

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE *to* SOCIAL PROOF MARKETING



## INTRODUCTION

Do you sometimes wonder why customers pick your competitors over you?

After all, you do everything by the book. You attract the right traffic, engage visitors with killer content and constantly test different approaches to improving the user experience.

And yet...

...they still prefer to buy from someone else.

But you see:

They might have a good reason for doing so.

*For instance, they may perceive your competitors' as more trustworthy, credible, and consider their products as more popular.*

They see the others using your competitor's products. They hear stories from friends about how well they have helped them, and read reviews and praise for your competitors' efforts...

So while you think your products are better, customers still prefer to buy something else... just because of various social proof that convinces them to do so.

**We're hoping to help you change that with this eBook.**

We'll show you how to use social proof to convince more people to buy from you, and present you with examples of how other companies successfully use it in marketing.

## WHO IS THIS EBOOK FOR?

### E-commerce Owners

If your online sales aren't as high as you'd hoped for, it might mean that you need to increase the trust in your store or products. And that's exactly what this eBook will help you achieve.

### Advertisers

If every ad you run fails to convince users to your product, then you should keep on reading too. You'll find out how to grab prospects' attention and convince them to buy from you.

### Agencies

If you want to find out how to improve the effectiveness of client campaigns, this eBook is for you too. It'll teach you how to incorporate social proof into their marketing campaigns and improve their performance



### The Best Online Resource Making Social Marketing Easy. Again.

Social marketing changes all the time. New trends or advertising techniques emerge almost every day, making it hard to stay up to date with it all.

That's why we created a premium space for you to be at the forefront of what's new and exciting in social marketing today.

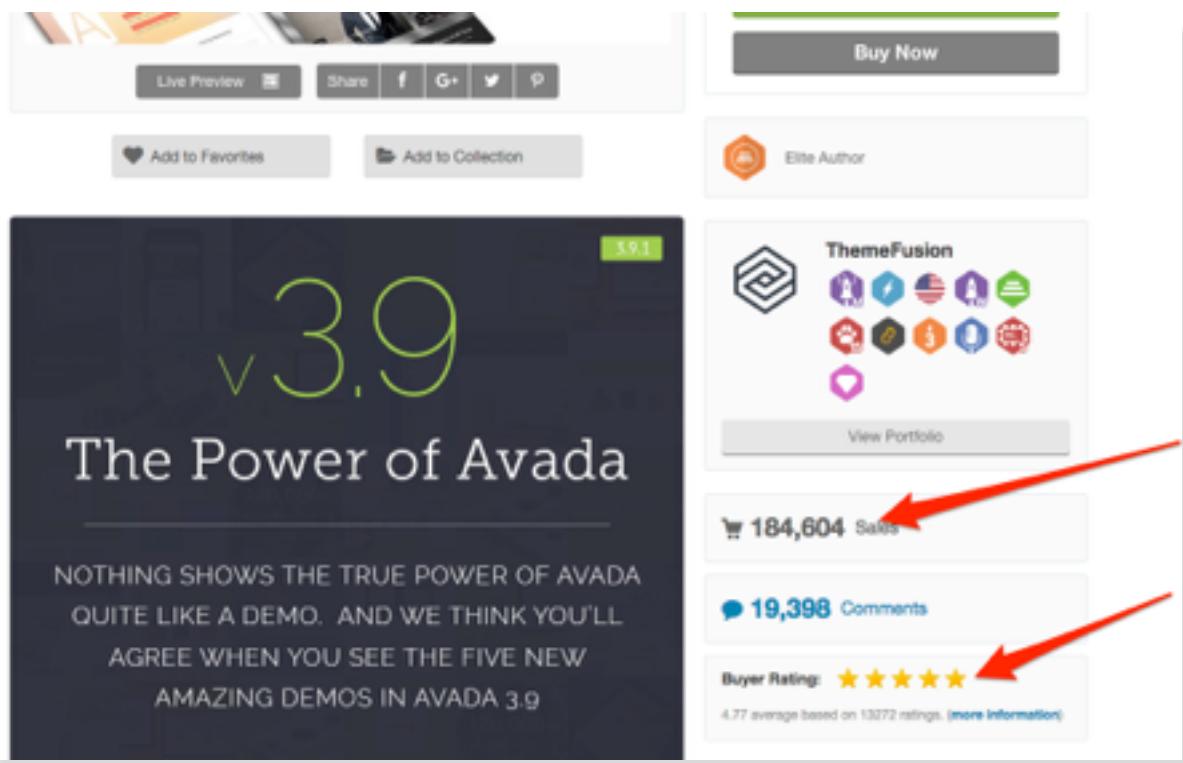
**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**



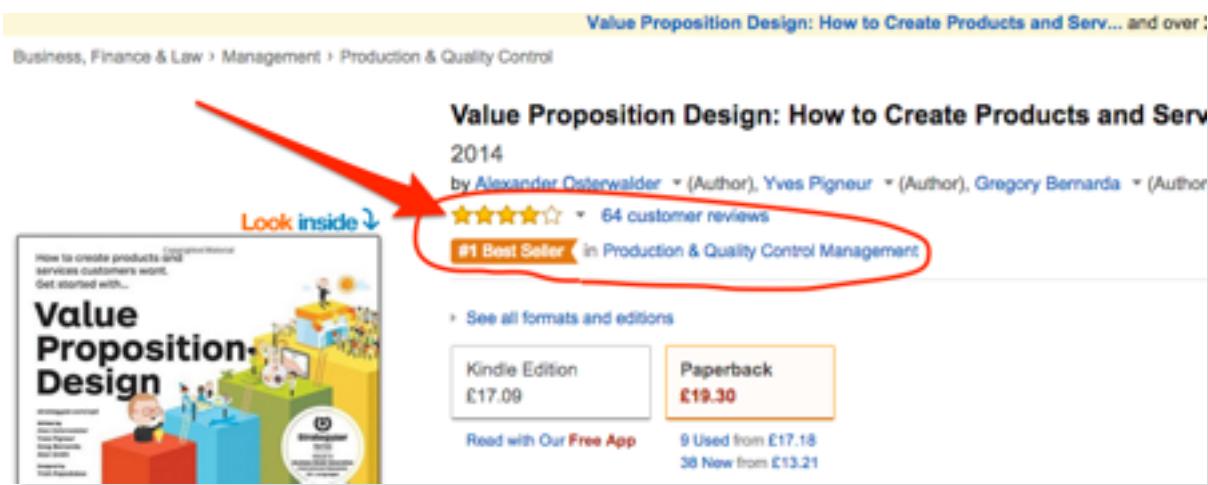
## HOW TO GET MORE PEOPLE TO BUY FROM YOU?

