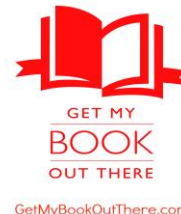


Get My Book Out There Podcast #11

3 Ways to Get Reviews When You're An Unknown Author



Narelle Todd:

I'm Narelle Todd.

S.E. Smith:

And I'm S.E. Susan Smith.

Narelle Todd:

We are the self-publishing author and marketing duo that has sold over two million books. But we didn't start out knowing how to sell books. Fast forward, past many failed promotions and a lot of lessons learned, you will see how we went from self-publishing newbies to hitting The New York Times Best Sellers list and making the USA Today Best Sellers list 19 times and counting.

We created the Get My Book Out There podcast to give you simple, yet effective marketing strategies to increase readership and book sales, so you know what to do, when to do it and how to do it, as well as some tips for staying mentally and physically well.

S.E. Smith:

Let's get started.

Narelle Todd:

We're going to be talking about reviews for your book. And in particular, when you're starting out as an author, and not many people know who you are, so maybe just family and friends. How do you get reviews? We know that reviews help with sales because it lets other people who don't know you, that it's safe to read your book, that it's going to be worth the money.

What are the three things that you can do to get reviews when you're not known?

S.E. Smith:

And that I've had a lot of authors ask me, "How do I get reviews?" Take it away. You know how to get them.

Narelle Todd:

Well, it's really hard at the start when people don't know you, exactly, you need reviews to help you with your sales, you need sales to get reviews. And so, you just go around in a cycle of not getting sales, not getting reviews and just trying to make some headway.

We're going to look at three things, but firstly, I just want to say that... Let's say there's four things, really. Our first one is an absolute given, always, always in your back matter, having there a request, ask for a review. Put that in all your books in the back matter, no matter what. We'll just make that assumption. We'll start with that one, but it's not our three, part of our three. That's just a freebie we'll give you today.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

© Copyright 2021 Successful Living Pty Ltd - Reproduction of this document in any way shape or form both online and offline is strictly prohibited. You are NOT entitled to resell, reproduce or share this document or any version you make of it, and any breach of this will be enforced by the law. This document is for your personal use only.

Firstly, do an opt in to give away your book. If it's your first book or if you've got a couple of books out, yet you haven't reached your target market, give away a book for free. By that, I mean, you would have an opt in page on your website and it's an exchange for an email. Here's my free book.

People are interested in signing up. They're interested in getting a free book. What that does though, is it gives you names on your email list so you're building your email list. It also means you can then follow-up with those people with an email. Have you had a chance to read my book? Would you leave a review? You can follow up once, which is great. But I actually recommend following up three times because people have busy lives, there's a lot going on.

Ask once and then ask two more times after that, "Hey, I'm just checking in. Have you had a chance to read my book? You know, would you leave a review?"

S.E. Smith:

And it's important. Give them time to actually read the book and don't make it a pressure thing for them, "You've got to read my book, you've got to read my book, so I can get a review." You don't want to come across as a used salesman type, nothing against used salesmen, but you don't want to come across as being that aggressive type of person because that's going to be a turn off. What you do is like you said, you'll ask once, definitely in the back of your book, but you also want to then do that exchange.

And then, once you do do that, give them time to actually have a chance to read the book because you got to remember that they're not going to just be able to drop everything and just immediately read the book, more than likely, they do have a life. Think about that. Think about your daily life, how you go about and make sure that when you plan on asking for review, that you've given them that time and it helps when you space it out, because then it doesn't become a pressure to them.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely. I like to flow those three emails out over a month-long period.

S.E. Smith:

Yeah.

Narelle Todd:

The first one I'm just checking in. "Have you had a chance to read it? Here's the download link again, just in case it got lost or hit spam or something like that, you've had a chance to read, leave a review." The second one, similar sort of thing. And then, the third one, yeah, you just, by then they've either read it or they're not reading it, but they've at least got it.

