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indie bookstore entrepreneur

IDEAS, INSPIRATION, BEST PRACTICES

autumn 2012

In This Issue

Bookstore Make-Over

Thinking about getting into the bookstore business?

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



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The holiday season is one of the greatest opportunities we have all year to 1) promote books as perfect gifts, and 2) remind people how enjoyable it is to shop in a *real* bookstore.



This issue is devoted to our 20th Anniversary Bookstore Make-Over Project ... Left Bank Books in St. Louis, MO. You'll see just how far some fresh ideas, paint, section moves, and some "junktique" tables can go to enhance a special sense of space. They are now ready for a wonderful holiday season in the bookstore!

We hope you are inspired to be open to the possibilities for your own bookstore!

Bookstore Make-over at Left Bank Books friendlier. easier. refreshed.

What we loved about Left Bank Books from the beginning is its rich character developed over decades of bookselling, smart staff, and interesting space. The make-over goals were to 1) make the layout more customer friendly and easier to manage, 2) establish better merchandising opportunities, and 3) give the space a general face-lift.

welcome. uplifting the front of store.

The first impression upon entering Left Bank Books became our first priority. Over time, the sales floor had gotten cramped with fixtures, some blocking visibility and making it hard to travel through the store.



Before

**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 areas**

**SPECIAL OFFER
BELOW**



Upon entering, one side of the stairwell was covered by under-utilized short bookcases. With a huge inventory of thousands of books on the lower level, we wanted to open this area, let customers know there was more downstairs, and create some space to breathe. The walls were all white, so there was an opportunity to add some color to attract the eye (and guide the feet).

After

Paint color and removing the cases to make the stairwell more visible became our first priority -- since we knew that it would make the greatest impact at the store entrance. St. Louis is filled with beautiful wrought iron, so this local architectural element was our inspiration. A Sherwin Williams paint color called 'Sassy Green' was chosen as an accent color for the stairwell and the front door. "Reflecting Pool" blue was used on the far wall to attract the eye and encourage customers to shop the entire store, including the farthest spaces.



look here. creating focal point displays.

Before

Fixture placement can cause barriers, become focal points, and be used to direct traffic flow. Before the make-over, this fixture was used to define space for the children's department, but it crowded the stairwell and was an impediment to the traffic path. We moved the kids department away from the front of the store and opened up the front for easier access to the lower



level. This simple fixture adjustment provided greater visibility into the expanded Fiction section, the best contributor to store sales. Signs with sticky tape were removed and all sections received new signs for the tops of cases and for individual shelves for easier navigation through the space and within sections.

After

A round table (from Kris and Jay's garage) was painted and added to the front of the store, offering some variety to all of the rectangular fixture shapes there. The large table was moved further back into the Fiction section, creating a second focal point display. The tall vases with grass provides another visual draw to explore deeper into the Fiction section.



special space for kids.



Before

The children's department originally occupied a space at the front corner of the store, adjacent to adult Fiction and Mysteries. There was no seating or play area and lots of books were on

the floor. Dumps were crowding the traffic flow making it frustrating and difficult to get to the section ... or feel comfortable once there.

After

We moved the entire section to the far back of the store into a dedicated space. The back wall was painted to draw the eye and we added an inexpensive chandelier for one more visual draw. Another table from the owners' garage was painted and we nestled a cube on top and a table



underneath for vertical dimension. Only one dump survived the move (*I Want My Hat Back*). The little red chairs (on top of the wall cases), painted by well-known local artist Mary Engelbreit, were brought out of the basement, cleaned and put on display along with some of her prints. A large bench was moved in front of the display window and a garage sale rocking chair was repainted, recovered, and placed nearby to encourage grown-ups to sit with their little ones.

totally unique. totally indie.



We discovered more merchandising opportunities throughout the store. With a little rearranging, combining fixtures, painting, adding a few decorative touches, and mindful product placement, each section was given a spotlight. When Kris (pictured with the cooking display) explained that their cookbooks were not just shopped by moms, but by

professional chefs (in a foodie town), we moved the section and added two focal point tables. Big, impressive cookbooks are now displayed on this focal point table that catches your eye as you travel along the traffic path in the store.

Left Bank Books is known for its unique selection and you'll find wonderfully rich sections there that you wouldn't find in many other bookstores. We moved Poetry from the back of the store to join Fiction at the front. This table and footstool used as a riser were garage sale finds that were painted and strategically placed to add a spotlight to some little gems. Wooden book boxes dress up the bottom rung on the table... cross-merchandising where customers will discover these beautiful items.



a vision. some planning. satisfying results.



Everyone cleaned and moved



sections. Jay (pictured left) painted walls and the door, assisted the electrician, and even demolished the stairway half-wall. Kris painted tables and the rocking chair she found at the garage sale. For a materials cost of \$2,368.79, we accomplished all of our make-over goals.

Who might have been happiest of all was Spike, the Left Bank Books cat! During the make-over, he discovered many long lost play mice. Spike kept us amused and centered while we worked to transform the bookstore.



Many thanks to Kris Kleindienst and Jarek (Jay) Steele, owners of Left Bank Books, for inviting us into their already wonderful bookstore to make it even better. We loved working with them and spotlighting their many competitive advantages. Visit us on [Facebook](#) for more photos.

Where did the ideas come from? Our design team: Liz Dion, Bookstore Architect; Rob Berlin, store designer, Ted Baylis, Franklin Fixtures, plus Mark Kaufman on signage and messaging and Donna Paz Kaufman on planograms and merchandising.

With a fresh new look, an even stronger statement about the benefits of shopping indie, and a comfortable and interesting bookstore, Left Bank Books is ready for the holiday season ... and its next chapter.

**a wonderful sense of place
has never been more important
to a retail bookstore.**

Is your store in need of a fresh look? We'd love to work with you to enhance your special sense of place for the new year!

Ideas, objective feedback and guidance,

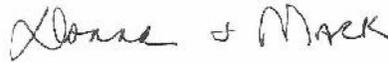


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