

# indie bookstore entrepreneur

Summer 2010

*Poy & Associates*  
THE BOOKSTORE TRAINING GROUP

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The Business  
Essentials

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What a great  
bookstore!

We're here to help you develop  
and improve your bookstore  
business.

## Summer

It's the playful season. Summer is about making time for fun. In that spirit, let's explore some creative ideas for the bookstore business...



## 5 important opportunities at the cash wrap.



As time goes by, too often the cash wrap can become cluttered with sticky notes, special orders awaiting pick-up, and an abundance of messages. Yet this space offers many wonderful opportunities. Walk to the customer side of the counter, see what they see, and imagine the possibilities...

**1) Reinforce your brand** -- Remind your customers where they are by presenting your name, logo, and maybe even your tag- line, if it will fit.

**2) Prioritize messages** -- What message do you most want to communicate? Do you present your gift wrap choices? Do customers know you'll ship their purchase for them? Do they know you have gift certificates or gift cards? Designate a staging area with some well-worded messages that remind your customers why they should continue to shop at your store.

**3) Hide clutter** -- If the whole point of a customer's choice to visit your bookstore is to escape from the craziness of the world outside, don't add visual clutter to her or his experience. Organize and conceal special orders, file folders, gift wrap supplies and such under your counter or in a separate cabinet.

**4) Say 'Thank you'** -- Remember when *'Thank You, Come Again!'* signs were in every corner store? Remind everyone to offer these simple words of gratitude at the close of every



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interaction with customers. Maybe that's a sign you might even want to add at the cash wrap or near your door so people will read words of gratitude as they exit.

**5) Offer a Take-Away --** What do you have that encourages the customer to come back to the bookstore? From newsletters, promotional bookmarks and flyers for upcoming events to loyalty program details and sign-up sheets for your e-newsletter, offer something in print to keep customers coming back.

**offer positive, purposeful messages.**

**be a go-to place for gifts.**



Now that ABA has discontinued its gift card program, you may be thinking of another option to pursue. Many booksellers are revisiting the good old printed gift certificate. If you want a gift from your store to present well, consider some of these packaging options.

One of our favorite shops places hand-written gift certificates in a 'pillow box'. This one stores flat and is available in a variety of colors through [Nashville Wraps](#).



Affordable, generic gift bags can be made into a classy gift presentation with a few creative touches. Add a foil label (see example below; 250 for just \$11.50 at suppliers like Nashville Wraps) and some tissue paper and your designer bag is ready to go.

Logo labels also add a nice touch to any item you gift wrap for your customers. A few pennies for such smart marketing is well worth it.



**something special ...  
comes from your bookstore.**

**unmistakably indie.**



We always love visiting **Malaprop's** in Asheville, NC. The staff is always so friendly and welcoming. And their displays are spirited and ever-changing. In the center aisle, a cut-out of Stephen Colbert draws your attention to a selection of Indie Bound t-shirts and fun logo items.

How can you clear the clutter from the front entrance and windows and still support community efforts by posting notices and posters? Malaprop's uses the corridor that leads to the public restrooms. Empty wall space can be covered with cork board and designated as the community message area.



**Blue Ridge Books** in Waynesville, NC is in the process of creating a customer service desk on the sales floor. In this photo, a standard bulletin board with a decorative piece hung above will make a lovely presentation for upcoming events. Want a cozy touch without the expense of changing out light fixtures? Consider adding table and floor lamps. A simple touch can add to the ambiance of the store.

**communicate. make connections.**

**make 'em smile.**



Tatiana Nicoli put the finishing touches



to her new bookstore, Boulevard Books in Brooklyn, by suspending some fabric leaves from the ceiling above the children's section. Under the bench, she chose an area rug with an African motif which looks wonderful with the large stuffed animals. We loved being there to hear comments as customers experienced the store for the very first time.

**be memorable.**

**3 more reasons to be optimistic about the future of retail bookselling.**



**Tatiana Nicoli of Boulevard Books, one of our new booksellers for 2010.**

1. Like Tatiana (a former attorney), more and more professionals are looking for something authentic to do with their skills and turn to a career in bookselling.
2. Faith in the value of small businesses becomes even greater as large corporations fail to serve the greater good in responsible ways.
3. Creativity and entrepreneurial spirit will continue to find ways to respond to our changing environment. Now that our lives are filled with high-tech, many will crave "high-touch" as an alternative. Some may prefer the sameness that seems to be so prevalent in this world, but so many others will seek what's new and fresh.

**feed your entrepreneurial spirit.**

**seek others who enjoy exploring ideas  
& the world of possibilities.**

**know someone who wants to  
own a bookstore?**

Many of us know full well just how much is involved in running a retail bookstore, let alone one that is profitable. Yet it seems that for every 10 stores that open, only 4 take part in any formal training for their career in bookselling. So if you know someone who is seriously looking at owning a bookstore, please let them know that the last full-week intensive training workshop of 2010 happens in mid-September.

And if you like what you see in this free e-newsletter, please pass it on by using the "Forward email" link below.

**Mark & Donna Paz Kaufman**  
Paz & Associates

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