Even if it's a year later that they read it, at least they've got your book, so that's a start that you've gotten your book into someone else's hand and you've got their email.

S.E. Smith:

And don't be intimidated if it does take them a year. I've had readers that have come back to me. "I've had your book that I downloaded. You had a free book and I downloaded it two years ago and it's been in my to be read pile and I came across it again. There was just something about it that moment that said, 'I've got to read it.' And it was like, oh my God, then I had to go and get all the rest of the book."

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

Even if it sits for a little while, it may be discouraging for you, but it may be that pickup that you need later on. Don't get discouraged, as long as it's in their to be read, there's a good chance that they will finally get to it.

Narelle Todd:

Yes. A part of the review process and increasing your sales is really a cumulative process where it's a bit like it takes a bit to get going, but then it's picks up speed. That's what you're looking for.

S.E. Smith:

Because this is a long-term endeavor.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

S.E. Smith:

For some, writing may just be a hobby, but for others, it's their hope that it becomes a business. And like most businesses, it takes time to cultivate that clientele. It's not going to be overnight. And they say all great successes were 10 years in the making.

Narelle Todd:

That's so true. Yes, absolutely.

Second thing is to have a look at, for a reputable service that offers read and review. You, as the author, need to be aware of what the terms of service are for the various book providers. You need to know what you can and can't do with getting reviews.

For example, Amazon is now quite clear that you can't offer an incentive for someone to read your book. "You give me a review and I'll give you a gift card." It can't be seen as paid. You need to look for services, paid services who have access to readers that you want to get that access to. But you want to make sure that how they are running their service complies with the terms of service from the booksellers.

There are good ones out there. One is Choosy Bookworm. They're quite good because it's really about connecting you with the reader. There's no promise of a review because that's against terms of service, they can't do that. You are entering into agreement with them, for them really to distribute your book to their readers. And their readers have the option to... or their subscribers have the option to pick up your book for free and leave a review. And it needs to be an honest review. You can't say, "Well, I only want positive ones or I only want a negative one." Be aware of that when you are asking for reviews, no matter where they're coming from, there's going to be some that hurt. You need to be prepared for that.

S.E. Smith:

Yes, unfortunately you cannot choose. It's going to be the reader that's picking the genre or the book. Sometimes, you'll get someone, for example, doesn't like Westerns and they end up picking up a book and it's a Western and they read it. They never liked Westerns, but they're going to end up leaving a bad review and it's because they've never liked them, but they thought, I'll try this book, or I accidentally downloaded it so I felt obligated to read it and leave a review.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

But the good thing about it is you don't want all five-star reviews because then it comes across as not being legitimate. Bad as it sounds, you want a good variety and you're going to get some of those one stars. Some of them will be legit, maybe, some of them will just be somebody that's having a bad day. There's no guarantee exactly why someone may give you a one star.

I had someone leave me a one star saying, "I absolutely love this book." I was like one star. Sometimes, I think when they go to hit those stars, they may hit the wrong one or they may have misinterpreted a one star is like, great. Sometimes, you'll get things like that.

Just accept the reviews and understand how thick your skin is.

Narelle Todd:

You'll need a thick skin potentially for my third option. Once again, remember we're starting at, you might not have capital in your business, do paid advertising, so a great freeway to get reviews and to get your book out there it is to go to Goodreads groups.

Now, typically when I suggest Goodreads, a lot of authors cringe because it has a bit of a reputation as being savage on authors, because readers just free flow with all sorts of comments from good, bad indifferent to horrible. They don't hold back.

S.E. Smith:

Again, I've seen a lot of one-star reviews like, "Oh, it just didn't sound interesting, so I didn't want to read it. I gave it a one star." Well, why give it a one star if you didn't read it?

That's part of the territory with Goodreads. And Goodreads, it takes a little bit of a learning curve to get used to how it works and the way it works. You're going to have to know what kind of skin you've got and what you want to put into it.

