



# **BRILLIANT TESTIMONIALS**

**THE BEST STRATEGY  
FOR BUILDING YOUR BRAND**

**A WHITE PAPER**

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Brilliant Testimonials

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## Executive Summary

In today's competitive global market, acquiring customers is more challenging than ever. While closing sales individually is satisfying, that simply isn't a sustainable way to grow your business. The key to multiplication is mobilizing your existing customers to sell alongside you.

Potential clients don't trust your marketing content or your sales reps as much as they trust and believe feedback from other people. Customer reviews, testimonials, and recommendations play a huge part in a person's willingness to engage with your business. Whether your testimonials are written, visualized, or recorded as a video, a glowing recommendation from a previous purchaser can be the catalyst that transforms a lead into a client.

In this white paper, you'll see why stories matter, learn six strategies to get clients talking, and grab over 20 easy taglines to inspire your printed ad copy.



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## The Best Strategy for Building Your Brand

How do you grab a lifeline on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*? You ask the audience!

While “experts” tend to get a trivia question right two-thirds of the time, the audience gets that answer right 91 percent of the time. Why? Because individually we are limited, but collectively we are genius.

In today's global economy, buyers understand the importance of collective intelligence. People rely on others to help them decide what movies to see, which vet to use for their pet, or the best software to buy. Recent studies show that more than half of adults under age 50 consult online reviews before making a purchase decision, and 88% of people read reviews to determine the quality of a local business.

Investing in testimonials is a highly strategic marketing tactic because customers trust recommendations from friends and family over any online marketing or advertising your brand can create.

### Why Stories Matter

Are reviews or recommendations worth your time? Absolutely.

According to Nielsen research, 92% of people will trust a recommendation from a peer, and 70% will trust a recommendation from someone they don't even know. People depend on reviews, and companies that publish testimonials dramatically increase the quality and quantity of their marketing qualified leads.

Your company's best marketers and sales reps aren't your employees – they're your existing customers. In many industries, there is nothing more powerful than social proof, and this is something that can easily be mobilized in your favor.

## Five Reasons to Use Reviews in Your Marketing Materials



### 1. Reviews Inform

While people generally skim ad copy, they are captivated by reviews. Testimonials offer something of value to the reader, including details about the product, a snapshot of benefits, or an insider peek into the experience of others. Spread the word by letting past customers share how your products have improved their lives!



### 2. Reviews Strengthen Credibility

When consumers see positive reviews about your brand, their trust instantly grows. Want to build a bridge with your prospects? The positive experiences of others are a perfect way to increase confidence.



### 3. Reviews Increase Brand Loyalty

After people make a purchase, they unconsciously seek social proof that they've made a wise choice. Confirmation bias drives people to embrace positive reviews while rejecting (or even ignoring) contrary information. Testimonials reassure existing clients that they've received a good value, making people more likely to purchase again.



### 4. Reviews are Inexpensive

Testimonials are the gold standard in marketing because prospects trust the honest opinion of other people. And while media spots can break the bank, genuine reviews don't cost a dime. One study showed that, of the 74% of customers who were asked to provide feedback, 68% were willing to do it. Your best advertising can also be your cheapest!



### 5. Because Customers Want Reviews

Potential customers say reliability, expertise, and professionalism are the most important traits for a local business to possess. Why not showcase these qualities through your brand ambassadors? Prospects crave proof, and their opinions can be significantly shaped by as little as two or three real-life reviews.

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## Tricks to Get People Talking

What is the best way to gather testimonials? Here are six strategies to get good gossip flowing.

### Ask Clients Directly

Often we shrink back from asking for help. This is a mistake! Your customers understand the importance of their feedback, and if you're providing an excellent product or service, they'll be happy to oblige.

### Ask at the Right Moments

Timing is everything, and capitalizing on the right moment takes intentionality on your part. Ask for testimonials when customers compliment you, when they tag your brand on social media, when they re-purchase or re-order, or when they refer a friend. And remember, there's no better way to get reviews than by doing it in person. Asking face-to-face garners seven to eight times more reviews than asking through e-mail.

### Collect Feedback as Part of Your Workflow

The most consistent way to gather stories is to schedule it. Pinpoint VIP clients and build review requests into your calendar. Identify which employee has the deepest relationships with VIPs and have that person boldly ask for input. Other workflow priority options include incentivizing employees with cash bonuses for reviews, or hosting contests and special events to collect as many great comments as you can.

### Try the "Tip" Trick

The "tip" trick is effective when you've spent a significant amount of time with a client (like in and around their home, finances, family, or physical care). After the service is complete, ask for a testimonial with this prompt: "If you had a good experience and include my name in this review, the company gives me a \$10 tip." Happy clients will be more likely to give feedback because it offers a free way to tip someone they appreciate.

