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Peer Review and Getting Endorsements

by Susan C. Daffron

Including testimonials—on your back cover and elsewhere—is a great way to help “sell” your book to a prospective purchaser. But how do you get these types of endorsements? The answer is by doing a peer review and then asking for testimonials.

Once you have a good draft of your book or even a few chapters of it, send each chapter out to people who are experts in that particular area. For example, if your book is about how to build widgets, you might send out the chapter on finding materials to build your widgets to a few manufacturers. Your goal is twofold:

1. To improve the quality of your book. By having other people read your book, you get the benefit of their expert feedback.
2. To get testimonials to use in your book marketing materials.

Ideally, you want to “aim high” with your peer reviews. The bigger the names you can find in your industry, the better. If you only send one chapter out to an expert, no one person should be overwhelmed by the amount of reading. It’s much easier for people to accept the idea of reading a 10- or 12-page chapter, versus a 200-page manuscript.

Many people, particularly authors or experts, will be flattered to be included in your list of peer reviewers. Plus, if you include a quote or testimonial in your book or promotional materials, it’s great publicity for the reviewer. Most people who have written a book or have become an expert in a particular area are looking for ways to get their name out, so they are savvy enough to see the value in this type of publicity.

[ENDORSEMENTS continued, page 8]

ENDORSEMENTS, continued from page 1

To get started you need to make a list of prospective peer reviewers. Then you need to get their contact information. You can either contact them by e-mail or snail mail, depending on your industry and what you feel most comfortable doing.


If you get responses, you will probably need to follow up by phone. If you e-mail an initial query, you may need to follow-up by mail. The key to all of this is being extremely professional and accommodating. People are busy, and even though they might be flattered by the idea of helping you out, they simply may not have time to do it. Accept that and move on to the next person on your list.

By doing a peer review you open a dialogue with many people in your field. After someone has reviewed your chapter, assuming the person didn't think it was awful, you can then easily ask if they'd like to do a testimonial about the book. If you get a lot of testimonials, you can include them in the opening pages of the book. The best ones should be included in the back cover copy.

Of course plenty of books manage to do quite well even without a peer review or glowing testimonials. But both can help you on your way to self-publishing success. 🍀

Susan Daffron is the President of Logical Expressions, Inc. Daffron has written more than 70 articles that have appeared in national magazines, more than 200

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