I'm sure you've noticed:

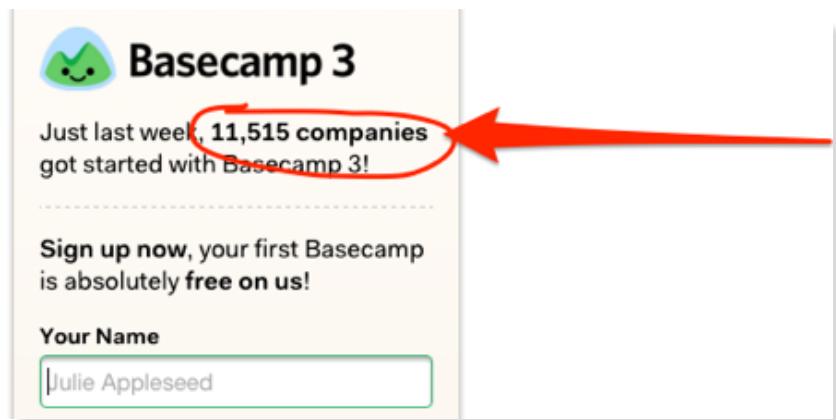
Many websites feature information on the numbers of customers who have purchased their products.



Online stores display ratings and reviews for every product they sell.



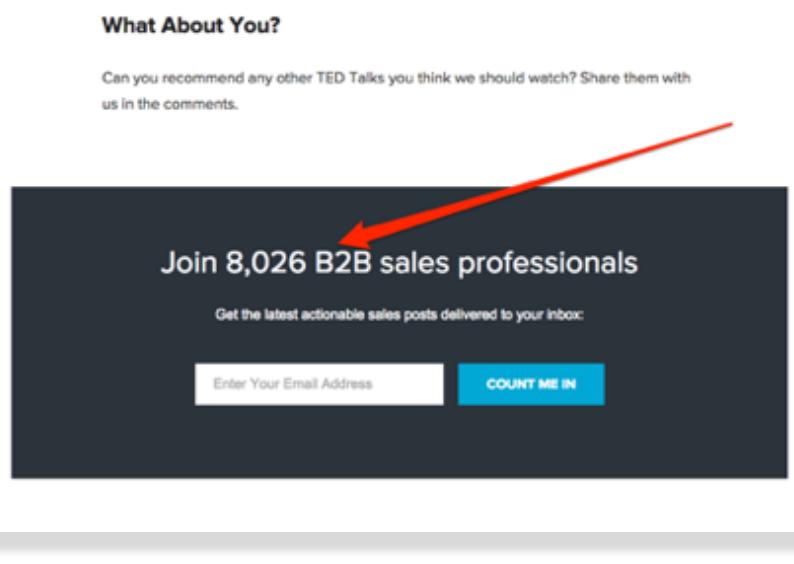
Software companies boast about the number of their active users or recent signups.



Groups and organizations make you get on a waitlist before you can apply to join them.

**The September Workshop is full, but we invite you to sign up for our waiting list.** If you want to join this workshop, please fill out this form and type "waiting list" in the questions field, and simply click [Submit]. Your name will be added to the waiting list.

And marketers entice you to sign up for their list showing the number of current subscribers.



## And the reason for doing it all?

To offer social proof communicating a product's value, and popularity, and influence our buying behavior.

## ENTER SOCIAL PROOF

**Social proof is behind almost every purchasing decision we make.**

Just think about it:

*How often do you pick a restaurant based solely on the number of people dining inside?  
Buy a product based on a number of customers who have allegedly purchased it already?  
Or hire a particular service provider just because they have more positive reviews?*

That's social proof in action.

*Whenever we're unable to make a decision, we look at what other people do, assuming that their actions are correct for the given situation.*

**What's more, this behavior is heavily engrained in our nature.**

*For one, we humans are pack animals.*

You might think that you're an individual but deep within you're as influenced by other people around you, their opinions, choices, actions as anybody else.

Scientific experiments like the Stanley Milgram's Street Corner Experiment or Dr. Solomon's Asche's Lift and Line Experiments have proved that **we tend to assume that if many people are doing something, have done something or believe in something, there must be a good reason why.**

*And so... we conform.*

# WHY DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED SOCIAL PROOF?

Think about it:

You could be doing a great job communicating your unique value proposition or the benefits of using your products...

...but unless you convince others to see what you offer as more favorable and popular; all your other efforts will be in vain.

## **Social proof builds trust**

It's damn hard to convince customers to try your product or book your service without any proof of how it has helped others.

Having social proof (i.e. reviews, testimonials or even the number of sales to date) adds credibility to your business.

## **Social proof helps to validate the buying decision**

For many products, social proof helps to communicate that buying them will get us accepted in social circles, for instance. And so, it provides additional reasoning for making the buying decision.

## **Social proof also simplifies decision-making**

Often imitating what others are doing is the simplest way to actually avoid having to make it.

## TYPES OF SOCIAL PROOF YOU COULD USE IN MARKETING

### PART 1. USER SOCIAL PROOF

Tell me:

*Do you pay attention to what other people say about a product before purchasing it?*

I, for one, often head to a product's reviews section first, well before reading the manufacturer's description.

And turns out, so do **77% of other customers**. What's more, **88% of us** trust reviews as much as personal recommendations.

