



Testimonials

Why a testimonial? As Psychologist and author Robert Cialdini points out in his book, *Influence; Science and Practice*, when people aren't sure what path to take, or decision to make, they look around for examples of what other people who appear most similar to themselves have done to get the results they are searching for.

This is a powerful influencer of human behavior. In order to maximize the positive impact that your programs, products and services can have on your members and surrounding community, you must utilize all proven and ethical means of influencing people in a positive way. This will not only help them get out of any "ruts" they may be stuck in, it can also effectively combat the tremendous clutter your members are exposed to by other advertisers in this industry.

Testimonials can come in the following forms:

- A written account of the experiences and results achieved by a member and client. These can also be accompanied by photos; both before and after, or just after photos
- A video testimonial
- A live testimonial (these are the most powerful and should be incorporated whenever possible during conversations with prospects, seminar presentations and other live presentation opportunities)

When should you ask for a testimonial?

The best time to ask for a testimonial is after the client experiences something that is positive and significant for them. This could include:

- A weight loss or performance improvement breakthrough. A long-standing plateau mark has been surpassed
- Fitting in a certain pair of pants
- Making the team
- Getting off the medication
- Anything that is of significant value to your client and the quality of their life. This means that you don't have to wait until their program is over to ask

What should the testimonial include? How should it be written?

The best testimonials come from the heart. As long as your client is honest and they know that their words are going to impact the people reading them, you do not have to influence the content of their testimonial. The best lengths range from 3-4 sentences to over a full 1-2 pages, depending on how much they want to share about the impact your program has had on them.



Here's a sample script you can use when requesting a testimonial:

“Congratulations on achieving this tremendous milestone! We are so proud of you and your accomplishment. You are an inspiration to all of us here and we would be honored if you were willing to share your story with others – especially those that are just getting started on their fitness journey and as a result, maybe don't know which direction to go, or who to trust. Would you be willing to share some of your experiences, advice and results you achieved through a heart-felt testimonial? If you are willing to provide some inspiration to others, all we ask is that you take a few moments and write down in your own words what you learned, how you benefitted and what advice you would give someone that may be contemplating about starting one of our dotFIT Programs. So many people out there just need some encouragement – your words could really help them take an important step.”

Photos

Each of your clients should have a “before” picture taken at the beginning of their journey with you. Make it clear that these photos are for the client's use only, and that they may choose to one day share that photo with others who may not believe that is where they started. Our experience has shown that 100% of the clients who chose not to take a before picture were disappointed that they didn't have that to compare to when they achieved their goal. Don't let that happen to them. Take the photo in good light, wearing whatever level of clothing the client feels comfortable in, and make sure it is a high quality photo. Digital is best.

After photos are usually something the client is excited about. The same photo quality guidelines apply here, although you can get a little more creative with the after photos. Have the client “make a muscle”, or get in a celebratory pose of some sort. Make it fun.

For your testimonial, if you only have an after photo you can still use that as a stand-alone. The goal, however, is to have a side by side comparison of before and after photos.

Other considerations

Every trainer should have a requirement for testimonials. If a trainer successfully helps 3-6 clients achieve their goals each month, they should be able to turn in testimonials from at least half of those clients. Set a monthly requirement for each trainer (it could be as few as just 1 new testimonial each month) and link the accomplishment of that requirement to their compensation to help gather momentum. As a trainer begins to use these testimonials as further proof that the program works, they will quickly learn the power of a collection of successful client stories.

Here are some suggestions for marketing with testimonials:



- Wall of Success, or “Me. Better.” board (leverage your Program name if you so desire). Posted throughout the club, in trainer’s offices, near the dotFIT Kiosk.
- Book of Success (three-ring binder with testimonials).
- The club’s website.
- A digital photo frame with automatically scrolling before and after photos.

Model Release

Be sure to obtain a signed Model Release form from all clients. Here is a sample you can build on:

I will allow <Your Club Name> to use my name and/or publish photographs of me for advertising, website, and promotion. This includes pictures, testimonials or any information provided by me.

I will only provide pictures or copy to <Your Club Name> that is privately owned by me and is not copyrighted or owned by any outside party.

I waive any right to inspect or approve the photographs, promotional copy or printed matter that may be used in conjunction with, or as part of, any advertising or promotion.

I understand that this does not guarantee a sponsorship agreement with <Your Club Name> and I do not expect any compensation.

Furthermore, I will not present myself as an employee, agent or representative of the company.

Date Signature

(_____)
Phone number Printed name

Address

City State Zip

Note: Share your client’s success stories on the dotFIT website for everyone to see! Simply email us at marketing@dotfit.com and request a dotFIT Model Release Form. Return the form with clear, high-quality photos and a testimonial, and we’ll post it at www.dotfit.com/testimonials.