

Don't ignore power of testimonials

HOW powerful are testimonials? I wrote a testimonial without being asked in support of restaurant Indian Star and unbeknown to me it was used to support them in the Rotorua Hospitality Awards.

Client testimonials are a powerful way to gain credibility and trust for your business. Every business should use testimonials to build their business and never be afraid to display and exploit their power. They are like the smiley faces on TradeMe.

Indian Star owner Ray Singh used it in his quest to win at the Rotorua Hospitality Awards and bingo, look what he won — Rotorua's Outstanding Restaurant Award and second in the Outstanding Chef. His business and team won and my testimonial may have played some small part.

Here is my unsolicited testimonial.

“What sets a great business apart from a good business? It's service, service and service. However, long before there is an opportunity to display the level of service there has to be a sound business structure. Every business needs a sales process. Without a solid sales process nothing is ever sold. A great business has a well-rehearsed and polished sales presentation. The ultimate aim of any

Small Business

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great business is to make the experience of dealing with them — Memorable. If this is achieved by service, quality and presentation then that business is truly a great business.

So you could imagine my delight when I experienced these qualities. I invited friends to join me at Indian Star on Friday night. After a very pleasant meal and hospitality from the owner Ray Singh I'm moved to write this testimonial to support his quest to win in the Rotorua Business Awards.

I have had dealings with Ray when we (PhotoArts) played a part in the refurbishment of his restaurant. I admired his vision and commitment to spend money to make his restaurant that much more special and set a standard for his clients and team. When I visited last Friday night and saw the very high

standards Ray has achieved I was impressed. The staff were all in uniform and presented immaculately. The premises were clean and inviting with the new mood lighting and of course Ray welcomed us as only a great host can do.

His sales skills are legendary and we bought but never felt like we had been sold. That is a real skill to up sell and gain value from every client without ever pressuring or badgering the client. Ray is a master. The quality of the food and service is exceptional.

This is what makes a great city. People always remember a happy experience in a restaurant and it certainly influences the feelings towards a city or place. Just as a bad experience does the same. Ray and his team are a master at making sure not only that Indian Star is remembered for the right reasons so is Rotorua. If we had more Ray Singhs in this city it truly would make a difference.

Good luck Ray, you deserve to be a winner as you have worked extremely hard and smart.”

— Rod Meharry is a former member of the Government's Small Business Advisory Group and a previous small business owner now looking for new challenges.