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indie bookstore entrepreneur

IDEAS, INSPIRATION, BEST PRACTICES

spring 2012

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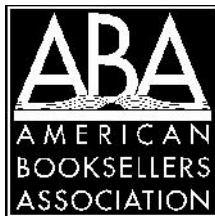
[unmistakably indie](#)



Going to BookExpo America in June?

Let us know if you would like to schedule time to get together and discuss your project.

Call us at
800.260.8605
or [email Donna](#)



Thinking about getting into the bookstore business?

[Join us for an introductory workshop at BookExpo America in New York City.](#)

[Sunday, June 3, 2012](#)

As sales figures from the recent holiday season attest at a number of indie bookstores, books make great gifts.

And spring is filled with gift-giving occasions! So if we're promoting the store and merchandising our selection with those occasions in mind, we should be able to sustain that positive momentum with robust sales ... and loyal customers.



Let's explore some ideas for reaffirming the value of books in our lives... all year long.

books make great gifts.

Are you confident that customers think of your bookstore *first* when they need a gift?

From birthdays to weddings, welcoming a new baby to anniversaries and beyond -- not to mention Mother's Day, Father's Day, and graduation ceremonies -- we all regularly need gift ideas, cards, and gift wrap. It's easy to put eye-catching reminders in strategic areas of the store...

Make it visual.

Color, graphics, and just a little bit of text is all we need:

- gift wrap empty boxes and place them in key spaces throughout the store with tags that read "For You" or "Give a thought-filled gift. Give a book!"
- stuff a gift tote with colorful tissue paper and next to it, place





Learn. Plan. Do.

Quick Links

[Paz Website](#)

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a frame of one of your special occasion greeting cards

- display a photo (like the wedding shot below) with a headline that simply reads "Congratulations!" next to a particular title or with your selection of gift books on a face-out shelf.
- always display your gift wrap and promote your gift cards/certificates at the cash wrap



Mother's Day, Graduation, and Father's Day are great gift-giving occasions, but there are so many other special days that we can feature all year long.

When you promote books and your wonderful non-book merchandise as gifts throughout the year, you're promoting your bookstore as the "go-to" place for gifts.

help customers find great gifts for all of life's special occasions.

savor the experience.

Staff training video immediately improves store visual merchandising

Bookstore Merchandising Made Easy 2.0



To preview video, click on image below.

The late Jeffrey Zaslow, in his book *The Magic Room*, reminded us that leading retailers are not selling commodities, but are selling an experience instead. He illustrated how Becker's Bridal Shop, for example, sells more than bridal gowns -- they create memories for brides, mothers, and friends.

Why do people love visiting bookstores? It's more than just needing or wanting a book. Enhance the tangible benefits of the in-store experience and you'll keep people talking about what a great bookstore you offer to the community.

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking about what else you could do in your store:

Help them discover.

Your focal point displays and shelf-talkers are absolutely critical to making it easy to find the right book or gift.

Stock up, stack up, tell them why you think the book is amazing with signage. Customers want to know your opinions ... in each and every section.





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

Make it easy.

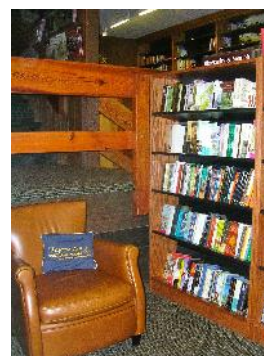


Limit your displays to a single theme or topic, even if it's only color-coordinated. Stick with beautiful works of poetry or cookbooks with fresh, local foods... a single theme. Here's an arts and crafts display.

Select your theme. Keep it simple. Stay focused.

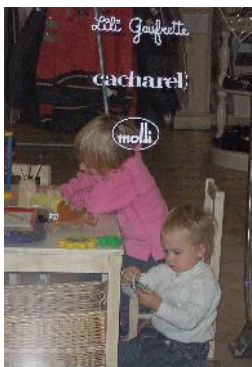
Invite rest & relaxation.

It doesn't really matter whether anyone actually sits in your chair -- seating is a visual invitation to slow down, sit, relax, and explore.



Visiting a bookstore is one place where you shouldn't have to rush through life. Reinforce the value of coming to browse, linger, and savor the moment.

Encourage interaction.



Somewhere in the children's area, engage little ones. McDonald's mastered this strategy long ago.

The whole family will enjoy coming to the bookstore, will stay longer, and be more likely to find 'must-haves' to buy and take home when little ones are having a good time.

keep enriching the in-store experience.

promoting your sense of place.

We are so impressed with the way in which **Little Shop of Stories** positions itself not just as a place to buy books, but as a comfortable, inviting, wildly interesting place that makes learning and discovery great fun.

Their **website** is a great example of a bookstore promoting its very special sense of place. Here's just one of the many photos that clearly speaks to their mission and lets customers know what to expect.



Click on the [summer camps page](#) and you'll find all of the ways they connect with local schools and give kids reasons to have fun reading during summer vacation.

You'll also see revenue-generating services for [birthday parties](#). It's a strategy perfect for their store concept, niche, and clientele. Where do you go in Decatur, Georgia for a child's birthday present? Little Shop of Stories!

How does your website promote the value of being in your wonderful bookstore? Make it visual.

give them reasons to come into the bookstore.

unmistakably indie.

It's remarkable to see what people can make with their own two hands. Chances are, you have creative people in your community who knit, paint, do woodworking and work with clay. Partnerships with local artisans can add such a fun element to the store.

[Phoenix Books in Essex, VT](#)

features artwork on the wall space above fixtures and also spotlights local art and crafts in feature displays throughout the store. What we love about their presentation is that information about the artist is featured with their merchandise. Book people love stories, so items often sell because of the artist's own words.



Featured in this photo are fiber artist Donna McDermid's amazingly unique "felt fantasies". The store regularly hosts opening receptions for a group of artists whose

work will be displayed over the coming weeks. The event is promoted by everyone involved.

What a wonderful way to create community connections and offer one-of-a-kind items in the store. Now that Phoenix Books is expanding to a second location in Burlington (due to Borders exiting this prime market), they'll have even more space for celebrating local talent.

source local, find what's unique.

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

Do you have something on your mind or a project on your plate? Give us a call. Your first consultation is free and our rates are really quite affordable.



Call us at 800.260.8605. We'd love to work with you!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna + Mark".

Mark & Donna Paz Kaufman

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off**

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Bookstore Merchandising Made Easy

A 25-minute **training video** that will help develop merchandising skills for everyone on your staff. You'll see immediate results on focal point displays, sections, the cash wrap, and window displays after your staff learns the basics of professional merchandising. Reg. \$39.95. NOW \$19.95 when you mention this e-newsletter. Call us at 800.260.8605.

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