

Book Review Activities Checklist

The search for Amazon Book Reviews can sometimes feel like Indiana Jones's quest for the Holy Grail.

Although there are no magic solutions to get every book (you publish) a bucket load of 5-star reviews, the activities listed below will improve your chances.

If you are a person who likes statistics, I'll warn you in advance that the chances of you getting a review from 100% of the people who purchase your book are close to 0%.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
1	Set up email list opt-ins.		

An email list is invaluable for all business owners, especially Indie authors. If you haven't started your email list yet, it is never too early. Plant the seeds for the relationship with your subscribers and they are more likely to review your books.

I know that most authors are paranoid that if they have any connection with another person on the planet Amazon will not allow them to review their book. With globalization, it is hard to find someone that you do not have some digital connection.

You can't have anyone in your immediate family, leave a review but you need some initial reviews so your email list is a goldmine.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
2	Build a book launch team.		

Humans instinctively don't like to be the first to do something and this Catch 22 means that you need some initial reviews in order to get reviews.

If you have already built a launch team for Beta reading, then utilize them for some initial reviews. If you haven't built a launch team yet, start building a team as soon as possible, in preparation for your book launch.

This team should be prepared to place the first reviews of your book.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
3	Distribute book Advanced Review Copies (ARCs).		

Traditionally publishers used to send out advance print copies of a book to selective readers in advance of the book launch (to get early reviews in newspapers etc.).

These pre-launch copies became known as Advanced Review Copies (ARCs) and the name has remained through to the digital age. With digital Book formats such as Pdfs, Mobi, and Epub etc., the distribution costs are minimal so you can send out a lot more copies.

ARCs do not have to be limited to pre-launch activities. You can continue to use them after the launch.

Include the distribution of ARCs of your book as part of your ongoing marketing plan (in order to promote book reviews).

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
4	Add universal links to your manuscript for your book's amazon review page.		

With our ever-diminishing attention span, statistics show that when someone has to click twice to make a purchase (that second click is enough that), they are more likely to abandon the purchase.

Basically, humans are getting lazier!

One of the benefits that a Kindle book has over a physical product, is that you can actually ask nicely for a review within the book (product) and create a link directly to your book's review page.

Remember that the purpose of this link is to make it easier for readers to leave a review. Getting readers to log in to Amazon and find their order and then place a review can seem like too much trouble, for even the most ardent fan.

Having a link that they can click on, while they're reading your book (that takes them straight to that books review page) is a lot more convenient.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
5	List your books on your author website.		

By listing your books on your own author website and driving traffic there, you are helping to build more of a relationship with your readers. As people visit your website they can see that you are more than just one book.

As only a small number of readers will review your book, they are more likely to leave a review for someone that they feel invested in, rather than some random author whose book they have read.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
6	Subscribe to review groups.		

There are some very supportive groups online for authors but a lot of these groups stipulate that they do not allow self-promotion. If your focus is to get book reviews it makes sense to join specific groups, that allow or actively display promoting your book for reviews.

These groups exist on Facebook, Promotion websites etc. and as they include words like “Kindle Reviews” or “Book Reviews) in the group titles, it is pretty easy to determine which groups to join.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
7	Create contests and send them to your email list.		

There are various ways to provide copies of your book for reviews but creating contests can help keep engagement with your email list. A physical copy as a prize, can sometimes provide a greater chance of reviews.

You can also create contests on Facebook and other social media platforms as a way of promoting your books.

Although there is no definite expectation that winners of your book will provide a review, the fact that they received a gift tends to increase your chances that they will leave a review.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
8	Promote your book while networking (always ask for reviews).		

You may be surprised by the number of authors who meet readers of their book while they are networking. You'll probably be more surprised by the number of authors who forget to ask the reader to leave a review on Amazon.

One thing to note is that not everyone knows how to leave a book review.

Have you have ever left a networking event with a business card and later realized that you couldn't remember much about the person on the card? Rather than expecting a reader to remember to leave a review, follow up with that reader later with instructions (and a link to your books review page), telling them how to leave a review for your book on Amazon.

Always remember to ask a reader for a review of your book.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
9	Schedule an amazon five day giveaway.		

I know that it can feel odd, giving away an unlimited number of digital copies of your work for free. Yes, you have worked hard to produce this book but you are not giving it away indefinitely.

Think how many large retailers have deals like Buy One Get One Free? They wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't a successful marketing tool.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
10	Schedule Amazon countdown deals.		

Initially, the Amazon Free giveaways were a novelty and converted to more book reviews. It's worth noting that even though the books are free, the reviews that they produce are classed as verified reviews.

Because free stuff doesn't have as much perceived value (lots of readers download free kindle books and don't even open them), \$0.99 may be now classed as the new "FREE".

Although Amazon Giveaways may receive more downloads than Amazon Countdown deals, the conversion rate for Countdown deals (from download to review) can be higher.

Rather than trying to determine which is the best option, alternate between the two.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
11	List your book promotions on promotion sites.		

Whether you are using an Amazon giveaway or a Countdown deal, ensure that you list your promotion on as many promotion sites as possible.

The wider you share your promotion the greater the potential for downloads and the more chance of reviews.

Some of these sites need ten days' notice to list your promotion, so ensure that you allow yourself plenty of planning time before your promotion.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
12	Launch a Goodreads giveaway.		

Since Goodreads started charging for their giveaways, they have included extras for authors (such as a reminder for readers to review your book).

Based on my own experiences (and that of other authors), the results here can be varied.

Although you can't guarantee a five-star rating or that a reader will even review a book from a Goodreads giveaway, this is an opportunity to get your book in front of readers on a site that is full of readers.

The more readers, the better chance you have of getting reviews.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
13	Update content for new editions.		

When you update more than 10% of the content of your book on Amazon you can list it as a new edition.

Anyone who has previously downloaded a kindle version of your book is now contacted by Amazon and offered the new edition for FREE. You have suddenly put yourself back in the front of the minds of your readers and increase your chance of getting more reviews.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
14	Post weekly social media review requests.		

You can schedule these requests in advance. Just asking regularly “if anyone has read my book, would you please leave a review”, is a simple option to jog reader’s memory.

If you have more than one book, send a separate message (tweet etc.) for each book. Ensure that you include a link to the books Amazon review page in that message.

Remember that you should try to make it as easy as possible for readers to leave a review.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
15	Contact book bloggers with review requests.		

There are lots of book bloggers out there and they receive lots of requests to review books.

To have the best chance of getting your book reviewed here are a few tips:

- Build up a relationship with bloggers before asking for a review. Comment on some of their posts, follow them on other social media platforms etc.
- Specifically approach bloggers who review books in your genre.
- Tailor your approach (familiarize yourself with some of their other reviews), mention things you liked about their other reviews.
- If they reply that they are currently not accepting books, ask permission to contact them again and ask when would be a good time to contact them. Leave the door open and get a specific date for your next contact.
- Contact multiple bloggers to increase your odds of one accepting you.
- Log all contacts and schedule the next contact to ensure that you use your time efficiently.
- If a blogger has reviewed one of your books, remember to approach them, prior to your next book launch.

If you are fortunate to get a book reviewed remember to thank the blogger.

Activities		Est Comp Date	Act Comp Date
16	Ask for reviews in any Ads or blog posts on your website.		

Whether you are boosting a Facebook post or receiving comments on a blog, treat it as networking and remember to ask for a review.

Ensure that your review request is relevant (e.g. if you publish in Sci-Fi Fantasy and Non-Fiction Biographies, don't paste a review request for one on a post for the other).

NB. Remember that if you do not ask for a review, your odds of getting a review are decreased.