

Sales Strategy

The sales objection inoculators

Phil Bedford explains how to go about writing a testimonial and the value it generates for businesses.

Otherwise known as the testimonial, this is one of the most powerful tools we have in helping to close sales and one of the least correctly utilised.

Most testimonials we see are "shallow" and pretty much useless. Anyone looking to use your services needs to see real value or ROI from using your product or service.

A good format for a testimonial would be to firstly mention the problem or situation which caused you to employ the particular service or product. Secondly, you can add your experience of using the product or service. Thirdly, input the result of using the service and any return on investment as well. The following example puts these three key points to good use.

Example

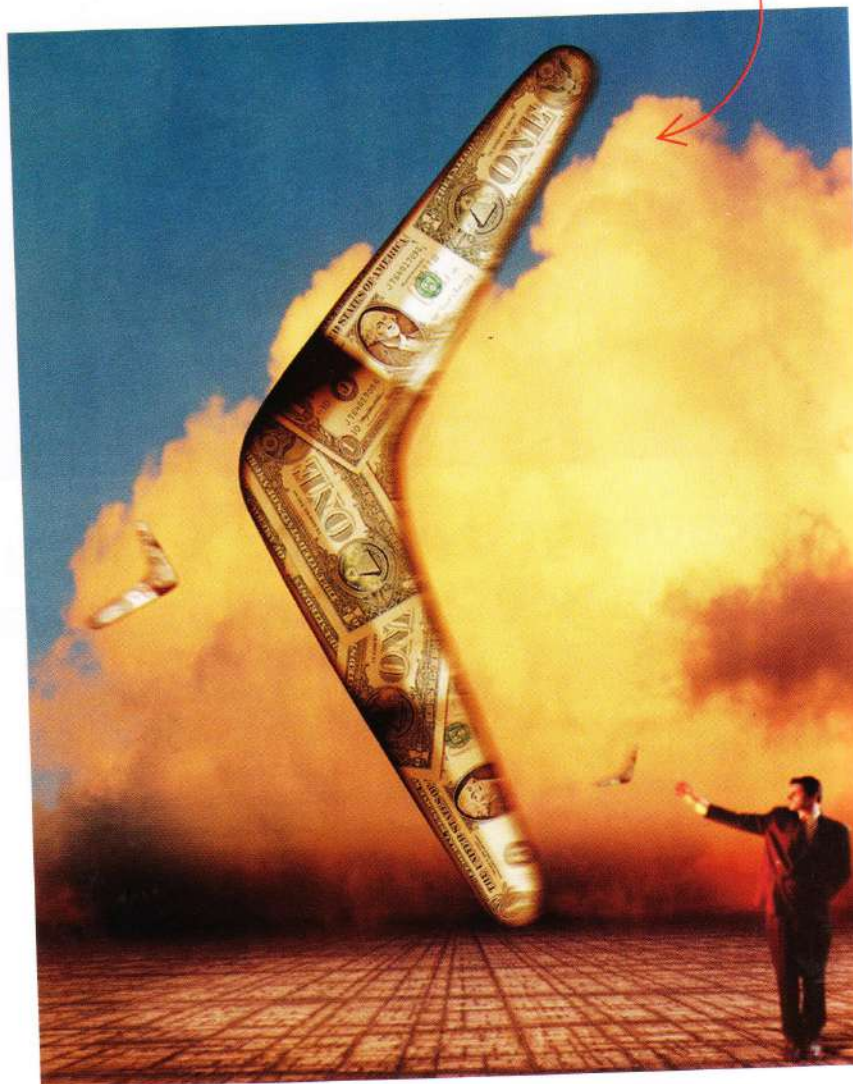
Hi Phil- I know this has been a long time coming, but I do not give testimonials for the sake of it, only when I have witnessed great service or benefit.

I am now into week 10 of the Referral Institute Certified Networker Programme, and am delighted with the results so far. I can categorise my ROI in 3 areas as below;

1. Financially- I received business to twice the value of my initial investment in the programme, within four weeks.

2. Personally- I am 46 years of age, and quite honestly thought of myself as a good networker, therefore somewhat sceptical of the possible benefits of the programme. I also almost convinced myself that I really did not have time to

Most testimonials we see are "shallow" and pretty much useless. Anyone looking to use your services needs to see real value or ROI from using your product or service.



Sales Strategy



An experienced business trainer, **Phil Bedford** brings over a decade of experience to his role as Master Franchisee for the Referral Institute. His expertise and experience of working with both companies and networking associations, coupled with a passion for training have helped him immensely. He regularly appears as a speaker in the UAE and abroad, educating people on how to build their business by word of mouth and "Creating Referrals for Life."

commit to the programme for the full 12 weeks. How wrong I was! I now have a full kit of referral tools that I can use with ease and confidence, giving me absolute certainty that 95 per cent of my future business will come from referral marketing.

3. My referral partners- I have already generated in excess of AED700,000 for my referral partners via other members of the CNP programme- the calibre of the delegates is so high that I am convinced that number will grow and grow.

I could not recommend the programme more highly for anybody who actually wants to learn how to achieve real success in referral marketing, as long as you are willing to adopt all that is taught.

*Best regards,
Peter Cowan
Realtime Learning, Dubai*

It always helps to get a testimonial as soon as you can or the person may disappear, however this is not necessarily the most impactful time. If you have laid grass seeds for example, you may wish to wait until there is beautiful, thick grass before requesting the testimonial. If it were requested immediately then one would assume it would be more about the service than the result.

How to get testimonials

I think it goes without saying, to ask is probably the first thing to do, but then many people are shy to ask. So here are some tips:

Do a follow up audit and, if they comment favourably, ask if it can be used or even expanded on.

Offer to promote your client to your network. They could start the

It is always good to provide an electronic copy for your client to upload to websites and LinkedIn.

testimonial by saying what they do and then how it has helped them. When you share the testimonial it also promotes their business to your network.

Some behavioural styles offer to provide testimonials, but then do not get round to it.

Normally, the fast paced styles those we call go-getters and promoters. I suggest asking them verbally what they would like to say and then offer to write it for them and then get their approval. Do the work for them, they like that.

Frame it

It is always good to provide an electronic copy for your client to upload to websites and LinkedIn. (A note on LinkedIn: make sure you are requesting testimonials from people you have done work for. I often get testimonial requests from people I have spoken to once. My immediate thought is if they are asking based on this then they either just do not understand what a testimonial is or they simply haven't done enough good work to have decent ones.)

How about framing one you have given to a client, it must be a really nice frame. Not only will your client be more likely to put it up on the wall. It also becomes advertising for you.

According to the Certified Networker II Program, giving testimonials is also one of the 18 tactics to motivate your referral source, which

will in fact, encourage them to refer you.

Share with your network

Make sure you share your testimonials with your network. Especially for your true believers, this gives them a great tool to give to potential referrals. Provide at least one for each of your products or services.

Top 3

Think of your top three sales objections and strategically find testimonials to counter these objections.

Video

The power of the web can be harnessed like never before. The video testimonial has really come into its own.

You can use the same format as mentioned above with the clients promoting their own business subtly and then following on with a testimonial. Many people do not like to read, but they love to watch.

Upfront

If you can get highly trained referral partners they can even utilise these testimonials as part of their introduction of you and your services. If introduced before the client can start to object, then we have already dealt with the objection in advance. It is truly an inoculation.