice restaurant. You read the 'dining' column of your local newspaper, and ask family or friends for recommendations.

What they're doing is 'endorsing' a restaurant: 'That was the BEST scampi I've ever had!' is a testimonial to how delicious the food was. You consider their recommendations because they've \*had experience\* with what you're looking for.

The same principle works online. Glowing testimonials from happy customers can be a powerful enticement to prospective customers. Similarly, a personal endorsement from you can have a significant impact on your sales. Here are a few tips on how to use testimonials ...

=== Send a personally endorsed ad to your newsletter subscribers. Your loyal subscribers know you and trust you. You can use this for any type of product, whether it's your own, a colleague's, or an affiliate product. Remember to be selective about what you endorse; you're putting your name to it. Try sending a solo ad to your list and compare the results against an endorsement in your editorial space.

=== Buy a solo ad from an editor – and use his or her testimonial within the ad. This may help to increase response rates, since the readers (hopefully) know and trust their editor. One way to get a testimonial from her is to provide her with a free copy of your product and ask her to review it. If she likes it, she'll let you know. If she doesn't, then at least you'll get some constructive feedback.

=== Do you sell an affiliate product? Post a personal testimonial on your website. Create a sales page specifically about that one product. Tell the reader

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how the product has helped you and why you like it. Be specific. Detailed testimonials are far more convincing than a bland, "It's great!". HOW is it 'great'?

=== Use testimonials about your own product on your website and in your promotional material. Create a few different sales pages and test which one gives the best response. Is it the page where you group your testimonials together for 'high impact'? Or is it the page where testimonials are placed strategically throughout the sales letter?

It almost goes without saying that you should always use real testimonials – they have that 'ring of truth', a sincerity that shines through. Make sure all your testimonials are verifiable by posting an email address, phone number, or other contact information alongside them. And, of course, ask permission to use them within your sales material. If you would like a template to help you write a request for permission, try the Instant Sales Letter package at <http://buildyourhomebiz.com/instant.html> .

It may take some work initially ... but it's well worth it. Your 'file' of testimonials is a wonderful way to showcase your product, establish credibility, and improve sales.

Angela Wu Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, an exclusive newsletter for eBusiness beginners. OBB features ongoing tutorials on how to build a profitable Internet business on a shoestring budget. Find out how you too can join the thousands quietly earning a living online: <http://www.onlinebusinessbasics.com/article.html>.

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