It, therefore, goes without saying:

*Nothing beats other user's stories as a way to help you make up your mind about buying a product.*

Testimonials, reviews, ratings, case studies, user stories and many other user proof help communicate the users' approval of a product or service.

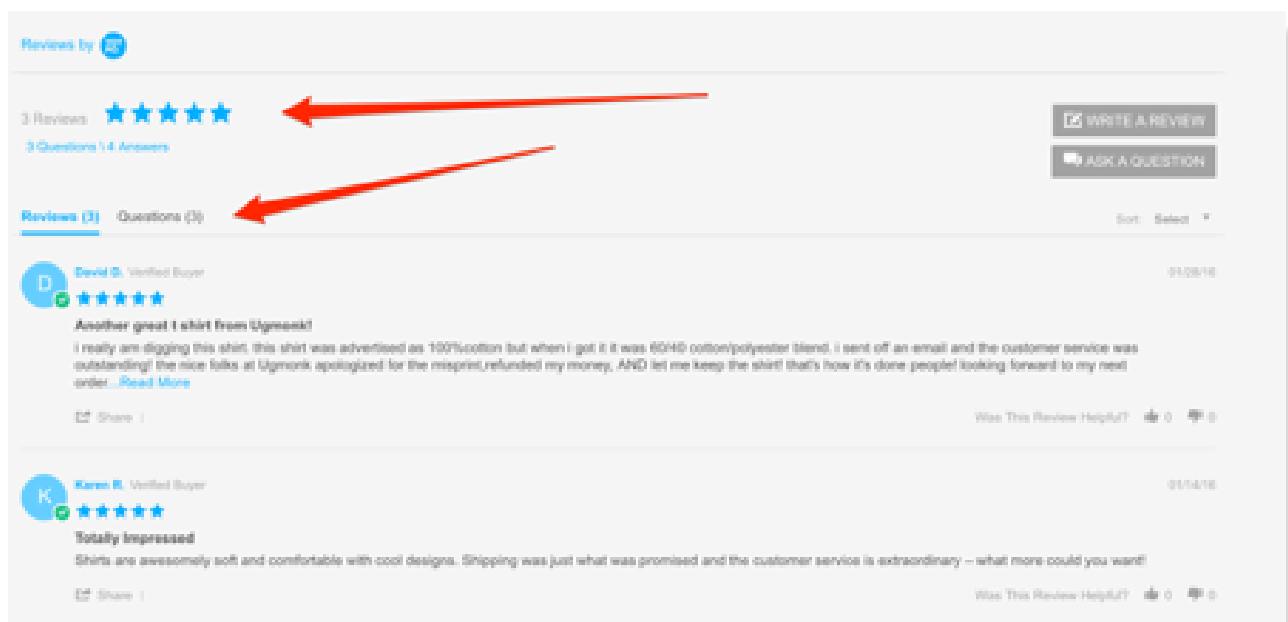
And here are a couple of examples how companies use this social proof type in marketing:

## REVIEWS ON PRODUCT PAGES

Did you know:

“63% of customers are more likely to make a purchase from a site which has user reviews”.  
[\(source\)](#)

And so, creating a reviews section on the site is bound to help you increase conversions.



The screenshot shows a product page for a t-shirt from the brand Ugmonk. At the top, there's a summary bar with '3 Reviews' and a 5-star rating. Below this, there are two red arrows pointing to the 'Reviews (3)' and 'Questions (3)' sections. The 'Reviews' section contains two reviews from verified buyers, David and Karen. Each review includes a star rating, the reviewer's name, their title ('Verified Buyer'), the date ('01/26/18'), the review text, and a 'Was This Review Helpful?' button. The 'Questions' section is also visible below the reviews.

The clothing company, Ugmonk, includes a prominent reviews section that, apart from allowing customers to leave feedback, offers an option to ask the company pre-sale questions.

## TESTIMONIALS

Testimonials help build trust and overcome a prospect's skepticism about your product.

They can also position you as a “safe choice” because they prove that you’ve already helped someone else.

And there’s a number of ways companies use to display testimonials.

1. Create a dedicated testimonials section on the home page, like Freshbooks (and millions of other companies) did:

### Small Business Owners Love FreshBooks



“FreshBooks not only makes me look professional, it saves me a huge amount of time.”

Tina Roth-Eisenberg  
Designer/Founder of CreativeMornings, Tatty swiss-miss.com

“I get paid three times faster using FreshBooks, and would recommend it to any small business owner.”

Kyle Sexton  
Marketing Consultant  
kylesexton.com

“FreshBooks is incredibly intuitive to use, and saves me five to ten hours every week.”

Justin Sundling  
General Contractor  
Sundling and Associates, LLC

Note how Freshbooks uses those testimonials to achieve two objectives:

- They communicate social proof by making them prominent on the page.
- But also, they overcome their audience’s key sales objections. Those testimonials feature exactly what prospects should hear to convince them to sign up. For example, the middle testimonial includes this line: *“I get paid three times faster using Freshbooks”* And I’m sure any self-employed person would agree that this is a heck of a benefit!

2. Blend them with the rest of the copy to back up its claims (like in this example from HookFeed):

**MARKETING**  
Filter & sort customers based on hundreds of data points from Stripe, Customer/Company Research, and usage data from your own product.

**SALES**  
Filter customers by the sales rep who introduced them to the product initially. Track metrics like Churn Cohorts across sales reps.

**OPERATIONS**  
Decrease response time to critical issues by routing instant alerts like failed or disputed payments to the correct people on your team.

**CUSTOMER SUPPORT**  
Integrate Hookfeed with your Help Desk Software to view customer purchase history, lifetime value, and more alongside your support conversations.

"This is one of the things I've been hoping someone would build since we launched."  
— John Collison, Stripe

"I recovered over \$1,200 in past-due payments the DAY I signed up!"  
— Collin Nederkoorn, Customer.io

3. Or include them in the sub-headline to achieve immediate impact:

**fasttrack**  
quick Home Sale Experts

# We Sell Homes Fast.

"Within 5 days of initially contacting Fast Track I had received 4 cash offers and was able to take the flat off the market. I would not hesitate to use Fast Track in the future and have already recommended them to friends and family as a refreshing alternative to traditional estate agents."

