

# How to Harness the Power of Testimonials

**SINCERE TESTIMONIALS OFTEN PROMPT PROMISING REFERRALS. HERE ARE SOME EASY-TO-IMPLEMENT IDEAS FOR GETTING GREAT TESTIMONIALS. BY DAVID CARLETON**



## ABOUT DAVID CARLETON

Industry expert David Carleton is the President of Street Smart Sales and Marketing, producers of *Boot Camp for Spa Retailers*. With a 30-year track record of success, Carleton has worked in the sales and marketing trenches for companies ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500s. He spent six years as a vice president with a major U.S.-based spa manufacturer, and in that capacity was responsible for developing programs that helped hundreds of dealers in 30 countries generate leads, enhance their marketing effectiveness and grow their sales numbers.

Testimonials are one of the most powerful yet under-utilized and overlooked tools you can apply to your marketing efforts. They build trust, get attention and overcome the skepticism of even the toughest buyers. They are neutral third-party endorsements that are more credible than any award or advertisement.

Customers who give you great testimonials are also candidates to give you great referrals and end up becoming more loyal to your dealership. By the way, testimonials should always be about how great your store is, how great the buying experience was or how wonderful your customer service is. I do not recommend using testimonials that are 'spa-brand specific' since you may at some point change brands.

Here are four tips for getting more testimonials and increasing their quality and useability:

- 1** After you deliver a new spa to your customer, tell them that you want to bring over their 'New Customer Gift Basket' on Saturday and that you'll be asking them for their testimonial at that time. In addition, I suggest you get a photo of them either in the spa or standing by it. Putting a face to a name makes the testimonial more believable and friendly to potential buyers.
- 2** Whenever someone mentions something positive about their buying experience, ask them if they'd mind putting it in writing.
- 3** Make it as easy as possible for a customer to give you a testimonial. Instead of making a customer write out his/her testimonial, why not use a digital recorder or even a Testimonial Hotline? Here's a real example: 800-391-6309 x6300.
- 4** Want to get the best testimonials possible? Try this: Write out what you would consider to be a great testimonial, turn it into survey questions and then give the survey to your customers. Be sure to include areas that specifically address your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) and help substantiate your claims.

After you gather your photos and testimonials, create a 'Wall of Fame' where you can post them all for prospective spa buyers to see.

It's a fact: Getting and using testimonials like this will help you close more sales. ■