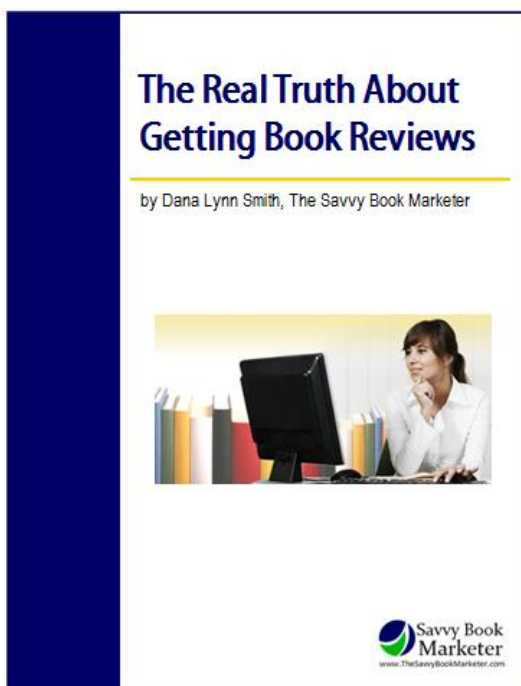


The Real Truth About Getting Book Reviews



Excerpted from

How to Get Your Book Reviewed

by Dana Lynn Smith

Published by The Savvy Book Marketer, an imprint of Texana Publishing Consultants, LLC

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About the Author

Dana Lynn Smith, The Savvy Book Marketer, helps authors and indie publishers learn how to sell more books through her how-to guides, blog, newsletter, and private coaching. She has 16 years of publishing industry experience and a degree in marketing.

The Real Truth About Getting Book Reviews

Book reviews are a powerful promotional tool, but there are some misconceptions about how to obtain and use them.

- Some authors think that book reviews are just for new books or for books sold through retail bookstores.
- Others believe that it's impossible to get reviews for self-published books or ebooks.
- Some people think no one pays attention to reviews in online bookstores, or they wonder if it's really worth the effort to pursue book reviews.

In this report, we will explore the real truth about how to get your book reviewed. But first, let's define what exactly a book review is and how it's used.

What is a Book Review?

With more than 300,000 new books published each year in the U.S. alone, book reviews provide a critical service to booksellers, librarians, and consumers in narrowing down the choices and helping them make good buying decisions.

The term "book review" is commonly used, but there are actually several different types of reviews that can be used to promote books:

- Critical reviews in book journals and mass media
- Reviews from book bloggers, subject matter experts, and other book reviewers
- Customer reviews and testimonials
- Endorsements solicited from experts and high-profile individuals

Traditionally, a book review is a critical review of the content of a book, with the reviewer commenting on the good and bad points of the book.

Many of the reviews posted online these days are really recommendations from readers rather than reviews, but they can be just as effective as traditional reviews. Word of mouth is a powerful selling tool, and websites like Amazon and Goodreads make it easy for readers to share their enthusiasm (or lack of enthusiasm) for the books they read.

How Reviews Sell Books

Book buyers learn about books by reading reviews in newspapers, consumer magazines, professional journals, newsletters, book review websites, online bookstores, and other blogs and websites.

In addition to bringing books to the attention of potential book buyers, endorsements, testimonials, and reviews provide “social proof” that the book is valuable to others, and help the reader determine if the book is a good fit for them.

“For a new author with some imagination and determination, this is an exciting time to market their book. Reviews should not only be part of the marketing strategy, but an important one,” says Ross Rojek, co-founder and editor-in-chief of *Sacramento Book Review*.

“That first positive review from an “authoritative” source opens one door to the next and brings in some readers who will also go talk about the book with their friends on their social media networks, on the retail website they bought the book, and on book-oriented websites,” he adds.

In fact, reviews are a critical element in any book marketing plan. Here are some examples of the ways that book reviews sell books:

- Expand your marketing reach by getting your book noticed on websites that readers of your genre visit, or in publications read by potential readers for your type of book.
- Positive reviews posted on online bookstores encourage sales once potential customers land on your book page. Reviews can be the tipping point that causes customers to click the buy button.

- Testimonial quotes can be used on your own website and in other promotional materials. You can also extract short quotes from book reviews to use for promotional purposes.
- Bookstore buyers and librarians base many of their ordering decisions on reviews in the major book review journals.
- Good reviews can close the sale for customers who are hesitating about buying your book, or choosing between several similar books.

Is It Worth the Effort?

There's no guarantee that reviews will translate into sales, but they certainly increase the odds. With the huge amount of competition facing your book, reviews are one of the very best ways to get your book noticed and to influence purchasing decisions of potential customers.

The more reviews you have and the more places where your reviews appear, the more exposure and selling power you will have.

The selling power of reviews makes it well worth the effort. You can save time and money and increase your success rate by planning in advance, being selective about where you send review copies, following submission guidelines exactly, and scheduling distribution of your review copies wisely.

Where to Get Your Book Reviewed

The words "book review" often conjure up images of pre-publication reviews in major review journals like *Publishers Weekly* or *Library Journal*, but there are a variety of places to get book reviews throughout the life cycle of a book. Here are some examples of where to get your book reviewed.

Endorsements

With today's information and entertainment overload, many people rely on name recognition when buying products, including books. Consumers tend to buy books from authors they have heard of, which can make it difficult for new or little-known authors.