### Collect Feedback as Part of Your Workflow

Create online spaces for customer reviews. As you tease out reviews, don't overlook search engines and review sites. According to Mike Bluementhal, online marketing co-founder of GatherUp, Google is especially crucial:

"We advise small businesses to think of Google as your new home page. Your Google brand result is one of your most important pages on the internet. That is not to say it can replace your website. It can't. But your Google presence should reflect the best your business has to offer. People searching will see how you appear in Google and make immediate judgments." Mike Bluementhal, GatherUp co-founder

Experts estimate that 70 percent of new leads start at Google. From phone calls, driving directions, or contact form fills, Google is the number one spot for prospects to initiate connections with a business. Search engine results are strongly influenced by the customer comments you post on your website or social pages, so aggregate and embed reviews on your sites to increase the chance of positive reviews appearing on Google. The more positive comments you post, the more leads you'll gather. Yelp, Facebook, Angie's List, and Amazon are also trusted sources of customer reviews in the U.S., so set up a profile or claim your business page here so prospects can find you and clients can share feedback.

### Start with Open-ended Questions

People are easier to engage when they feel their opinion is valued. Instead of asking directly for a review, approach people with an open-ended, conversational approach. This is a simple way to elicit genuine input, and to prime the pump for future reviews. Below are 10 questions to get them started:

## 10 Testimonial Questions to Ask Your Clients

1. What was it like before you had our product/service?
2. What problems were you trying to solve with our product/service?
3. What made our company stand out from other options?
4. What obstacles did you need to overcome before signing on?
5. What features convinced you to commit?
6. What's the biggest benefit in using this product?
7. What has exceeded your expectations since working with us?
8. How much time/money does our product save you each day/week/month?
9. What have you been able to achieve since making this decision?
10. What would you tell someone who is considering this purchase?

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## How and Where to Use Testimonials

One or two well-placed quotes from real customers can be a compelling way to attract interest for your business. So, once you've collected these comments, how can you put them to work? The opportunities are endless! Post them:

- ✓ In local business listings
- ✓ In navigational website pages
- ✓ On your social media platforms
- ✓ In TV, radio ads, or video content
- ✓ In e-mail drip campaigns
- ✓ On your blog
- ✓ Embedded in online product pages
- ✓ In newsletters, coupons, leaflets, or flyers
- ✓ In case studies or "how to" guide sheets
- ✓ In sales and product brochures
- ✓ In direct mail or neighborhood door hanger campaigns
- ✓ In welcome packets for new customers
- ✓ In sell sheets for prospective future clients
- ✓ Near your e-mail signature
- ✓ As a testimonial bookmark insert or envelope stuffer
- ✓ For billboards or outdoor signage
- ✓ On shopping baskets or point-of-purchase displays
- ✓ In contests meant to elicit new testimonials

### Real Results

When featuring that "real results" angle, don't forget the impact of print. According to neuromarketing specialist Roger Dooley, printed materials are more "real" for the brain because they involve more emotional processing. This is crucial for memory and brand associations because brain responses that are connected with feelings result in a greater internalization of ads. If testimonials build transparency and trust, then including them in print is a slam-dunk strategy.

## Finish Strong: Best Practices for Sharing Your Stories

If you're going to prioritize real customers, you want to be as precise as possible. This includes:

### Highlighting Tangible Impact

Testimonials that are vague or fluffy will seem inauthentic. Look for feedback that refers to the specific, tangible impact your product or service has had.

### Differentiating Your Customer Base

When featuring testimonials, segment your audience into buyer personas and feature reviews that relate to your customers' pain points or needs.

### Featuring Names or Faces

Make your testimonials trustworthy by highlighting names, photos, dates, or ways your reviews can be traced back to a real person. Best-fit customers are influencers that prompt your prospects to think, "I can relate to this person, and I trust their opinion." Present them as someone with a story to tell and set them up for a perfect opportunity to share.



### Responding Regularly to Reviews

The more you listen and respond to customers, the more relevant your business will be. Even when you receive negative feedback, it is a chance to learn or improve your service. Thank customers for positive reviews and follow up with those who are critical. Cornell University found that online reviews with responses from those in management tended to yield better revenue overall. Researchers also found that leaders should respond to around 40% of reviews (especially targeting response to negative feedback) for optimum results.

## Conclusion

Telling people your business is the best in the industry won't prompt people to reach for their wallets. But hearing this message from others can convince them to do so!

Great reviews can make or break your brand and serve as a lead-generating engine for your sales team. This extra layer of transparency not only gains the trust of prospects, it solidifies the loyalty of your base.

What are you waiting for? Start collecting and featuring customer stories today!

## About Your Sponsor

Asking for reviews doesn't require any special tools or technology, just a commitment to see it through.

Collecting and featuring stories puts power in your hands and brings social proof to your message.

Sharing testimonials should be fun! Once you've gathered great reviews, we'll help you combine names, faces, and the power of print to create pristine marketing materials. From first-glance flyers to colorful catalogs, gain the trust of potential clients and start leveraging your reputation today!

### Contact Us

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Positive Printers, Inc.  
3555-A Centre Circle  
Fort Mill, SC 29715

803-802-3345  
[positiveprinters.com](http://positiveprinters.com)