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EVIDENCE, NOT VIBES



A field guide for turning proof into trust without sounding like a case study robot.

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PROOF IS A SYSTEM

Most proof on websites is decorative.

Logos float in a row. Testimonials say nice things. Numbers appear without context. The founder says "trusted by" and hopes nobody asks what trusted actually means.

That kind of proof is not useless, but it is weak. It asks the buyer to admire the business from a distance.

Strong proof does a different job. It reduces the buyer's fear.

It answers the questions they are too polite to ask out loud:

- Has this worked for someone like me?
- What changed?
- How hard was it?
- What did you actually do?
- What might go wrong if I wait?
- Can I trust your taste with my name attached?

Proof is not a trophy case. It is risk management.

THE FIVE PROOF TYPES

You need more than testimonials.

Testimonials are useful, but they are only one proof type. A stronger page uses a mix.

Outcome proof shows measurable change: pipeline influenced, conversion lift, time saved, revenue created, speed gained.

Process proof shows how the work happens: steps, artifacts, checklists, audit structure, delivery rhythm.

Taste proof shows judgment: before/after language, design direction, editorial choices, what you refused to do.

Proximity proof shows relevant experience: industries, roles, team sizes, buyer types, stage of business.

Self-proof shows your standards in public: essays, teardown notes, guides, talks, product samples, and the way your own site behaves.

When a buyer hesitates, it is usually because one of these proof types is missing.

They may believe you are smart but not know your process.

They may like your process but not see outcomes.

They may see outcomes but not know whether you have taste.

The page needs to answer the real fear, not just add a shinier quote.

MAKE THE BEFORE VISIBLE

The easiest way to make proof stronger is to show the before.

Weak proof says:

“*We helped a founder clarify their positioning.*”

Better proof says:

“*The founder had three offers, four audiences, and a homepage that made sales calls start with ten minutes of explanation. We rebuilt the offer hierarchy around one buyer, one primary promise, and one next step.*”

The second version gives the reader a place to recognize herself.

People trust proof when they can see the problem before the solution arrives.

Do not only show the glow-up. Show the mess you were asked to solve.

USE NUMBERS WITH CONTEXT

Numbers are powerful when they are anchored.

"\$40M pipeline influenced" is stronger when the reader understands the role you played. Was it messaging? Demand generation? Sales enablement? Campaign strategy? A little of all of it?

"Doubled conversion" is stronger when the baseline and time frame are clear.

"Saved ten hours a week" is stronger when the buyer knows what those ten hours used to be spent doing.

A number without context can feel inflated. A number with context feels like evidence.

Use this structure:

1. The starting condition.
2. The intervention.
3. The measurable change.
4. The reason the change mattered.

That turns a metric into a story the buyer can inspect.

LET PROOF SOUND HUMAN

Not every proof point needs to wear a blazer.

Sometimes the strongest line is the one a client actually said:

“*I finally know what to say when someone asks what we do.*”

That is proof.

So is:

“*The sales call got shorter because the page started doing its job.*”

So is:

“*This is the first version that sounds like us and still sells.*”

The buyer does not need every sentence to be polished. The buyer needs to believe a real person was helped.

Keep the texture.

BUILD A PROOF BANK

Do not wait until the page redesign to collect proof.

Create a simple proof bank with five sections:

- Client words
- Before states
- After states
- Numbers and signals
- Screenshots, artifacts, and examples

After every project, add to it while the work is still warm.

What did the client say in Slack?

What changed in the page, pitch, deck, bio, pipeline, or decision speed?

What artifact shows the method?

What sentence would help the next buyer feel less alone?

Proof gets weak when it is reconstructed from memory. Capture it while it is alive.

PUT PROOF WHERE FEAR APPEARS

Do not trap all proof in one section at the bottom.

Place proof next to the fear it answers.

If the buyer fears the offer is too expensive, show the cost of the old way.

If the buyer fears the work will be vague, show process artifacts.

If the buyer fears the voice will be flattened, show before/after language.

If the buyer fears the result will not matter, show the business effect.

Proof should arrive exactly when the doubt does.

THE PROOF AUDIT

Open your homepage or sales page and mark every claim.

Then ask:

- What proof supports this?
- Is the proof visible nearby?
- Is it specific enough to lower risk?
- Does it show outcome, process, taste, proximity, or self-proof?
- What fear is still unanswered?

You will see the leaks quickly.

A page that claims too much and proves too little feels expensive in the wrong way.

A page that proves with restraint feels calm. It lets the buyer come closer.

That is the work.

Not louder proof.

Better evidence.

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