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indie bookstore entrepreneur

IDEAS, INSPIRATION, BEST PRACTICES

spring 2013

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THE BOOKSTORE TRAINING GROUP

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**Owning A Bookstore:
The Business Essentials**

May 6-10, 2013

Designed for all who are thinking about opening or buying an existing store, already in the planning stages, or recently opened.



Learn. Plan. Do.

Spring symbolizes new growth.

What if the best thing you could do for your bookstore was to devote more time to the creative side of the business ... giving new growth and vitality to the experience of shopping your store?

In the spirit of spring, we're devoting this issue to the art of bookselling, inspiring a renewed sense of wonder for your sections.



**Propel positive momentum.
Have fun.
It's contagious.**

sections for how we live life today.

Some may remember a time in the 1970s when many booksellers arranged books by publisher so they'd be easier to find if needing to be returned! Ridiculous, yes? When was the last time you reviewed the names of your sections and how title categories are grouped to make they're still relevant and meaningful for how we live today?

1) shopping zones make the store easy to shop.

Have you grouped your categories with your customer in mind? If your customer wants to take a trip, will s/he find travel guides and travelogues with foreign language phrase books? Are beautiful coffee table books with photos from around the world nearby? How about travel writing, or even novels set in exotic locales? Trip planning becomes even more fun and valuable than Internet searching when customers would find this zone in your bookstore.

Increasing the average sale begins with intentional groupings. Here's a planogram with basic zones. Categories that appeal to the same kind of customer fit within each

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Staff training video immediately improves store visual merchandising

Bookstore Merchandising Made Easy 2.0



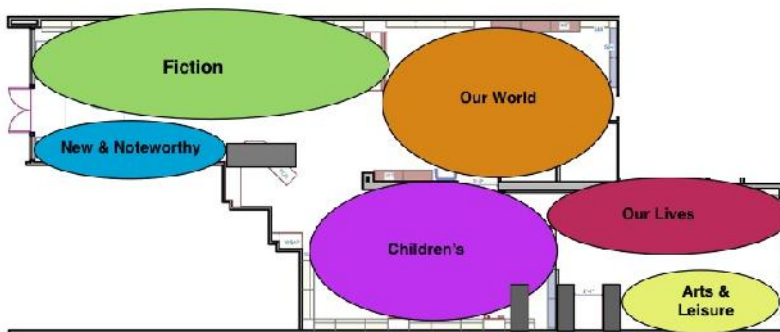
To preview video, click on image below.



Put ideas to use to inspire the sale:

- * **The most valuable retail real estate: the "Front of Store"**
- * **Tables & focal point displays**
- * **Sections throughout the store**
- * **Shelf-talkers**
- * **Impulse areas like the cash wrap & service**

zone. Mixed merchandising happens throughout the store.



2) section signs = marketing.

If books are seen as a commodity and so readily available online, shopping in a store needs to be way more fun because you find things you never knew existed. That's why section signs offer tremendous opportunities.

Go beyond describing the features (what they'll find) to offering benefits (what's in it for the customer). Here's what we mean:

You might have a section or category sign that reads "Health" or "Medical" with books on medical conditions, pharmaceutical guides, general health guides, books on menopause, etc. It's functional, but perhaps you can rephrase that section name to make it more appealing.



"Be Well" is a wish for good health and well being. In this zone, you could merchandise health, fitness, and medical books, plus loss and grief, aging, relationships, caring for family (younger and older), personal growth, and even personal finance. This is a more holistic way to think about living well. Ditch the "Self-Help" section and find a more inviting grouping for books that help us be happier and healthier.

During a spring workshop in the NAIBA region, we gave new names to many sections throughout a general bookstore. Biographies/Memoirs became "Notable Lives" and "Fascinating People" and Travel became "Great Escapes." A section for Gift Books became "Celebrate!" and "Read. Love. Give."

3) great timing

Every section presents opportunities to spotlight books. Tables, endcaps facing the traffic path, eye-level shelves on perimeter cases, flat tops on island cases ... all are prime spaces within sections.

areas

**SPECIAL OFFER
BELOW**



Most categories have a "prime season." Winter and early spring is the prime season for gardening books. When everyone has cabin fever and is hungry to spend time outdoors, these books have their moment and deserve prime space.

Rather than just buying books from publisher catalogs and then "shelving" your stock, adopt customer-centered buying.

Help your categories sell by scheduling your displays, buying with themes in mind and in appropriate quantities, then celebrating occasions during the entire year by changing out display areas and watching sales.

When prime time is over, reduce stock levels and move onto your next theme. It doesn't take all that much to make this happen. You're planning displays and buying to keep the store alive and evolving.

Ideas we love ...



This section sign is held by two tiny place card holders. Moving a section? Just pick up the sign and go!

Hubert.com has some fun, creative, and affordable options for in-store signage.

Pictured at right is a new twist on shelf labels ... a tag swinging from the shelf with the label on both sides of the tag!

You can easily make them yourself with some card stock, color markers, a hole punch and some string.

Breaking up large sections into smaller categories helps customers (and staff) find just what they need at the moment.



mindful buying drives merchandising.

dump some dumps. (and wire spinners too)

Spring is also a time for spring cleaning and we can't think of an easier place to start than looking at the corrugated dumps and wire spinners that may have been multiplying around the store.



When is it time to dump the dump?

When sales are past their peak.
When your stock level is about half full and you don't plan on replenishing stock in significant quantities.

When the title is still selling, move what's left to a small focal point display area, end cap or eye-level bookcase shelf.

Do you really need that spinner?

Why let the merchandise with the *lowest price point* (and often lowest gross margin) occupy the most prime space?

Often we simply use vendor spinners because they're sent to us! But does the fixture match the look and feel you want for your store? And is it the best use of the space?

Sometimes spinners work, like if you want to showcase a series. Klutz could be a good choice of a vendor spinner if the product fits your market and the spinner fits the space and doesn't block entry into a shopping zone. Card spinners with seasonal cards can sometimes work well near the cash wrap or at the end of an island case along the traffic path. Again, as long as it isn't blocking sight lines.



Lower price point items, however, are often best merchandised within their sections. Here's a shelf with books for early readers. The spinner was crowding the children's section in prime space so we moved the books to a bookcase and used the cards indicating reading levels

on the shelves.

Oddball books like those without spines or those with a tiny trim size are problematic, but don't need to drive our merchandising decisions.

Here is a case with pop-up books, hardcovers, and paperbacks. The pop-ups get the most prime space (one is open so customers are invited to see how wonderful it is), hardcovers are at eye-level, and spineless paperbacks are on the bottom shelf where an acrylic insert makes the shelf look full ... and the covers visible.



let price points guide placement.

Ideas, objective feedback and guidance, encouragement (always) and support ... we are here for you for any bookstore project.

Give us a call. Your first consultation is free and our rates are really quite affordable.



Call us at 904.277.2664. We'd love to work with you!

Warm regards,

Donna & Mark

Mark & Donna Paz Kaufman

[The Bookstore Training Group of Paz & Associates](#)

New Section Signs

Need to update your signage?

Create attractive section signs ... with your store's colors and type font that complements your logo.

For just \$395 (for stores up to 2,000 sf), you'll have all new section signs (18" x 4") and shelf labels for acrylic sign-holders to help customers navigate within sections.

Contact mkaufman@pazbookbiz.com

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