

Hundreds of smaller publications stand ready to review your book, despite the fact that the "big boys" seldom review newcomers. Reaching out for publications that deal with subjects that relate to your book can place your work on exhibit with thousands upon thousands of people, and because they are reading a niche publication, they are very targeted readers.

Authors Can Find Many Creative Ways To Reap More Reviews for Their Writing

By Charles Jacobs

No, they may not be the *New York Times* nor *Publisher's Weekly*. But there are hundreds of publications out there ready and willing to review your new book. All it takes to expose it to thousands of their readers is a dash of creativity and a willingness to take off the blinders and think out of the box.

That's very important to know for those of you who are newcomers, publishing your very first book now that you have reached retirement. The top level reviewers seldom bother to review first time writers. But that doesn't mean that you can't introduce your book to the public through other outlets.

Daily newspapers are subdivided into a variety of specialized sections whose editors are always eager to find new material to fill their pages. Business, food, sports or lifestyle sections run daily or weekly. Many papers run periodic sections aimed at senior citizens.

Schedules are available from the paper's advertising department. The value of capturing an article or a review in these sections is that the people who read them are a targeted audience interested in the very subject you write about.

Reaching for Appropriate Magazines

Search for magazines that deal with the subject of your book. Request a review and offer a free book. These may be trade journals that cover specific businesses or professions, even hobbies. There are specialized magazines that target age groups like baby boomers or seniors. Business magazines publish articles or sections that deal with issues of the workplace, as well as preparation for or how to enjoy retirement.

Directories such as *Wooden Horse* (www.Woodenhorse.com), *Bacon's* or *Writer's Digest* will help you pinpoint these specialty publications. Even if your request for a review is not successful, there's a strong likelihood that the editor might include a short item announcing the book. You might even be interviewed for a story.

The almost endless possibilities of the Internet await you as well. Search for web sites, chat groups, newsletters and blogs that cover topics related to yours. Send them a press release and a request for a review. As an inducement, you might offer to send them an article on the subject you cover that they can use at no cost.

Overlook No One

Now all of this does not suggest that you should bypass the formal review channels. Well before the publication date set for your book, you should be sending Advance Review Copies (ARCs) to the "big boys." (ARCs are also known as bound galleys.)

Because top reviewers like *Kirkus*, *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *Foreword* and *Publisher's Weekly* are essentially geared to informing the trade about new book releases, they insist upon receiving the ARC at least three months in advance of publication date. Granted, they are very selective in the books they review, but the old adage "nothing ventured, nothing gained" applies.

For the minimal cost and effort of printing and sending them an ARC—and that can be little more than bound galleys inside a book cover prepared by Kinkos—the potential results are well worth the effort. A review in one of these publications usually results in moving scads of books and greatly increases the likelihood you will receive reviews in other publications.

Jim Cox, the highly respected chief of Midwest Book review, is devoted to assisting authors. In addition to the 490 widely respected reviews his staff cranks out every month, Jim has graciously compiled a lengthy list of reviewers complete with their addresses that he offers at no charge to authors.

After clicking on www.midwestbookreviews.com, scroll down to "Other Reviews" on the left side of the page. Click again on the name of the desired reviewer to bring you to that reviewer's web site. There is no charge for this, but appreciative authors will send Cox a roll of stamps. His postage program is described on his web site.

Be certain not to overlook the review possibilities offered by the major online bookstores like Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Reviews on the pages of B&N's Reader's Guide and Amazon's Readers' Reviews can increase sales dramatically.

Reaching Out

While not mandatory, the protocol for contacting reviewers is to send an announcement first, accompanied by a request for a review. Include either an SASE (self addressed stamped envelop) or a stamped return postcard to make it easier for the reviewer to respond to your request. This is a wise policy when you are submitting an ARC or after publication date when you send finished copies for review. The press kit that you send along with the request must include basic information about the book:

- A synopsis and description
- A profile of the author
- A press release that describes your book, as well as its importance and uniqueness
- A copy of the book cover
- All needed identification of your book: ISBN, Library Cataloguing Data, Copyright
- A referral to the Press Room on your web site, where a sample chapter can be found and a photo of the author

The alternative to sending a press kit is simply to refer the reviewer to your web site and the information available in the site's Press Room. My own preference is to include the press kit, leaving the reviewer the option of going to your web site or simply working from the information contained in the kit. You are making a request of the reviewer, so it makes sense to make the task as simple and easy as possible.

Follow-ups can be done by telephone after a reasonable length of time. But do not become a pest with repeated calls. If you do receive a review, make certain to respond with a thank you note whether the review is favorable or not. You may be glad you did when and if you later send another book to this reviewer.