Endorsements are recommendations solicited from subject experts, authors, celebrities and other well-known people prior to publication, and they are

often used on the book cover and interior. The magic of endorsements is that the credibility of the high-profile endorser transfers to the author and the book being endorsed.

Book Review Journals

Book review journals are designed primarily for the book trade (libraries and booksellers) to help them make book buying decisions. The reviews are usually brief, due to space limitations and the need for their readers to peruse the listings quickly.

A good review in a major journal can result in many library sales. In fact, some libraries automatically purchase some or all of the books that are reviewed in their favorite journals.

Other Print Media

Book reviews also appear in print media such as newspapers, literary magazines, consumer magazines, and trade magazines. These reviews may include a brief overview of the book and discuss what the reviewer liked (or didn't like) about the book.

Customer Reviews and Testimonials

Often people who enjoy reading a particular book will post a review or a brief testimonial (recommendation) on sites like Amazon, Goodreads, or Facebook, or even write a note to the author. A customer review is a little longer than a testimonial and focuses more on the content of the book, rather than just recommending it.

Reviews are especially important in online bookstores. Many shoppers read the book reviews before they make a purchase, to verify that they are making the best selection. That's especially true for nonfiction books, where buyers often compare several books on the same topic. In addition, reviews on Amazon can even influence how many customers see your book when searching by keyword.

Be sure to encourage customers to provide testimonials and reviews and make it easy for them.

Virtual Reader Communities

Virtual reader communities such as Goodreads are specialized social networking sites where readers and authors network, and readers recommend books to others.

Book Blogs

By now you have probably heard the story of Amanda Hocking, who sold hundreds of thousands of her self-published fantasy novels on Kindle and landed a multi-million contract with a major publisher. But did you know that she credits reviews on book blogs with helping to propel her book sales into the stratosphere?

In a blog post at <http://bit.ly/oqNRXE>, she describes how her discovery of book bloggers skyrocketed her sales from 624 books in May of 2010 to 4,258 the following month. After quitting her day job and focusing on writing and publishing full time, her sales continued to grow at an incredible rate.

Topical Blogs and Specialty Media

Opportunities abound for reviews of nonfiction books in blogs and publications that are geared to the topic of the book or aimed at the book's target audience. In addition to seeking book reviews, nonfiction authors can offer to provide articles for blogs and publications.

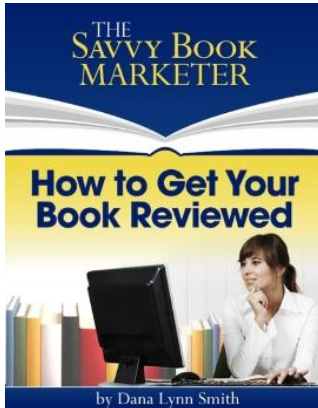
Virtual Book Tours

Book blogs, topical blogs, podcasts and online radio shows are potential hosts for virtual book tours, where authors visit a different site each day promoting their book. Tour stops can include book reviews, guest posts, interviews, and book giveaways.

Other Book Review Sources

Keep an eye out for other opportunities to get reviews and testimonials. For example, you can offer review copies on reader networks like Goodreads and LibraryThing. Always ask people who send you a nice note about your book if they would be willing to post their comments on sites like Amazon or Goodreads.

Learn How to Get Your Book Reviewed!



Now that you've seen why book reviews are so important and the variety of places to get reviews, learn how to get reviews for your own book and use them to boost your sales.

In the ultimate guide to profiting from book reviews, you'll find everything you need to confidently pursue reviews, endorsements, and testimonials.

Here are just a few of the things you will learn:

- How books are selected (or rejected) for review
- How to save time and money and increase your success rate by developing a solid review strategy
- What to do if you get a negative review
- 6 things you should never do when seeking book reviews
- How to deal with the bias against self-published books
- How to encourage loyal followers to review your book prior to publication
- Strategies for attracting 5-star reviews on Amazon
- The secrets to working successfully with bloggers to get book reviews
- How to plan a successful virtual book tour
- Strategies for increasing your odds of a review in a major book journal
- The best ways to use book reviews to reach and influence book buyers
- And much more

In *How to Get Your Book Reviewed*, you'll also get:

- 14 case studies with real life examples of how reviews work

- A sample book announcement press release written by an award-winning publicist
- Dozens of hyperlinks to valuable resources
- Words of wisdom from two dozen top book marketing experts and authors
- Links to major book review journals
- No fluff — just well-organized, practical advice and resources

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/BookReviewsTW9>

Praise for How to Get Your Book Reviewed

“A no-nonsense, richly-detailed examination of what you should and shouldn’t be doing to ensure your book wends its way to the best hands available to promote your project, *How to Get Your Book Reviewed* is a quick and incredibly informative read. Studded with frequent bullet points and savvy tips galore, Smith provides a wealth of advice for first-time writers and established authors alike. (Her Case Studies are a particularly effective treat, highlighting effective execution of her ideas by other professionals and writers.) With boundless honesty and clarity, Smith delivers on the eBook title’s promise in spades.”

— **Glenn Dallas, San Francisco/Sacramento Book Reviews**

“One of the little known secrets of selling books is how much reviews influence others to purchase your book. Dana Lynn Smith reveals the insider details in *How to Get Your Book Reviewed*. Tap into this important resource.”

— **W. Terry Whalin, author of *Jumpstart Your Publishing Dreams: Insider Secrets to Skyrocket Your Success* and 60 other books**

See more reviews at <http://bit.ly/MoreReviews>