NetGalley is another paid service where you can put your book in, but again, they can be very, very brutal. And you don't have any idea who's going to pick up your book to read or what kind of review that they're going to leave. That's one of the things you have to be prepared for. The good thing is, is you've got the reviews. The bad thing is, they may not always be what you want, but if you've written a good book and you get enough positive reviews, then it will come out.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely. That's back to Goodreads, join the group as a reader and groups for your genre and spend some time just chatting in there and getting to know people, building relationships. This is very much what the business is about. Spend some time. Don't spam the groups, you got to read the rules. It's a bit like groups on Facebook, similar sort of thing. Make sure you read what's allowed in the group.

And then, once you've established a bit of a presence there, you can start to then say, "Well, look over here, I've got my book." But then, don't just leave it there. This isn't a one-time thing. You need to keep being involved, not spamming and just every now and then also saying, "Here's my book, anyone interested in reading it?"

S.E. Smith:

Exactly. And what's really good is as the readers get to know you, they become interested in you, which makes your books more interesting. And when they know that they can chat with you about the characters and about

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

the setting and the plots and the world, they get even more excited about reading your books and leaving those reviews and sharing. And that's the whole part is you want them not only to leave the review, but to get so excited about your stories that they go out and they tell their friends on Goodreads, a good review and then on Amazon. And some of them actually go to Kobo on Barnes & Noble and others.

And if you get an author that has read your book and they leave a review, you can actually take that review and put it on the cover of your book with their permission. Or even for, "Can you give me a testimonial to put on the front of my book?" And so, you can get from say a New York Times, a USA Today Best Selling author, if they've read your book and they really love it, they may give you something, a quote to then put on the front of your book cover.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah.

Moves into another tip that I had with authors who do leave a review, or you've connected with, or have made comment about your work, then asking them to share your book in their newsletter. That gets it in front of other people's eyes, it's there for the review. Everything kind of feeds into each other, all the steps all build on each other. So this is all about fitting all the puzzle pieces together, all that and you can get natural reviews.

S.E. Smith:

And coming back to the newsletter, don't forget to ask at the end of your newsletter or at the beginning and at the end, please, if you've read the books, make sure that you post a review on the distributor that you purchased it from. Don't be shy about asking and make sure that you put it on your website, on your newsletter and get these reviews and asking people is one way to do it.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely, so readers know to leave reviews. They just need to be reminded and that's why you're always including that call to action for them to do that.

S.E. Smith:

And once they get in the habit of it, then you're not going to have to keep pestering, they'll automatically, they'll actually say, "I wrote a review," and they'll give you a link to it a lot of times.

Narelle Todd:

Yes. Yeah. Nothing better than that.

Three tips and kind of two others thrown in. Five tips today on how to get reviews, find reviews when you don't necessarily have a budget for more paid advertising. How do you get those reading reviews naturally for no-cost or low-cost?

S.E. Smith:

And I just have to say something. I live in the States, in Florida, and Narelle is in Australia and we did not coordinate our outfits today, but we were having a good laugh about the fact that we both match.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

Narelle Todd:

We're both doing Where's Waldo?

Okay, well go out there, start getting your reviews, put your processes in place and we'll come back in future episodes and talk about other ways because we can think of at least 10 different ways that we do to get reviews.

S.E. Smith:

I hope everyone has a great one. And don't forget to ask for those reviews.

Narelle Todd:

Hey, thanks for joining us today. You know we've got way more information we want to share with you to increase your book sales. Please come and join me at [Facebook.com/getmybookoutthere](https://www.facebook.com/getmybookoutthere).

© Copyright 2021 Successful Living Pty Ltd - Reproduction of this document in any way shape or form both online and offline is strictly prohibited. You are NOT entitled to resell, reproduce or share this document or any version you make of it, and any breach of this will be enforced by the law. This document is for your personal use only.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).