



By Terry Begue,
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“Not only are testimonials the most powerful selling tool we have, they are also the most under utilized. That’s just crazy because they are FREE!”

Terry Begue is the owner of Begue Painting Inc., and author of the popular e-book, “The Wealthy House Painter’s Guide to Having it All.” He’s been a successful house painter and enjoys helping others start their own successful painting businesses, too. Discover more at: <http://www.yourhousepaintingbusiness.com>

Pass the Testimonial Test!

In 2012, proving your credibility to your customers as a painter is a must. People simply aren’t as trusting as in the past. Can you blame them after the shameful actions of some businesses?

Your customers want to know the service they are about to purchase is worth their hard-earned cash. Put yourself in your prospect’s shoes; it’s a leap of faith for them. Your potential customers want to know who they’re dealing with. It’s important they know you’re a legitimate, credible business. The best way to prove you’re the “real deal” and that your prospects should move ahead and hire your company is through testimonials, also known as third-party endorsements. Testimonials are the written words of people who enjoyed a positive experience after hiring your company.

Almost every prospect I talk to has suffered through at least one bad experience with someone in the service industry, so you need to prove to your prospects that you’re tried and true. Now more than ever, people need to know you can be trusted.

The strongest credibility builder you must have in your arsenal doesn’t even belong to you; it’s borrowed from the words and opinions of your customers. You’re expected to speak highly of your business, but when someone else sings your praises it makes a more powerful statement.

It would be nice if your happy customers always offered to write you a testimonial, but it’s not their job to remember. Get out of your comfort zone and ask. Timing is important; don’t ask for an endorsement in the middle of the job when all the living room furniture is in the kitchen and the cat just ran through the paint tray and then up the stairs.

The best time to ask is when they’re the happiest. That’s usually when they see the completed job for the first time. When everything is cleaned up, put away, and they can take comfort in knowing you did a great job. Usually about the same time they’re ready to write you a check.

Here’s how I do it: I ask them how they like the job. Then I ask if it was everything they expected. After they say a few nice things, I ask, “Would you mind putting what you just said in writing?” If you treat them right from start to finish, they will want other people to know. Tell them you want to use their name, but you won’t list their address or phone number without their permission. The more information about a customer you can add the stronger their testimonial becomes.

Some people don’t know what to write for a testimonial even though they just said the words. If they seem uncomfortable writing one for you, offer to do it for them. Tell them you’ll paraphrase what they just said and, you will get their okay before using it in your marketing. I’ve never had a customer refuse, or, tell me to change anything I wrote for their approval (even though I sometimes laid it on pretty thick). Usually they say, “Yep, that’s perfect—exactly what I wanted say.”

List the testimonials on your website as you collect them; you can’t have too many. Keep copies of three or four of your best ones with you to hand out along with your proposal, as some people do not take the time to look at your website. Make it easy for your prospects to discover why you’re the best choice for their painting needs.

Not only are testimonials the most powerful selling tool we have, they are also the most under-utilized. That’s just crazy because they are FREE! They cost nothing more than the time it takes to collect them. Testimonials are like “word of mouth” on steroids. Make it a habit to ask your happy customers for an endorsement. The only thing better than saying the right thing at the right time is when your customers do it for you. **TPC**