Bob Finch, London

**Get A Valuation & Offer Estimate**  
FREE  
If you need to sell your home please fill in the form below and we will give you a free valuation and an estimated offer.

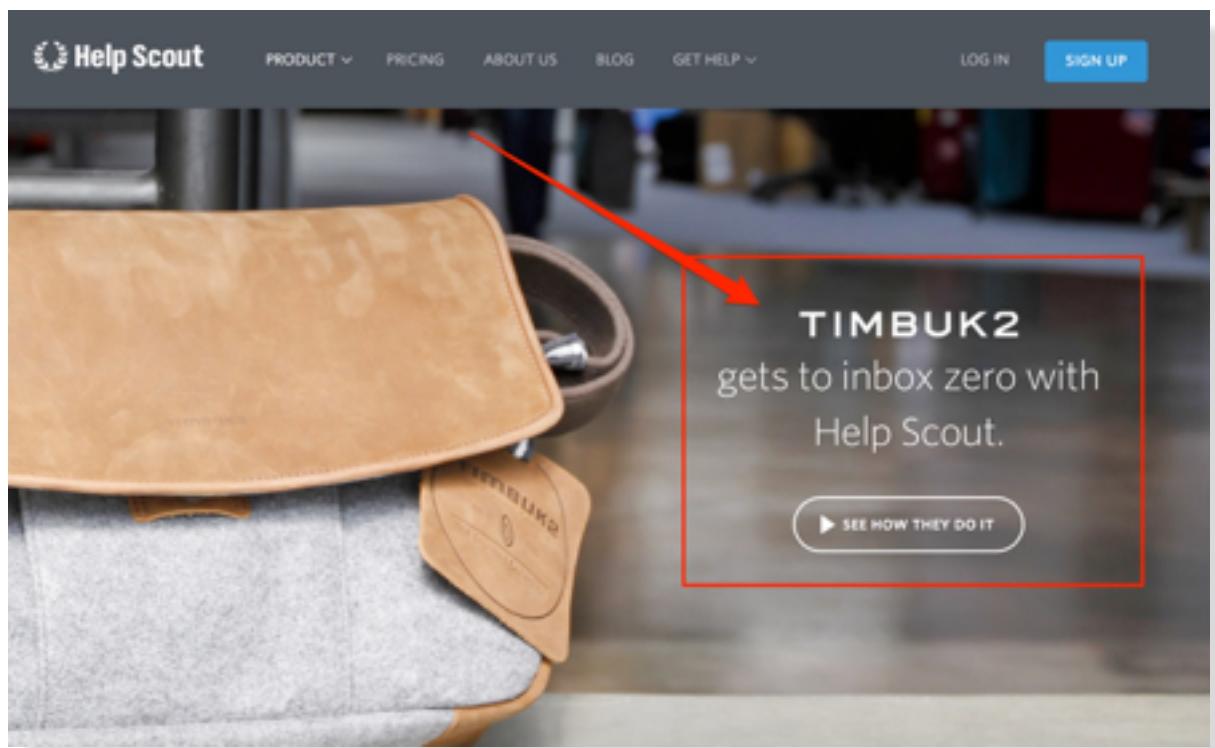
## CASE STUDIES

Case studies provide a deep insight into a customer's story, from the problem they experienced and the reason they sought out your solution to how you've helped them solve it.

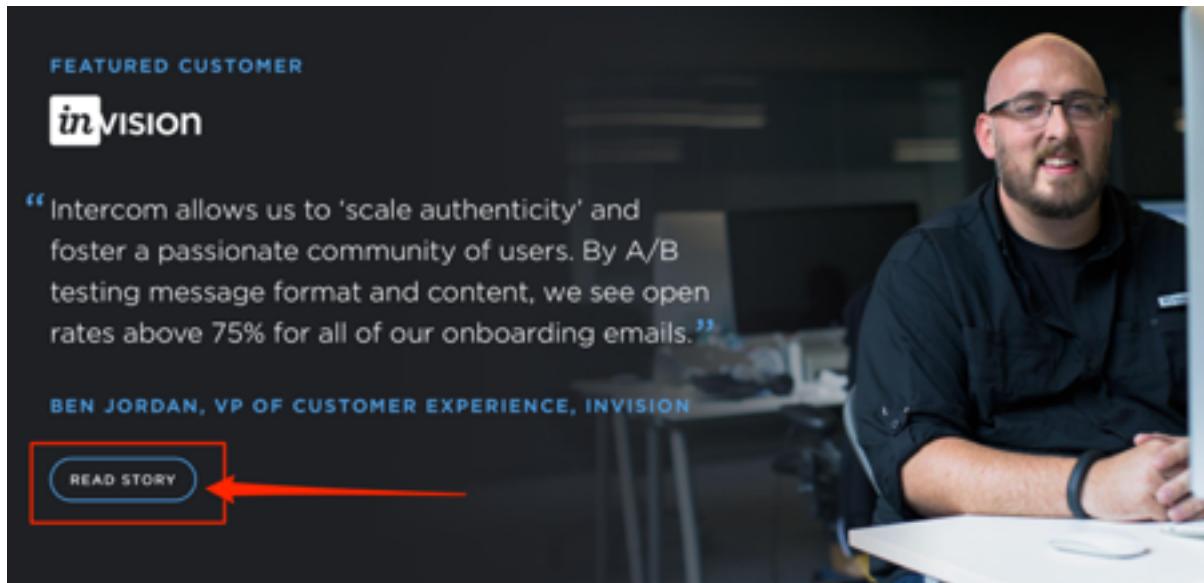
Case studies help convince prospects at later stages of the buying cycle and for that reason, companies often use them as lead magnets.

However, that's not the only way to use this social proof.

HelpScout, for example, offers video case studies right on their home page:



Intercom, on the other hand, combines them with testimonials to target casual browsers and prospects already comparing available solutions to buy.



