



Supercharge with Toastimonials

Testimonials add power to your club or district website and shift your marketing efforts into overdrive. Just as nitrous oxide injected into the cylinders of a hot rod boosts the power and speed of the car, testimonials boost the rest of your marketing efforts by leveraging social proof.

It's human nature to follow the behavior of others. If you've ever purchase a book or other product based on a review, you've relied on social proof in your decision making. Social proof is especially powerful when someone is making an important decision for themselves and they perceive others as being knowledgeable on the subject. Joining Toastmasters is an important decision and the members of your district will be viewed as knowledgeable on the subject.

You could, of course, simply place testimonials on your club or district website and hope for the best. However, forming a game plan will take the power of your testimonials, your social proof, and supercharge it.

Steps to Supercharge District Testimonials

1. Set a goal for the number of testimonials you want to collect (I recommend at least 104 to 156 ... you'll see why in a minute.)
2. Of that goal, attempt to get 52 of them as videos (see **Video Tips** below) and the rest as written testimonials (see **Written Tips** below.)
3. Each week, post one or two written testimonials and one video testimonial to your website.
4. After they're posted, use Facebook (or your other social media outlets) to promote these by posting links to the testimonials on your website. Posting links to the content that is on your website drives traffic back there.

See **Social Media Strategies** below for a suggested posting sequence.

Video Tips

Videos should be posted to YouTube. It's the second or third most popular search engine in the world (depending on when the last analysis was done.)

Along with posting the video, be sure to provide a good description that includes your district website, the town the member lives in, the member's club and club website, and how long they've been in Toastmasters. Also, work in a couple of sentences that use words and phrases like "public speaking," "leadership," "communication," "Toastmasters," and other important terms that someone might be using to find that video.

The clips should be a couple of minutes in length, maybe slightly longer (think Table Topics response or Speech Evaluation in length.)

Video testimonial participants should hit as many demographic categories as possible in your district: all ages, all races, and both sexes. You might find that if you only take volunteers, you could end up with a fairly homogenous group. If this happens, go out and ask for testimonials from people who fall into other categories.

Care should be taken when selecting members for video testimonials. This will probably require a little tact and might be best done by inviting specific people to provide videos rather than making a general announcement asking for volunteers to video testimonials.

Written Tips

Written testimonials can be of any length, but people tend to lose interest unless the testimonials are extremely engaging. To be safe, asking for shorter responses will be better. 150 to 300 words is generally a good length.

All written testimonials should come with a photo of the person. Pictures make the testimonial more real to the reader. They can also help the reader relate to the person more closely (do to perceived similarities like age, race, or sex that are seen in the photo.)

Like videos, written testimonials should also come from members who hit many different demographic categories.

Social Media Strategies

Just like you'll be posting your testimonials to your website in small groups each week, you'll want to post links to those testimonials to social media in small groups, too. Even smaller groups, in fact. Post them to social media one at a time, a day or more apart, in order to get the most visibility and marketing mileage out of them.

My recommendation is that you post your testimonials around the lunch hour in your time zone, especially on Facebook. Statistics show that Facebook usage spikes just before and just after the lunch hour each work day.

Also, because people tend to look on Facebook for things to do towards the end of the week, I recommend that you post your video testimonials on Thursday around lunch. On other days, post your text testimonials (with photos) to social media. For example, if you're posting three testimonials per week, try posting a text testimonial on Monday and Wednesday and your video testimonial on Thursday.

Other Tips

- Share the testimonials with the clubs that the members belong to or the city websites (if your district has those) for the cities the members are from. They might want to use them on their websites, too.
- Include information that non-Toastmasters understand and exclude information that they don't. For example:
 - Time as a member of Toastmasters definitely matters. Include it.
 - Highest office held does not matter unless they are a past district governor or maybe lieutenant governor. We have a lot of offices and it will just add confusion for non-members. If you really want to include that information to show participation, perhaps say "a former (or past) district officer."
 - Similarly, educational achievement level can be confusing. We have a lot of acronyms and some current members are still confused by them. I would exclude these except for DTM. However I would spell it out as Distinguished Toastmaster.

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