

Perfect Testimonials

How to encourage your customers
to give great testimonials



About the Author



Heloise Laight is a publisher and seven-figure entrepreneur who specialises in coaching people to leverage their knowledge and achieve their business goals by creating their own online course.

Over the past decade she's helped many home entrepreneurs create their own online courses and advice services.

Combined, these businesses have generated over £30 million in sales and helped ordinary people get their message out to thousands.

Before launching her own business with her husband, Heloise was Marketing Director and Head of Publishing for the UK division of international publishing powerhouse, Agora Inc.

Now, for the first time ever, she is bringing her unique expertise to the public in her new programme – the *Course Creation Academy* to help female entrepreneurs turn their passions, experiences and skills into a fulfilling and profitable online business.

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Perfect Testimonials

How to encourage your customers to give great testimonials

When it comes to selling almost any product, customer testimonials are one of your greatest assets.

A testimonial is a written or spoken comment from someone who has enjoyed your product or benefited from it in some way. You can add them to sales letters, websites, 'about me' pages, adverts, press releases – wherever you need to convince people that you're the real deal.

They are incredibly powerful because they're a form of social proof. A testimonial will show that your product or service has produced a real result or transformation for a real person in the real world. Think of it this way, what would you trust more...

A shoe company who tells you that their latest brand of shoe is the most comfortable ever... or a person you bump into on the street who tells you that they are the most comfortable shoes you've ever tried?

A course creator who tells you that their advice will help you improve your job interview technique... or someone who tells you that the course helped them bag a great new job?

You're always going to trust the ordinary person who has tried a product and loved it, over the business who created, published or marketed the product.

It doesn't matter how good your course content is. And it doesn't matter how compelling your sales offer is. If someone doesn't know you, and has never bought from you before, they won't trust you right away.

After all, you're asking them to take you on your word as a complete stranger. To complicate things further, they can't even speak to you, or see you, as you only exist on the internet.

So how do they know that you're going to deliver what you say you'll deliver? How do they know that the information you're asking them to pay for will actually get the results they want?

The short answer is, they cannot know for sure. But what will help give them a lot more confidence is the testimony of others.

This is why, according to bigcommerce.co.uk, 92% of consumers read online reviews and testimonials before they make a purchase... 88% trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations... and 72% say that positive and testimonials give them more trust in a business.

The upshot is, testimonials are essential if you want to sell your course. But as a first-time course-creator, there's one obvious problem.

What if you have no previous customers?

The first time you promote your course, you'll have no customers, which is why I recommend you give your course, for free, to a small selection of people. These could be friends, family and associates, but even better are people you find on forums and social media.

In return for the free course, they have to give some feedback, based on a set of questions I'm about to give you. These will help

guide their answers so that the testimonial really gets across the effectiveness of your course.

Once you've got some people on board, you'll start to get sent comments by those who are happy with what you've provided.

However, sometimes these comments are along the lines of, "This was great, thanks!" or "would happily recommend." These are fine, but they don't really show the specific results of the course, which is what a potential customer is looking for to help them make a purchase decision.

So, you need to get back in touch, thank them for their comments, and ask them for more specific details. This will turn a good bit of feedback into a great testimonial that increases your sales.

And what makes a great testimonial? Quite simple, one that specifically shows how a person following your course had gone from a poor situation to a better situation, all thanks to your course – and uniquely your course.

A testimonial can do something else useful, too – it can give you feedback on the elements of your course that have been done well, and those that might need improvement. You don't have to put those negative elements into a sales piece, but don't shy away from asking difficult questions, as the result will be a better course, better testimonials and more sales.

To help you, here is a set of questions to prompt your customers.

7 Prompt Questions That Can Get You a Great Testimonial

1. "What was the situation before you took my course?"

This will prompt your customer to paint a picture of the problems or goals they had before they bought your course. This will chime with potential customers who are in a similar situation or feel the same

way. They'll know that this testimonial is from someone just like them, which makes it more likely that they'll get the same result.

2. "What was the obstacle that almost prevented you from trying the course?"

Common answers to this include, "I didn't think it would work", "I didn't believe my situation could change", "I was worried that I'd fail", "I was worried that I didn't have the right skills or experience", "I didn't have much spare time", or "I didn't have much money".

By getting the customer to show that these obstacles didn't matter (either you overcame them, or they weren't relevant) you show a prospective customer that their doubts are unfounded.

3. "What have you been able to achieve since using this course?"

This is where you prompt the customer to provide details of the positive outcome. Perhaps they felt more confident, perhaps they got a promotion, perhaps they earned a specific amount of money, or cut their working hours. Try and get them to include specific details if they can to make it even more credible, e.g "Thanks to your course, I have saved £150 a month on bookkeeping and accountancy costs."

4. "What elements of the course have exceeded your expectations?"

In a competitive market, you should show that your course goes that extra mile. It might be the contents, the surprise bonuses, customer support or extra materials and resources. Or it might be that your information delivers a much better result than most people might expect.

This question tries to get a happy customer to show instances where you've excelled. These will excite those who are considering the course and could make the difference between choosing you and an alternative.

5. “What would you tell someone who is considering this course?”

This prompts the existing customer to almost speak directly to your potential customers. Answers might be, “However old you are, I’d recommend you just go for it, because anything’s possible”, or

“Don’t let worries about tech stop you, this is much easier than you think”, or “You’ll never regret learning this skill, which could last a lifetime.”

6. “What can we do to improve the course?”

This isn’t for the testimonial you publish on your marketing materials. What this question does is alert you to any problematic areas of your course, so that you can fix, delete or improve them.

7. “Is there anything else you can think of that might help someone considering this course?”

This final prompt allows the customer to freestyle a bit, and give their view on almost anything. They might not always have something else to say here, but if they do, it will make the testimonial much more quirky, unique and credible.

What Next?

When you get your answers back, make sure you save the full original testimonial on a file. Then create a new file where you can create an edited version. Don’t put words into their mouths, simply cut the testimonial down to the elements that are relevant. In some cases, it might be that you pick a line or two, and in some it might be a long paragraph.

Make sure you ask the customer if you can use their full real name and location. If not, ask if you can use their first initial and surname.

Failing that, their initials will be ok. But the more details you get, the more credible the testimonial becomes.

Video Testimonials

The most powerful form of testimonials are video testimonials. This is because a potential customer will be able to see and hear the person who has benefited from your course, which makes it much more trustworthy and credible.

You can offer similar prompts, but you don't want the video to include the potentially negative answers to question 6, so send the following instead:

“What was the situation before you took my course?”

“What was the obstacle that almost prevented you from trying the course?”

“What have you been able to achieve since using this course?”

“What elements of the course have exceeded your expectations?”

“What would you tell someone who is considering this course?”

“Is there anything else you can think of that might help someone considering this course?”

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