## ONLINE BRAND MENTIONS

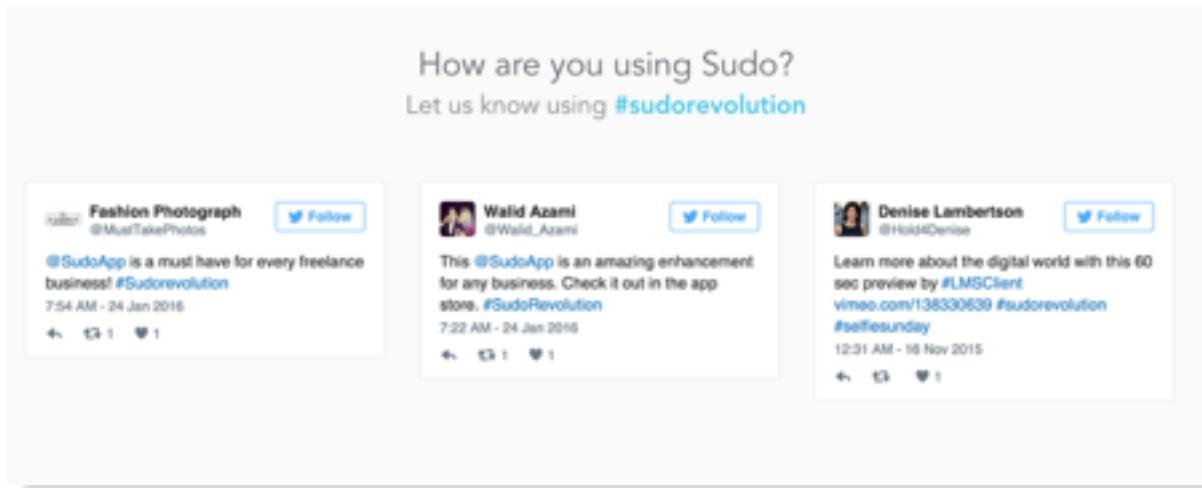
Some companies display their brand mentions on social media as a social proof.

For example, Cultured Code, the makers of Things app, include tweets with their company brand name on the home page:

A screenshot of a website showing a collection of tweets from Twitter. The header says 'What our customers say on Twitter' with a Twitter icon. Below are several tweet cards from different users:

- @culturedcode ❤️ Best support ever ❤️  
Karl Freeman - Yesterday
- @sacca Things by @culturedcode fits my needs the best!  
Mattias Thurjell - 6 days ago
- @culturedcode I've been using Things for years. Thanks for investing the time and energy to make such a well-designed, reliable product!  
Shaun Chapman - 1 week ago
- @sacca I live in Things by @culturedcode  
Robert Cooper - 1 week ago
- @sacca Things by @culturedcode gets my vote.  
Dom - 1 week ago
- @scottjohnson @samac82 @culturedcode It's the best.  
Ben Sullivan - 1 week ago
- @samac82 I use @culturedcode's "Things" pretty exclusively.  
Scott Johnson - 1 week ago
- I am happily managing my todos with the Things apps by @culturedcode now. This simple guide was a great help! <https://t.co/7d7H19Ch9E>  
kahill - 1 week ago

Sudo App also includes tweets mentioning their brand on the site:



## USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Because it isn't created by the company, a marketing agency or someone else with the intention to promote the brand, user-generated content is becoming the most trusted form of social proof.

Take GoPro for example. The company embraced user-generated content in their marketing.

And the result?

In 2013 alone the company's net income grew by \$28 million with only \$41k more in marketing costs.

Here's one example of their user-generated content, a video of [Linkedin manager wearing GoPro's camera](#) on his head for a day:



## CLIENT LOGOS

Including a list of clients and showing their logos often helps B2B companies provide a strong social proof convincing others to hire them.

HelpScout not only displays logos of companies they've helped but also, positions it close to the sign-up button, turning client logos into the final proof needed to convince someone to try their product.

JOIN THESE AMAZING ONLINE RETAILERS THAT LOVE THEIR CUSTOMERS WITH  
HELP SCOUT

**Homage**

**BLUE BOTTLE**

**scrapbook.com**

**TIMBUK2**

**Hammacher  
Schlemmer**

**PRÖMGIRL**

**KAUFMANN  
MERCANTILE**

**Tuft & Needle**

SIGN UP FOR A 15-DAY TRIAL



Beacon combines logos with another social proof type, also displaying the number of companies already using their product.



Typeform resorts to just including logos but makes a good play on it in the copy. Instead of using the typical “Companies that use our products” headline, they reference what the product helps clients to achieve, run awesome surveys, by stating that these businesses “Asking awesomely...”

Clever, huh?



## PART 2. WISDOM OF THE CROWD SOCIAL PROOF

Seeing that the others might be benefitting from something makes many of us want the same.

Companies use this phenomenon (called FOMO -the Fear Of Missing Out, by the way) to entice more people to buy from them.

Here's how:

### OTHER PEOPLE'S PURCHASES

Amazon (and many other retail stores) show a list of products customers who bought a particular item had also purchased:

Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought

Wireless Keyboard K360 for Business UK Layout ★★★★★ 16 £37.41 ✓Prime	Huawei E5770s-22.4G LTE 150Mbps Unlocked Wireless Router ★★★★★ 26 £149.99 ✓Prime	Ergonomic mouse Evoluent VerticalMouse 4 Right Large ★★★★★ 47 £84.49 ✓Prime	Microsoft Natural Ergo Keyboard 4000 - UK Layout ★★★★★ 579 £42.85	Evoluent Right Handed Vertical Mouse 3 Ergonomic Mouse ★★★★★ 108 £83.99 ✓Prime	Brand new genuine Dell Latitude E5420, E5430, E5520, E5530, E6120, E6420, E6430, E6520... ★★★★★ 7 £39.99 ✓Prime	Logitech Wireless Keyboard K360 - UK layout ★★★★★ 443 £24.99 ✓Prime
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iTunes shows albums listeners bought:

