

Getting Real Social Proof, Fast

Business Vision Academy · affiliate program
Document 8.2

The landing pages now contain a **What buyers say** section with three empty, clearly marked slots. This document explains how to fill them lawfully, and why the slots were left empty rather than filled with invented names.

A. Why the quotes were not written for you

A fabricated testimonial on a US commercial landing page is not a grey area. It is deceptive advertising under **FTC Act §5** and, since August 2023, under the **Rule on the Use of Consumer Reviews and Testimonials, 16 CFR Part 465**, which explicitly prohibits fake reviews and testimonials and authorises civil penalties per violation.

The practical consequences, in the order they usually arrive:

Consequence	How it happens
ClickBank account termination	Compliance review, competitor report, or a refund complaint referencing the quote
Ad account permanent ban	Meta and Google both prohibit fabricated endorsements
Payment processor withdrawal	Chargebacks referencing misrepresentation
FTC civil penalty	Per-violation, and each page view can count
Personal liability	Officers can be named where they directed the conduct

There is also a purely commercial argument. Invented testimonials in this niche read as invented. "Sarah M., Marketing Manager, saved 12 hours a week" is a format every buyer in this demographic has learned to discount. A page with no testimonials outperforms a page with obviously fake ones.

So the slots are empty and marked. They are wired into the layout, styled, and responsive. The moment you have real quotes they take five minutes to fill.

B. What a compliant testimonial requires

All five, for every quote you publish:

1. **The person exists** and genuinely achieved what the quote describes
2. **Written consent** for the use of their name, likeness and statement
3. **Documentation** supporting any figure mentioned (hours saved, outcome, result)
4. **The typical result disclosed** alongside the quote, if the quote is not typical
5. **Records retained** for the publication period plus three years

Point 4 is the one that catches people. Since 2023, "results not typical" is not a fix. If you publish an exceptional result you must state what the ordinary result actually is.

C. The fastest lawful way to get four testimonials

This takes about ten days and costs the vendor nothing but access.

Step 1 — Identify candidates (day 1)

Pull twenty existing customers who completed at least three courses. If the product is new and there are none, give twenty free accounts to people in the target demographic — non-technical office workers, managers, freelancers. Free access in exchange for an honest review is lawful, **provided the fact that access was given free is disclosed** alongside the testimonial. That disclosure is short and does not meaningfully hurt credibility.

Step 2 — Ask a specific question (day 1)

Do not ask "what did you think?" You will get "great course, highly recommend", which is worthless on a landing page.

Ask instead:

What is one specific task at work that you now do differently, and roughly how long did it take before compared with now?

Specific answers convert. Vague praise does not.

Step 3 — Get written consent (day 2 onwards)

A short email is sufficient. Keep the reply.

Subject: Permission to quote you

Hi [Name],

Thanks for that. Can I use your comment on our website?

I'd publish it as: "[EXACT QUOTE]" – [First name, Last initial], [role], [city].

Reply "yes" to this email and I'll take that as your permission. You can ask me to remove it at any time and I will, within 48 hours.

[If applicable] I'll also note that you received free access to the program in exchange for an honest review.

Thanks,
[Name]

Step 4 — Establish the typical result (day 5)

Send one question to everyone who has completed at least three courses:

Roughly how much time per week, if any, do you now save on work tasks because of this program?

Take the **median** of the replies. That number is what you publish next to any exceptional quote. If the median is small, publish the small number — a modest, honest figure is credible and safe, and an inflated one is neither.

Step 5 — Fill the slots (day 10)

Search each HTML file for `class="quote slot"` and replace the block.

D. Exact markup to paste in

Replace one slot block with this:

```
<div class="quote">
  <p>"The monthly report used to take me most of a Friday morning. Now
  it's about twenty minutes and I spend the rest of it checking the
  numbers rather than assembling them."</p>
  <p class="who"><b>Rebecca L., operations coordinator</b>
  Completed 6 of 10 courses &middot; Denver, CO</p>
</div>
```

If free access was given in exchange for the review, add it to the attribution line:

```
<p class="who"><b>Rebecca L., operations coordinator</b>
Completed 6 of 10 courses &middot; Received free access in exchange for an honest review</p>
```

Then, immediately below the three quotes, replace the vendor note with the typical-result line:

```
<p style="font-size:.84rem;color:var(--stone);margin-top:14px">
Individual results vary. Across participants who completed at least three
courses, the median reported time saved was [X] hours per week. The quotes
above are individual experiences and are not a promise of any particular
outcome.</p>
```

Do not publish the section at all until you have at least two real quotes and the median figure. Delete the whole `<section>` in the meantime — the pages are designed to work without it.

E. Proof you can publish today, without any consent

The pages already use these. They are factual attributes of the product, not endorsements, so they carry no substantiation burden beyond being true.

Element	Where it appears	Why it works
Course count in a numbered grid	Hero visual	Shows the buyer exactly what they receive
Total study hours	Proof strip	Sets a realistic expectation, which reduces refunds
"0 lines of code"	Proof strip	Answers the main disqualifying fear
Permanent access	Proof strip and offer card	Removes the subscription-trap objection
Named tasks with before-and-after times	Story and listicle variants	Specificity substitutes for proof better than adjectives
"Who it isn't for" section	Review variant	Disqualifying people is the strongest credibility signal available without testimonials

The last one is worth stating plainly: a review page that names four types of buyer who should not purchase reads as more trustworthy than any five-star quote block. That section is doing the job of social proof right now.

Additional proof the vendor can supply without consents

- Screenshots of the actual course platform
- A screen recording of one lesson or one completed task
- The instructor's real name, background and photo
- Total number of enrolled students, if it is a number worth stating
- The refund rate, if it is low — a published low refund rate is powerful and entirely factual

Every item on that list is stronger than an invented quote and none of them carries legal risk.

F. What to do about ratings and star counts

Do not add stars, review scores or "4.8/5 from 2,300 students" unless the underlying reviews exist and are collected through a system you can produce on request. Aggregate ratings are covered by the same 2023 rule as individual testimonials.

If genuine reviews exist on a third-party platform, link to them rather than restating the score. A link a buyer can check is worth more than a number they cannot.