

Establishing Credibility from Scratch:

How to Score Testimonials with No Experience

❑ Establish Your Brand

Clarify who you are, what your company does, and what that looks like. Create a consistent image across all platforms that you have a presence on.

❑ Identify Your Ideal Customer

When you're just starting out, it's important to focus on attracting who you would ideally work with, because that will set the tone for everything that follows.

❑ Network & Engage

Determine where your ideal customer "hangs out," whether this be online or locally. Get connected groups and start interacting with these people. Help out as much as possible!

❑ Identify Problems

Once you've spent some time engaging and helping publically, you'll find some people who would benefit from one-on-one help. This might be because their problems are too big to be dealt with through chatting on social media, or perhaps because they need very specific help.

❑ Reach Out

Offer to help! Inform them that you understand their problem and it's something you've dealt with before. Explain that you've recently begun doing this skill professionally, and you're working on gaining testimonials to bolster your credibility. Offer to help them for free, in exchange for a testimonial. (The free work could be thirty minutes of coaching to teach them how to fix their own problem, or you could fix it for them yourself.)

Check out the next page for a practical example of what this looks like in the real world.

For example, you might message them:

“Hey Katy,

I saw your post in the XYZ Facebook group about the struggle you’re having getting traffic to your new site. That must be pretty frustrating! I was actually dealing with the same thing myself last year, so I had to learn a lot about SEO to solve the problem.

Now, I’m getting such great results that I’m offering this as a service to other small business owners. I’m just starting out though, and I’m trying to gain more experience and credibility. I’d love to offer you some of my time for free to help you out! I could provide a comprehensive SEO review of your site and then follow up with a half-hour coaching call to help you understand what you can do to get more traffic.

If you find my service helpful, a short, written testimonial is all the thanks I would want.

Let me know how this sounds to you!”

Of course, not everyone will take you up on your offer, but most people will welcome some free help! Especially those who are really struggling will be more than happy to have someone else fix their problem in exchange for writing a few words.

Many clients have had great success with this method, racking up several great testimonials in less than a week. Also, you can add the pro bono work you do to your portfolio, and maybe even close a paying customer as well!

It’s actually often easier to close these “leads” as customers, because: 1) they are already impressed with you and grateful for your generosity, and 2) when you help them you’ll go above and beyond, because you want as good a testimonial as possible. These two factors mean that these “customers” end up extra impressed. If they have any future need, chances are they’ll choose you over a stranger (even if the stranger is much more qualified).

Try it out! There’s little to lose, except perhaps a small amount of time. Focus on helping people as much as possible, and you’ll quickly gain greater experience (both in your field and in customer service), feel more fulfilled, easily gather testimonials, and be turning leads into paying customers before you know it!