Listeners Also Bought

Rheingold (feat. Li... Klaus Schulze View In iTunes »	China Vangelis View In iTunes »	Electronica 1: The ... Jean-Michel Jarre View In iTunes »	Farscape, Pts. 1 & 2 Klaus Schulze View In iTunes »	Ephemeris H.U.V.A. Network View In iTunes »
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Name	Album	Artist	Time	Price	Action
1 Ascension	The Songs of Distant	Mike Oldfield	5:49	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
2 Zero Gravity	Electronica 1: The Ti	Jean-Michel Jarre ...	6:46	£0.99	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
3 Lysistrata	Leylines	Aes Dana	9:22	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
4 Magnetic Fields 1	The Symphonic Jean-	Nic Raine & The C...	4:23	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
5 Orientations, Pt. 2...	Ephemeris	H.U.V.A. Network	8:18	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
6 Let There Be Light	The Songs of Distant	Mike Oldfield	4:57	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
7 On	On	Aphex Twin	7:12	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
8 Dream Within a Dr...	A Secret Wish	Propaganda	8:04	£0.99	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
9 Signs	Leylines	Aes Dana	6:44	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>
10 Songs of the Seas	Oceanic	Vangelis	6:12	£0.79	<a href="#">View In iTunes »</a>

## BEST SELLERS

Denoting a product as a best-seller is another way to highlight its popularity.

Tatcha, a beauty and skincare products retailer, features a dedicated Bestsellers section on their site. Notices how it is strategically placed as the first item in the navigation.

FREE U.S. SHIPPING & RETURNS | 3 COMPLIMENTARY SAMPLES WITH EVERY ORDER

**TATCHA** BESTSELLERS SHOP GIFTS OUR STORY

MY ACCOUNT HELP BAG SEARCH

HOME / SHOP / BESTSELLERS

## BESTSELLERS

TATCHA's most beloved treasures for easy discovery and replenishment.

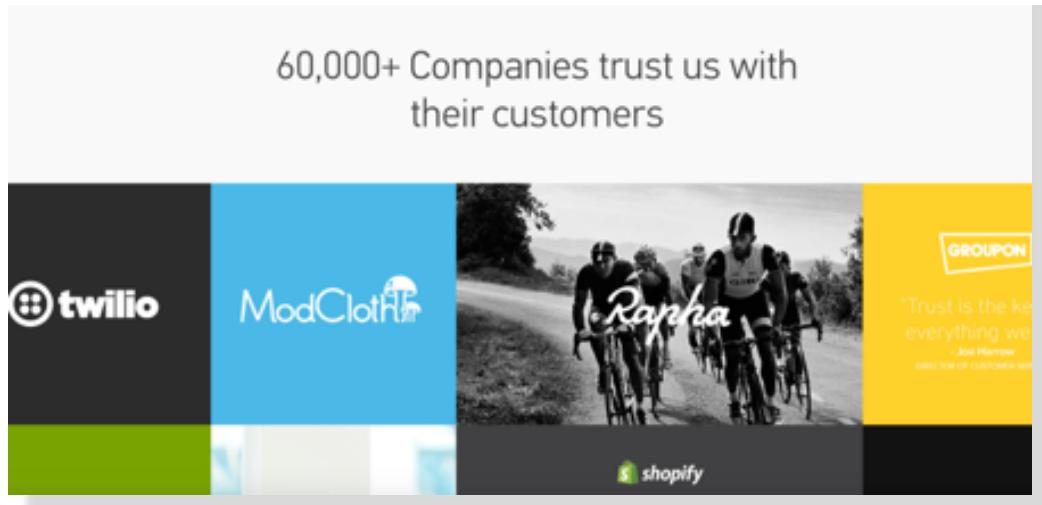
Product Image	Name	Price	Rating
	BEGINNING Ritual Discovery Kit	\$59	★★★★★ (58)
	POLISHED Rice Enzyme Powder	\$65	★★★★★ (602)
	PURE One Step Camellia Cleansing Oil	\$48	★★★★★ (112)
	LUMINOUS Dewy Skin Mist	\$48	★★★★★ (49)

**ADD TO BAG** **ADD TO BAG** **ADD TO BAG** **ADD TO BAG**

## CUSTOMER OR SALES STATS

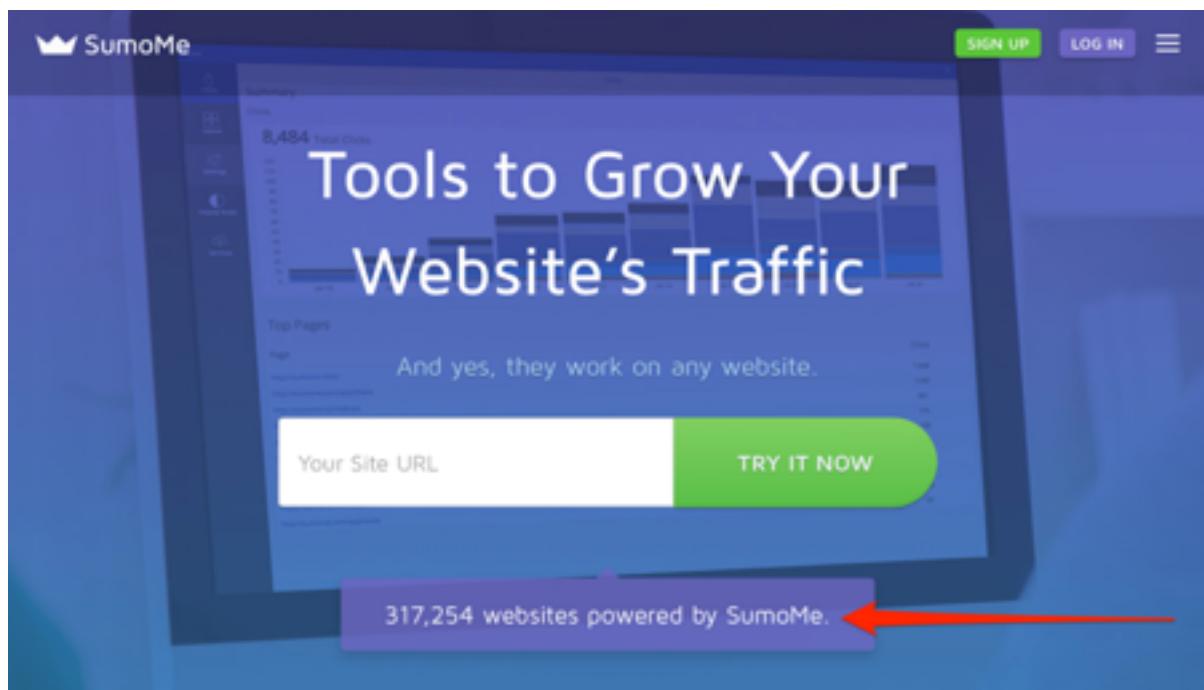
Many companies show the number of customers who use or purchased their products to signify their value ability and trust they receive from others.

