



Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them



At some stage or another, we've all needed to make a purchase but felt torn between multiple options. While there are certainly many factors that contribute to our final decision, ultimately, the words we read are what get us over the line.

Have you ever made up your mind to spend some money on something, mostly because someone else recommended it?

Perhaps you were in the market for a new restaurant to try and asked for opinions in your local Facebook group, ultimately selecting the one that had the most votes. Likewise, when you need a plumber to come and fix your toilet, you end up choosing someone that other people recommend.

These scenarios where others give their stamp of approval are, ultimately, testimonials. In the world of marketing and business, we call this 'user generated content' (or 'UGC'). While you might be familiar with this concept, what you might not realise is just how much UGC can drive your business success.

Why do freelancers need UGC?

As complex human beings, we seek and rely on connection from other human beings. In the context of relationships, this can be done through multiple different mediums, e.g physical affection, acts of service, and using the right words at the right time.

In business, most of our human interactions happen from behind a screen. This means that much of the connective power is filtered out, leaving us with really only one tool in our toolbox: words.

As a freelancer, you'd be forgiven for thinking that having a shiny portfolio of your past projects is enough to persuade a potential client to give you the green light.

While your work certainly does say a lot about your skills, it doesn't actually articulate how you're the right person for the job. Simply saying 'here's a link to my portfolio' isn't necessarily enough to make you stand out from your competitors and land the project.

It doesn't provide enough connection but, more importantly, is riddled with bias and lacking important information. It's your portfolio, so of course it's filled with only the work you feel makes you look the best.



Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

Potential clients are incredibly aware of this and will keep it in mind when reviewing your past projects.

It also doesn't speak directly to them and overcome any possible objections. The only way to really tackle that bias and communicate the right stuff, is through the opinions of others.

When comparing your skillset with a competitor who has similar abilities, the glowing reviews from past clients may be the only thing that seals the deal.

Getting the right testimonials

Given the high value of UGC, it's important to understand what ingredients make a great testimonial.

While it's lovely to have a client say you did a great job, a testimonial that persuades needs to answer these questions:

- What made the client choose you?
- What did the client enjoy most about working with you?
- Did you meet and/or exceed their expectations? How?

- Have you been able to solve their problems?
- Have any outcomes yet been achieved since implementing your work?
- Would they work with you again? Why?
- How likely are they to recommend you to others with similar problems?

For your own personal growth (and not to be included in your testimonial), you may also wish to ask:

- Is there anything you would change, or wish had gone differently?

Many businesses have a pre-prepared form asking these very questions, and they send it out once the project wraps up.

This can be a good time to gather your testimonial because the client is still basking in the afterglow of your magic.

Having these specific questions answered provides the necessary information to anticipate potential objections from future clients and overcome them in a completely unbiased way.



Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

*“Sam did a great job on our website and we are very happy.”
- Jess P, Plumbers ‘R’ Us*

VS

*“Working with Sam has been great. From the very first discovery call, we were impressed with her professionalism, organisation, understanding of our business goals, and ability to know exactly how to help. The website she built not only looks great, but is functional, automates much of our admin, and is easy to navigate. We are already noticing an increase in our website conversion rate and are spending less time answering questions. We would recommend Sam to any other business who needs a new website to drive their success.”
- Richard W, Wurtain’s Curtains*

When deciding which projects would make great testimonials, focus not only on jobs that have gone smoothly, but also ones that demonstrate your various skills and abilities.

A copywriter, for example, may have a testimonial for a website they wrote, another for a research article they created, and another for an ad campaign they were involved with.

A graphic designer may opt for testimonials about branding they’ve created, packaging they’ve designed, and event invitations they’ve crafted.

Have each client answer the specific questions listed above and create a diverse portfolio of testimonials.

The right way to ask (without getting the ‘ick’)

Most of us have enough manners to know that asking for compliments is quite the social faux pa, which is why we may feel awkward (and a bit desperate) when asking for a testimonial. In casual situations, it would definitely be a bit weird to ask someone how clever they think we are, but thankfully, the rules are a bit different when it comes to business.

Many of us actually like providing a great review and understand the value it brings. We know that you’re not trying to stroke your own ego and, provided we had a good experience, are more than happy to give your business that leg up.



Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

As humans, we love it when people follow our recommendations!

That 'chuffed' feeling is because we've helped someone, and they've trusted our judgement on something.

We know that our review could help multiple people, and that's reward enough.

However, everyone has busy lives to lead and should never feel obligated or pressured to provide a testimonial (except in certain circumstances where it's actually part of the project contract).

When asking for a review, be humble, be polite, show gratitude, and never expectation.

If you've asked for a review and been ghosted, it may be a good thing.

Perhaps the client isn't as happy as you thought, and their ghosting is a way of avoiding an awkward conversation.

Alternatively, they could be busy basking in the success you've helped provide and providing a testimonial has simply slipped their mind (incredibly human).

Either way, if you ask and don't receive, leave it at that and move on.

There will be plenty of other opportunities!

Testimonials play a significant role in the client buying process, which is why you can use them to your advantage. They help lower the risk of buying by building trust and clarifying what's on offer.

In my freelance design business, I use testimonials to build case studies that demonstrate specific skills and abilities.

Freelancers who choose to actively market themselves may opt to use testimonials as marketing content, however I personally don't do this as I find them more powerful in the nurture and proposal parts of landing clients.

By asking the client the right questions, I can use their answers to build case studies that can land me similar projects in the future.

Remember, you only want to get testimonials for the kinds of projects you want to do more of.

If, for example, designing social media slide decks leaves you underwhelmed and desperate for the end, don't waste time asking those clients for testimonials.

Instead, nurture the client relationships that give you the good projects and get your testimonials from them.

Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

Asking for testimonials doesn't have to be awkward and cringey. Here are three email templates I use to ask for a review:

When the project has wrapped up:

New Message

Recipients *client@businessxyz.com*

Subject *We made it!*

Hey **Ben**,

The new **website build** went so well that I'm feeling a bit sad that it's come to an end! I really enjoyed working with you and having the opportunity to help you achieve your business goals. I wish all clients could be like you!

While we're still basking in the success of our time together, I'm wondering how you feel about **answering my client feedback form** *OR* **leaving me a five-star Google review**. This information helps me to land more great projects in the future while letting me know how I'm doing as a **designer**. It also helps other business owners know whether or not I'm right for them. I may use your kind words on my website, in case studies, in my proposals, and in my business marketing.

I know how busy you are, so completely understand if this isn't something you can fit in right now. If you are willing to go ahead (and I'll be forever grateful), you can do so by [clicking here](#).

Looking forward to our next project together,
Jaz.

Make it easy for clients to book time with you by using an online calendar like Calendly, or cal.com

Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

'It's live' celebration

New Message

Recipients *client@businessxyz.com*

Subject *It's alive!*

Hey **Steph**,

I've just seen that the new packaging has made its way to the website, and I wanted to send you my congratulations. You and I worked so hard on it, and it's definitely paid off. I can't wait to see what we come up with next!

I'd love to create a feature or case study to show off our success and know it would be all the more amazing to include a testimonial from you as part of the feature. I would also link back to your website and share the win with my audience on socials.

*Would this be something that you could send over? It would only need to be a sentence or two highlighting the work we did, **here's an example of this that I did for a past client so you can see what yours might look like.***

Give the client the context they need, even better if you have previous examples of what you're asking

I know how busy you are, so completely understand if this isn't something you can fit in right now. If you are willing to go ahead (and I'll be forever grateful), just reply what you'd like to say and I can send you the link when it's live.

Looking forward to our next project together,

Jaz

Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

Framing the request as a gift (can also be for a birthday)

New Message

Recipients client@businessxyz.com

Subject It's alive!

Hey Roger,

Just wanted to firstly check in and see how things are going since the **new branding went live**. I must say, that project is one of my favourites and I really enjoyed working on it with you.

Seeing as how we're in the season of gift giving, I'm hoping you and Santa might be able to work on a little gift for me (cheeky of me, I know); a testimonial of our time together.

If you're able to spare a few mins, **I've got a client feedback form that I'd love you to fill out, *OR* a link I can send for you to leave me a five-star Google review**. This information helps me to land more great projects in the future while letting me know how I'm doing as a **designer**. It also helps other business owners know whether or not I'm right for them.

