

Sell More Books With a Powerful Back Cover

By Judy Cullins

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Word Count: 817 words at 65 characters per line.

Thanks,
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Did you know that your back cover information is, after the cover, the best way to sell more books? And , that most authors, emerging and experienced, miss this opportunity to engage more potential buyers?

Your book's front cover and sizzling title must impress your buyers in four seconds. If they like it, they will spend eight seconds on your back cover-a great opportunity to convince them that your book is necessary for their success.

Does your back cover pass the test?

Best Solutions to the Biggest Mistakes

1. Mistake: Too many non-powerful words and too busy to have a focus.

Solutions: A back cover of 6 by 9 inches should have under 70 words. Use sound bites; picture and emotional words; benefits, not features; and testimonials to capture your readers' attention to keep your message focused. Make every word count and be willing to get five-fifteen edits.

2. Mistake: Too much superfluous material on it such a long

author's bio or large photo. Potential buyers want to know how the book will help them, teach them a skill, or entertain them.

Solutions: Print only a one or two-line bio on the back cover. Put your photo and more bio on the inside of the back cover. Omit features such as format information, which belong in the introduction. Connect with your buyer emotionally with specific, powerful ad copy. For self-help books use bullets with specific benefits, and enough of the right kind of testimonials to sell your book in 8 seconds. For fiction, modify to include a bit of plot, with a powerful quote or dialogue. Use bookstore models to assist you.

3. Mistake: Repeating the book's title at the top of the back cover.

Solutions: Since your potential buyers already know the title and are stimulated enough to look at the back cover, hook them with an emotional question or statement to read on.

Create a "Hot Headline" that compels your reader to buy. Notice the headlines in your newspaper. Visit your bookstore and notice other best selling authors' headlines. "What's So Tough About Writing?" by wordsmith Richard Lederer, author of *The Write Way*; "Imagine Being an Author, in Dan Poynter's *Writing Nonfiction*; or "To Age is Natural...To Grow Old is Not!" In Rico Caveglia's *Ageless Living*.

4. Mistake: Omitting testimonials.

Solutions: Testimonials sell more books than any other information on the back cover. Put at least four up. Contact a variety of people. Use one from a top professional in your field, one from a satisfied reader, one from a celebrity who cares about your topic, and one from a famous media person.

In her book, "A Kick in Your Inspiration", Ruth Cleveland got one testimonial from an exconvict! Jacqueline Marcell, author of *Elder Rage*, took eight months to get forty testimonials from celebrities. Her book is endorsed by: Steve Allen, Ed Asner, Dr. Dean Edell, Dr. John Gray, Dr. Nancy Snyderman/ABC, Regis Philbin. Jacqueline Bisset, and Phyllis Diller it was worth the effort, because in April, 2001, she made the cover of the AARP Bulletin distributed to over 35million readers. It included a feature story, some how-tos and contacts and large pictures of the author and her book. She had to dance fast, and order 10,000 books to get distributed by the time the piece came out. After it came out, she was inundated with speaking engagements. There's a problem you might love to have!

After you write several books and become rich and famous, you, like other professionals, will fill your back cover with testimonials. You won't even need to add benefits, because people have

already bought your other books and liked them. Potential buyers will purchase when they see people they trust and know recommend the book. Besides filling the back cover with testimonials, you may want to even add extra testimonials in the front pages of the book. The more testimonials, the better!

5. Mistake. Independent publishers submitting galleys to reviewers, distributors, and wholesales without ANY back cover information.

Solutions: Make the back cover your first area of concern, "says Susan Howard, Director of Consulting Services at top publishing firm, The Jenkins Group Inc., who write "The Publishing Connection" She adds, "Waiting for testimonials is generally the reason the back cover of a galley is left blank. Failure to realize the value of the back cover seems to equate with the failure to realize that the text for the finished back cover can always be changed before the printing of the book."

It's important for writers to "market while they write"-- To make each part of their book sell copies. The back cover is all-important.

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Judy Cullins: author, publisher, book coach

Helps writers manifest their book dreams.

20 clients published since 1999!

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