Zendesk highlights their huge user base:

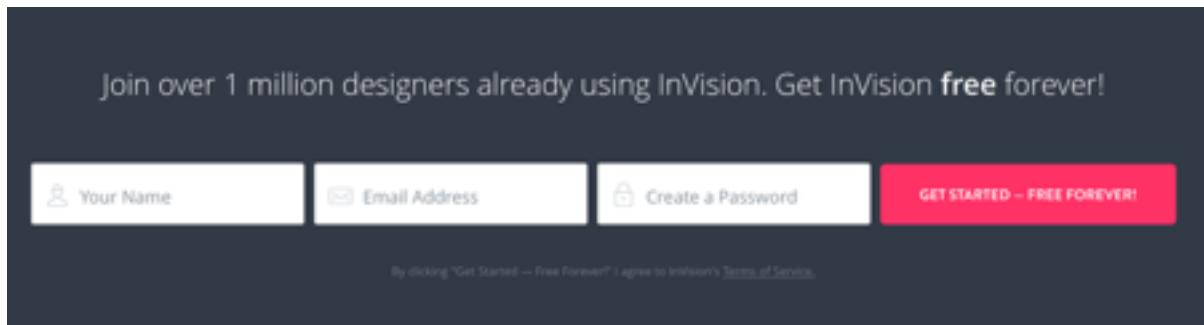


Note how they include their value benefit in the copy. Instead of just stating the number of companies using their live chat app, they tie the number to the key benefit their product delivers – increased customer satisfaction.

SumoMe states how many sites use their products:



Invision ties the number of users with the call to action, using this social proof as the final way to overcome their prospects' sales objections.



## SOCIAL SHARES

Showing social sharing stats helps many companies convince first-time visitors to their content.

We do it here on AdEspresso:

A screenshot of a blog post titled "Facebook Ads for Kickstarter: The Complete Guide". A red arrow points to the "1.4k SHARES" text next to the Facebook icon. The post was published on February 3, 2016, by Tim Chard. It includes sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. The main image is titled "FACEBOOK ADS FOR KICKSTARTER" and features a green stylized letter "K".

So does Kissmetrics:

## How Live Chat on Your Website Can Maximize Conversions

Live chat is the ultimate sales hack. It's a big call, but I stand by it. The reason is simple. It's the easiest way to bump your website conversions in real-time without split testing.

This won't come as a surprise to many of you who have already tried live chat to increase leads (and save on customer service). But, for most of you, it didn't work right away.

Websites like Kissmetrics and SaneBox (which trialed our service when we founded) have tried live chat, and the data was conclusive. There was [no increase in conversions](#), and in some cases a reduction.



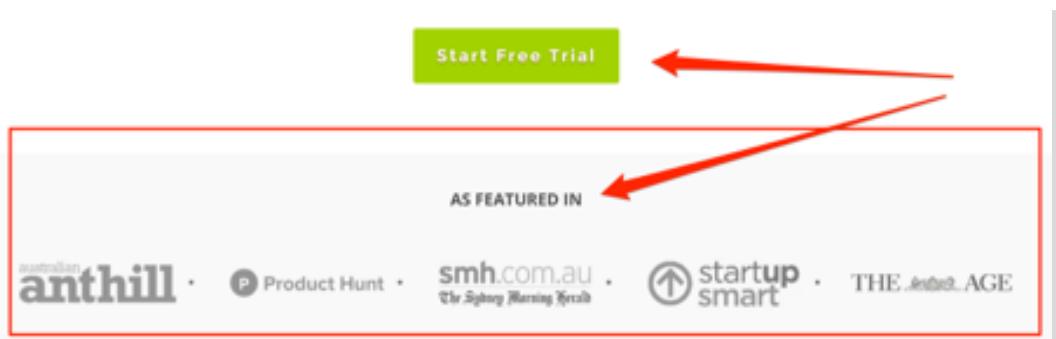
And millions of other sites out there.

## “AS FEATURED ON”

If you don't have a large user base to allow you to use the wisdom of the crowd social proof, use media mentions instead.

Many new startups display an “as featured on...” section on the site or landing pages to use the credibility of media to offer some social proof to visitors.

LeadChat displays media companies that have covered their company recently. Note how they placed the list right below the call to action.



## PART 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FRIENDS

You know:

*We almost unconditionally trust recommendations from the people we know.*

For example, [\*\*according to Nielsen\*\*](#), 84% of people say they completely trust recommendations from friends and relatives.

A joint-research project by [\*\*Ogilvy, Google, and TNS\*\*](#) revealed that word of mouth is the highest point of influence for customers (74%).

And a [\*\*study by BabyCenter\*\*](#) discovered that moms rely on the wisdom of friends 67% more than on any other channel.

And so, enticing people to recommend your products is another way to highlight their value and popularity.

However, this social proof works differently than the others I presented so far. Instead of showing a proof on the site, you need to develop strategies to encourage customers to share what you offer with the others.

Here's how:

## SHARING PURCHASES

Include an option for customers to share their recent purchase with friends on social media.