I know how busy you are, so completely understand if this isn't something you can fit in right now. If you are willing to go ahead (and I'd be forever grateful), you can do so by clicking here.

Looking forward to our next project together,

Jaz.

Points for personality, the more fun you have with it, the more likely you get a human response

As you can see from these email templates, asking for client testimonials doesn't have to be an awkward encounter. At the end of the day, it's good business and most people are happy to give them.



Deconstructing Testimonials and how to get them

The final checklist before you hit 'send'

To give yourself the best chance at getting a great testimonial, make sure you've covered everything on this checklist before you ask the question.

Have you told them where their testimonial will be used?

This helps them to know what they should and shouldn't say, while also subtly seeking their consent to use it.

Do you have a central location to collect testimonials (like a form)?

Having a testimonial given in the body of a return email doesn't always give you the right information and is too easy to forget about or lose. Using something like a structured form allows you to ask specific questions, while organising your testimonials so they're easy to find when you need them.

Have you written the testimonial for them, or could they perceive that you have?

While this may be tempting, don't do it. Some business owners think they're helping by writing the testimonial and then sending it for approval, but honestly, it's just bad form. Doing this seems self-serving and just an attempt

to stroke your own ego. It may also turn a relationship sour if the recipient has to awkwardly decline their approval of what you've written.

Carefully consider where your clients come from before deciding how you want the testimonial to be given.

If your clients are mostly finding you on Google, your Google review link may be more beneficial than sending a client feedback questionnaire. When asking for a Google review, make sure you're absolutely certain the review will be positive and truthful. Google reviews can be dynamite because they're the exact words the person wrote, while also being Google verified.

On the flip side, you don't get to approve Google reviews before they go live, and if someone were to lie or write something negative, it's incredibly difficult to have the review removed. If you're wanting specific feedback to use in a variety of ways, a client feedback form may be the best choice. You can arrange and use the information however you need to.

Just make sure your testimonials always seem authentic and could never be misconstrued as being fake.

Now go get those sweet, sweet testimonials!



If you've got successful projects under your belt and no testimonials to back them up, use this guide to get the ball rolling.

As a seasoned Design Superwoman (and successful creative freelancer), I can't tell you how many times the right testimonial has pushed the next project over the line.

Trust me when I say that the same could be true for you.

And if you need an extra helping hand or motivational voice note to help you hit send, you know where to find me.

Until next time,

*Piece out,
your Pricing Queen, Jaz*

WANNA WORK WITH JAZ?

CLICK HERE TO LEAVE A REVIEW

The ingredients you need to succeed as a freelancer, served on a silver platter!

Well, inside a pantry..

Ready to access literally everything you need to build, bake and create the freelancing career you've salivated over?

Over the past 15 years I have built a literal pantry of resources, lessons and tools that have helped me build my own freelance career and can help you build yours.

Join the Freelancer's Pantry membership program and indulge in monthly masterclasses, worksheets, calculators, cheatsheets, and much more!

Whether you're a seasoned freelancer looking to enhance your career or a budding creative eager to turn your passion into profit, The Freelancers Pantry provides the resources and support to help you thrive in the freelance world.

This fully stocked membership includes:

- Gourmet Guides covering topics from Negotiation to Licencing Pricing, Retainers and plenty more
- Whipped Worksheets to help you work through your pricing, customer journeys and developing client avatars
- Hours worth of Loaded Lessons and Very Tasty Vlogs exploring the topics we face as freelancers on the daily
- Creative Calculators coded into the platform that help you set your prices, calculate your different types of rates and charge more dollars
- Freelancer Flowcharts to help you step through the decisions you need to make on the daily as a freelancer

PLUS Feast Members have a Group Coaching Long Table call each month to dish on all things being a freelancer, pricing pickles and extra support via a private community chat!

The Freelancer's Pantry is lovingly stocked and served for ambitious and creative individuals seeking freelance success.

GRAB YOUR SPOT HERE

Feast

FOR THE FREELANCER WHO CRAVES THE SWEET TASTE OF SUCCESS

97g

Staples

FOR THE FREELANCER WHO CRAVES THE SWEET TASTE OF SUCCESS

57g