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**Keith F. Luscher**, is author of the book **Prospect & Flourish**, and is a marketing representative with Principal Financial Group®. Prior to joining Principal®, he served

professionals in the insurance and financial services industries as a management consultant. In that role, he advised producers on issues related to marketing and prospecting, and developed groundbreaking educational curriculum. In addition, Luscher is also a nationally known author, speaker, and expert in media, interpersonal communication and marketing.



## If They Write It, It Won't Come

by Keith F. Luscher  
Author, *Prospect & Flourish*

We all know that client testimonials can be one of the best ways to grab the attention of prospects in your marketing. They give you credibility, they show you have a successful track record, and most importantly they reflect the feelings that your clients have when you have served them with success.

Further, when you state your value proposition in your elevator speech or marketing materials, it is important to have testimonials to back up your claims. If you don't have compelling client testimonials, get them!

This is not just a challenge—it's a task that presents an opportunity to talk and listen to your current or past clients (or employer). Often when I pass on this advice to others, they will indicate that there are several clients whom they believe will give them a testimonial.

The mistake is made in how they attempt to get it.

**Don't call your client and ask them to write a testimonial for you.** When you ask, you may say that you are simply updating some of your marketing communications and indicate that you would love to cite them as a happy customer and ask them to share just a little of their story.

"Sure!" they will respond. "I would be happy to."

And then you wait. Odds are you will keep on waiting, because the testimonial will never come.

The point here is not to give your client something to do. They have enough on their plate. The reason the testimonial won't come is not because they aren't happy—they are just too busy. After all, it is not their job to do your job.

Instead, list out your top five or six clients, and invite them for a cup of coffee and a conversation. Then, your job is to find out what they have valued in your service, why, and use that as a foundation for the testimonial that you write (Note: if this is not something you feel competent in doing yourself, have someone who is and meet them on your behalf, and be upfront about that person's role and purpose.).

Use the meeting and the conversation not just to learn what they value, but also to uncover opportunities for improvement on your part. And ask them this question: "Given your happiness with what we have done, who else should we speak with? Who else may benefit just as you have?" This is perhaps when you may want to have a print out handy of their LinkedIn connections, and highlight a few contacts with whom you would welcome an introduction.

When you arrive back at your office, write up just a few sentences that summarize, in their words, what they value. You write the testimonial—not them.

You then send it back to them via email, for their approval. Most of the time, they will sign off on it as is—or they will return it to you with a little embellishment and thus sounding even better.

Stay tuned, because if you like the idea of getting testimonials, you are going to love what's coming: Turbocharged Testimonials: Your Happy Customer Showcase.