## REWARDS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Offer rewards to customers for forwarding your emails or product pages to a friend.

The Body Shop, for example, ran a dedicated campaign to entice customers to share their newsletter with friends.

## INCENTIVES

Reward customers for every new customer they bring into your business.

Dropbox gives free space for every new user you entice to sign up.

Get up to 32 GB of free space by inviting your friends to Dropbox!

For every friend who joins and installs Dropbox on their computer, we'll give you 1 GB and your friend 500 MB of bonus space (up to a limit of 32 GB)! If you need even more space, [upgrade your account](#).



## PART 4. EXPERT SOCIAL PROOF

This type of social proof relies on a credible source (a celebrity, an influencer or another recognizable person your audience identifies with) endorsing or approving a product or service in some way.

Here is a number of ways to use it:

### TESTIMONIALS FROM INDUSTRY'S INFLUENCERS

Copyblogger's home page features testimonials from people their audience would consider influencers and most likely look up to:

The image shows three testimonial cards against a dark wooden background. Each card contains a quote, a circular profile picture, and the name of the influencer with their website below it.

Testimonial (Top)	Testimonial (Bottom)	
<p><i>"It was only once I joined the Authority Content Marketing Training program that I turned ideas into action."</i></p>	<p><i>"Everything I know about content marketing, I learned from reading Copyblogger. It's my go-to resource."</i></p>	
<b>BELINDA WEAVER</b> <i>CopywriteMatters.com</i>	<b>JEFF GOINS</b> <i>GainsWriter.com</i>	<b>KRISTI HINES</b> <i>KristiHines.com</i>

### ENDORSEMENTS

With a big enough budget, you can get celebrities to tweet or promote your product in other ways to their followers.

In 2012, Internships.com hired Charlie Sheen to tweet about them to his followers. The tweet (you can see it below) reportedly generated over [95k clicks in the first hour!](#)

 **@charliesheen**  
Charlie Sheen

I'm looking to hire a #winning INTERN  
with #TigerBlood. Apply here –  
<http://bit.ly/hykQQF> #TigerBloodIntern  
#internship #ad

17 hours ago via Ad.ly Network ☆ Favorite ↗ Retweet ↙ Reply

Or feature them in video ads.

Like Volvo did in this ad featuring Jean-Claude Van Damme.



## DOES SOCIAL PROOF REALLY WORK?

As part of the AdEspresso University, we decided to see for ourselves if social proof marketing really makes the difference.

We ran two ad campaigns:

- ✓ One enticing people to join our newsletter,
- ✓ The other, offering an eBook download.

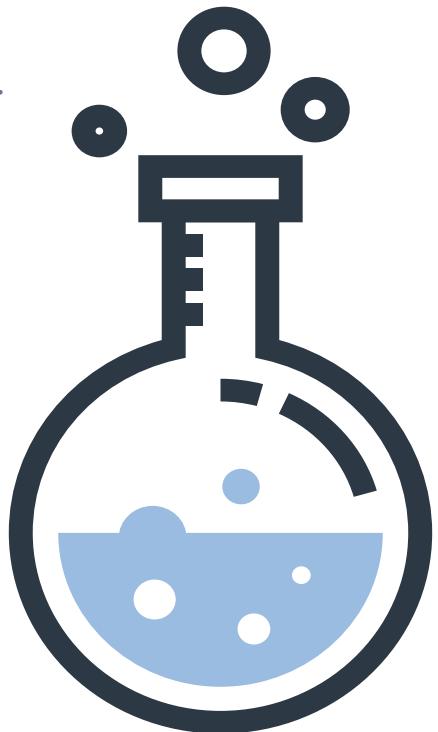
In both campaigns we set 3 different ad creatives:

- ✓ One included a rounded number as a social proof (i.e. 35000+),
- ✓ The other, an exact number,
- ✓ Finally, the third ad featured no social proof whatsoever.

We spent, on average, \$100 per each ad.

**And the results?**

**ADS WITH SOCIAL PROOF GENERATED A LOWER COST PER LEAD THAN THE ONE WITHOUT ANY SOCIAL PROOF.**



Here's the exact breakdown of costs per lead per campaign:

**The “Newsletter” Campaign:**

- ✓ Ad with exact social proof: \$1.973
- ✓ Ad with a rounded number: \$2.202
- ✓ Ad with no social proof: \$2.478

**The “eBook Download” Campaign:**

- ✓ Ad with a rounded number: \$1.572
- ✓ Ad with exact social proof: \$1.741
- ✓ Ad with no social proof: \$2.056

However, as you can see, our research wasn't conclusive on which social proof works better, an exact or rounded number.

Something for another test perhaps?

## **AND, THAT'S IT**

Hopefully, now you have a good idea of what social proof is and how to use it to entice more people to buy from you.

The next logical step then is to implement this advice and start positioning your products as more valuable, trustworthy and popular.

## THANK YOU

Thank you for reading our eBook. If you found this information useful, don't forget to drop by our blog for even more amazing social marketing advice.

Also, check the other AdEspresso University experiments:

- ✓ [Social Ads and Fake Clicks: Truth or Myth?](#)
- ✓ [Freelancer or Fiverr? We A/B Tested 3 Different On-Demand Design Services So You Don't Have To](#)

And finally, if you have any questions or suggestions regarding this publication, get in touch with us at:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AdEspresso/](https://www.facebook.com/AdEspresso/)

Website: [www.adespresso.com](https://www.adespresso.com)



## THE BEST ONLINE RESOURCE MAKING SOCIAL MARKETING EASY. AGAIN.

Social marketing changes all the time.  
New trends or advertising techniques emerge almost every day,  
making it hard to stay up to date with it all.

That's why we created a premium space for you to be at the forefront of what's new and exciting in social marketing today.

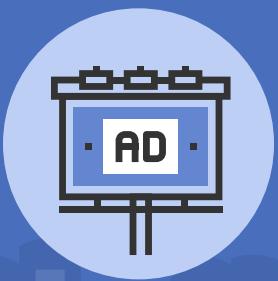
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