

# W29

**"Imagination is more important than knowledge."**

— Albert Einstein

**Wednesday  
Morning**

**Fax**

*from*

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## **5-Point Testimonial Checklist**

Testimonials are one of the most powerful tools in advertising, next to word-of-mouth recommendations. Yet many marketers shoot themselves in the foot by misusing them. Here are five pointers on how to put testimonials to work for you—and costly mistakes to avoid with them:

### ■ **Reader Identity**

Make sure that your reader can identify with the person giving the testimonial.

A rave review from Julia Child for a kitchen appliance, for example, would pack much more punch with cooks than kind words from her about a power sander.

### ■ **Specificity**

Be as specific as you can concerning the names and addresses of the individuals whose testimonials you employ.

With consumer referrals, for instance, print full names and city locations rather than only initials and state abbreviations. "John Smith, Pasadena, California," for example, is more believable than "J.S., California."

Business-to-business testimonials should, whenever possible, include the person's title or function and the name of his or her company. "Henry R. Luce, Publisher, *Time Magazine*" counts for more than "Henry R. Luce, New York City."

### ■ **No Puffery**

Remember that most people—especially those on lists of hot customers—have built-in BS detectors that help them ignore advertising overstatements.

Never claim too much for your product in a testimonial. It may be great, but it is not the Holy Grail—and a consumer, no matter how happy with his or her purchase, will not exude as much joy about it as your sales manager. If he or she does, nobody will believe it.

### ■ **Communication is a two-way street**

When you can, include a toll-free phone number after a printed testimonial. Answer resulting calls with a brief recorded message by the recommendation's author, verifying the content of the message. A Grade A confidence-builder.

### ■ **Stimulate testimonials**

When you fulfill orders, tell customers that you are interested in their reactions to your product and include a postpaid envelope and answer form. Do not at this point offer an inducement to reply.

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