

indie bookstore entrepreneur

IDEAS, INSPIRATION, BEST PRACTICES

spring 2014

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**Owning a Bookstore:
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Independent bookstores have been part of the entire "indie" movement and more and more people have discovered that the "indie" lifestyle is a good way to live ... supporting local farmers and businesses, celebrating local artisans and all of the creative people who are our neighbors.



This issue is devoted to celebrating what's local, real, and authentic.

"indie" is always more interesting.

**leveraging "local" ...
spotlighting your regional section.**



If you're in a tourist area, you're entering into high season where your local and regional books have their best opportunity to sell.

Here's a short checklist, filled with small tasks that will help spotlight ... and sell ... what's local and unique.

- **Create a focal point display** in a visible area in the store (along the traffic path or the focal point area within a section) with some of your bestselling, most interesting, absolutely stunning books. If some of those books are tucked away in the



Buy Customer Service Video

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 areas

Travel or Cooking sections, gather them up and make sure you've got multiple copies



of anything on display. Cross-merchandise with some non-book merchandise that's locally crafted.

• **Write shelf-talkers. Lots of them.**

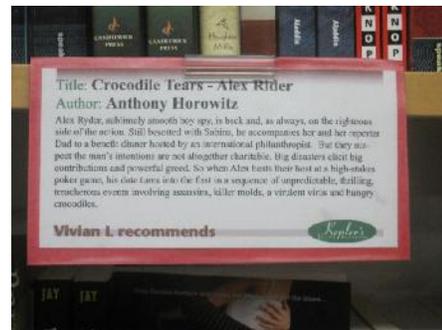


How about lists of favorite local writers in your region or city? Shelf-talkers are your silent handsellers and can help you turn that browser into a buyer more easily than any other marketing effort.

• **Make a formal introduction.** Introduce your local writer or artisan to your visitors with a small sign that includes a photo and few words to make a personal connection.

• **Create an eye-level display in Fiction.** Don't

limit your promotion of all things local to the Regional section. You'll help visitors discover writers from your area. Add a small sign with the author's photo and bio for an even more



personal introduction. Or, like Kepler's, feature what your local book groups are reading.

• **Be a gracious concierge.** Visitors will look for things to do, so think about promoting any local attractions, like your museum (with their brochure displayed with your local history books), local galleries (especially if they've created their own flier), and even create a list of your staff's favorite restaurants (and display them with your local cookbooks).

love local ... it's your competitive advantage.

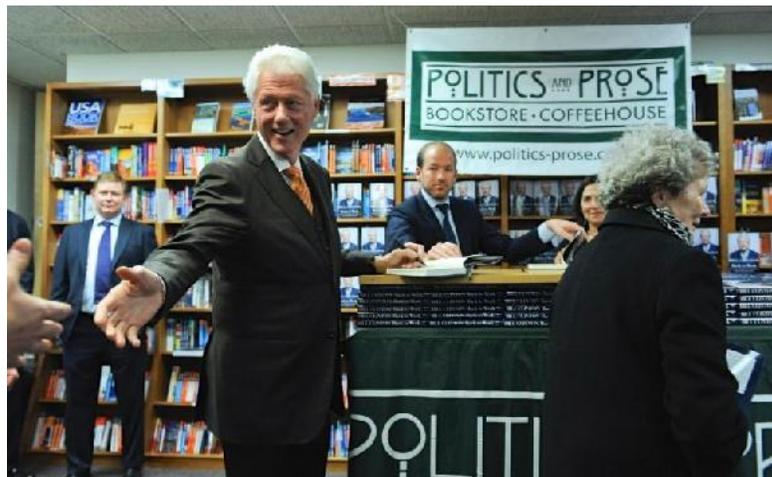
retail field trip ... staging pointers for your events.

In-store events are such an important part of bookselling. While we're busy coordinating and promoting events, staging those events requires some mindfulness, making sure the stage is properly set.

When a photo is taken during your event and posted online by a customer or used by the local media, are you getting full credit?



Paint is so affordable and effective. If you have wall space, paint your logo large. A local sign company has the technology to do this easily.



Politics and Prose has a banner they can hang for events and even take on the road for off-site events.

What's missing in the photo on the right is any indication where this event is taking place. Imagine if every bookstore podium had a sign with the store's logo attached to the front... or perched on shelves nearby.





Here's Gayle Shanks of Changing Hands Books at their 40th anniversary celebration. Notice the store's name appears on a sign above the perimeter cases as well as on the

podium.

**take credit.
get your name in the photo.**

**nostalgia ...
offering comfort with the familiar.**

[Island Books](#) on Mercer Island, just east of Seattle, is quite an amazing bookstore. With average sales per selling square foot way above the average for indie bookstores (in Amazon's giant shadow, no less), there's this unassuming community bookstore, filled with wit and wonder, amazing books, the most unique and extensive card and gifts, knowledgeable booksellers ...and a lot of really old typewriters.



Why keep these old items from yesteryear?

"High touch" has a lot of mileage in an age of "high tech." You'll notice a resurgence of retro products ... there's something very comforting with the familiar.



**Keep it, promote it ...
these can be a valuable
part of your brand!**

- Writing beyond 144 characters - your customers may come to your store because of your 'considered' selection. Read a few of the personal entries on reading and life from the [Staff Journal from Island Books](#)
- Print promotions - they last longer than mass email

blasts and small businesses of all kinds still use print to stay connected to customers. Here's [Octavia Books](#) ... take a look at the very personal photo of owners Tom Lowenberg and Judith Lafitte on page 2.

- Your soulful, meaningful items brought into the store that add character have their own stories, and make your store one-of-a-kind, like [La Casa Azul Bookstore](#) in East Harlem, New York

**"high touch" has tremendous value
in a world of "high tech"**

Here's to all things "indie"!

Ideas, objective feedback and guidance, encouragement (always) and support ... we are here for you for any bookstore project. We've begun the new year with a [brand new website](#), with more information about our services and training opportunities.



Have some thoughts about your business you'd like to explore? 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,

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

New Section Signs

Need to update your signage?

Create attractive section signs ... not only with your store's colors and type font that complements your logo, but also with alternative section names to catch your customers' eye.

For just \$395, you'll get up to 30 all new section signs (18" x 4") and up to 150 shelf labels for acrylic sign-holders to help customers navigate within sections. Estimates for additional quantities and/or custom sizes and designs available on request. Contact mkaufman@pazbookbiz.com

Colorful. Easy. Indie.

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Paz & Associates | 1417 Sadler Rd. #274 | Fernandina Beach | FL | 32034