

"Nobody does a better job of showing how to use design to build relationships than Roger C. Parker!"

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author, *Guerrilla Marketing*

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Roger C. Parker's

Guerrilla Marketing & Design

Profiting from testimonials

Protecting and displaying one of your most precious business assets.

Most businesses receive favorable customer comments and testimonials, but few translate these powerful marketing weapons into additional sales.

Testimonials work because customer comments are more credible than your words.

- When you say something about your business, your words are viewed as *claims*.
- But, when your *customer* says them, their words are viewed as *truth!*

When a customer says something nice about you, your business, or one of your employees, how you respond is critical.

Forms of testimonials

Customer testimonials come in many forms, including conversations, e-mails, and letters.

Few testimonials are ready-to-use, however. Most can benefit from a little effort before you can put them to work.

Obtaining permission

Although you may receive testimonial letters that include permission to use the customer's words and name, in most cases you're best off contacting the customer, verifying the quote and asking permission to use their words and their name.

This is especially true if you are going to quote from a conversation or an e-mail.

Customers will appreciate your integrity. More important, verifying gives you a chance to clean up the customer's grammar and also *improve upon the customer's original quote!*

For example, when verifying (or rewording) their comments, you might also ask: "Were there other aspects of buying from us that you might care to comment on?"

Simply showing an interest in the customer's words is often enough to open the testimonial floodgates.

Displaying testimonials

Display and protection ideas include:

- *3-ring binder.* Letters and e-mails tend to get lost. One of the best ways to prevent this to immediately place the origi-

Create a credibility campaign based on customer photographs and words

nals in transparent sleeves stored in a three-ring binder.

- *Bulletin board.* Hang copies on a bulletin board or—better—frame and display them behind glass in a prominent location in your place of business. Use a colored background to highlight the most recent letter you've received.

- *Computer file.* Save excerpts from customer letters in a special computer file. Enter just the most relevant words along with the customer's name and city. (Excerpting focuses attention on the most important parts of the letter.)

- *Copies and printouts.* Copy customer letters and insert them in your press kits and customer presentation folders. Format your customer testimonial file and include printouts with proposals.

- * *Newsletter and web site.* Include customer testimonials in your newsletters and on your web site. When appropriate, place testimonials next to descriptions of specific products or services.

Adding photographs

Whenever possible, include photographs with your testimonials.

Many car dealers, for example, photograph customers taking delivery of their new cars. Since this is generally a happy time for customers, displays of these photographs project a positive image.

Add photographs to testimonials. Consider adding customer photographs next to their words in your testimonial file.

Even better, create posters for display at the point of sale. Simply create a collage of customer comments and photographs professionally typeset and laid out.

Customer profile ads

Use customer testimonials as the basis for your firm's advertising. Nothing beats ads written in your customer's own words.

The ads inevitably attract attention and communicate with a credibility unavailable in any other way. Create a variety of ads, reflecting the different market segments your business serves.

Thanking customers

Thank your customers for their support and time. However, avoid paying customers. This could detract from the credibility of their words.

Feel free, however, to show your appreciation with gift certificates or coupons worth savings on discounts .

For more information

Call Roger C. Parker for help creating a program to convert your existing customer testimonials into future sales.



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