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## **You're the Best? Now Prove It!**

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Most of us have to work hard to gain new clients and customers. But how do we convince prospects to choose us? It's natural to boast, "Because we're the best!"

But claims such as "we're the best" or "we're number one" are used so often – sometimes by competitors in the same field – that they have lost meaning. The result: prospective customers are unimpressed, or worse, turned off.

***You can win back your credibility by substantiating your claims if you do it believably and honestly.*** How you set yourself apart from your competition must be both ***meaningful*** (i.e., an important criteria) to your prospects and ***believable*** (you must have convincing proof).

### **Here are 5 ways to prove your "we're the best!" claim:**

1) Special credentials

If you or your company have a unique expertise or certification that sets you apart, this certainly can give credence to your claims, as long as prospects see it as relevant to their needs.

2) Outside authorities

Lucky you if there is an objective authority in your field who regularly ranks companies and you are ranked # 1 this year! The more widely-accepted this authority is – by both your peers and your customers – the better.

**Lacking an industry-accepted authority to rate you, there is nothing wrong with doing your own survey!** Whom to poll depends on the criteria you are looking at:

3) Your own customers

Testimonials from satisfied customers or clients can be very powerful and convincing, so ask for them! Important: Actual quotations, directly attributed to an individual (***real name***, not just a title), are essential for believability.

4) Target prospects

Surveying your target audience is most suitable for assessing perceptions of your company versus your competitors. In most cases, you will want a fairly large sample to give weight to the results. (Obviously, this only makes sense if you are fairly certain of a positive outcome.)

5) Your peers, vendors or other business partners

Companies who know you and/or do business with you can also be an important source of testimonials. In addition to being character references, they can also validate your technical competencies or other criteria that are valued within your industry.

### **Tips**

- In some cases, having an objective third party conduct the research brings much more credibility to the results. Depending on the situation, you may or may not wish to have your company identified as the one sponsoring the research.

- Quantitative substantiation is almost always more impressive than qualitative (i.e., being ranked # 1 in customer service by a sample of 500 is more impressive than by a sample of 10). There are exceptions, however. Testimonials by a few very well-known customers can carry a lot of weight. So can endorsements by respected experts.
- When you communicate your claims, always include information on how the documentation was obtained. When you don't, the omission can raise questions in the prospect's mind.

Just as you evaluate the reputation and credentials of vendors and suppliers before you buy, so do your prospective customers. **Do *your* claims stand up to scrutiny?**