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# indie bookstore entrepreneur

IDEAS, INSPIRATION, BEST PRACTICES

autumn 2011

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*Paz & Associates*  
THE BOOKSTORE TRAINING GROUP

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As the seasons change from summer to fall, bookselling also enters a new season. All the Borders stores will close. eBooks and eReaders will again receive a disproportionate share of media attention as we head into the holiday season (compared to actual sales). And the interest in all things local continues to grow. Change comes in many colors.



### *What matters most to your success?*

Let's explore the opportunities for bookselling in a changing world.

## the value of community.

Across the U.S., there's been a lot of media attention given to the Main Street Fairness Act and one particular mega-online retailer's resistance to collect state sales taxes. This exposes one of the primary differences between Wall Street corporations and locally-owned indies: the long-term commitment to the well-being of a community.



When you reflect on the year to date, how many organizations and charitable efforts has your business already supported? In an upcoming newsletter, why not thank all of those worthy groups who contribute to your community? [McLean & Eakin, Booksellers](#) in Michigan and [Nonesuch Books](#) in Maine each do a wonderful job listing organizations and noting how happy they are to support these worthy efforts.

Your impressive list of community connections will be one more reminder of how local businesses have a long-term investment in the well-being of the community.

## Merchandising Made Easy 2.0



To preview video, click on image above.



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

**BUY NOW**

## Neighbor to neighbor.



Indie businesses have one big fat competitive advantage and it's that owners live in and love their communities.

How personal are you in your marketing communications? In promotional materials to current customers and potential customers alike, is it clear the store is locally owned and community-based? Do readers know who owns the store?

Use your name and photo, scan your real signature to use in marketing materials. We love this photo of Tricia and Alan Lightweis, owners of the [Booksmith](#) in Seneca, SC with their new granddaughter Lauren Claire which appears in the Autumn issue of their newsletter, along with their letter to friends and neighbors.

## Gratitude.

Not surprisingly, 81% of companies that provide excellent customer service are outperforming their competition. The little things are what make the difference:



- eye contact
- a smile
- words like "thank you" and "appreciate" that are genuinely offered

Looking to renew that sense of gratitude and connection on the sales floor? Make this an exercise during your next staff meeting ... ask your team to brainstorm the list of the little things that make a difference when they are customers elsewhere. It'll be a gentle yet powerful reminder to offer these same things when we're the ones providing service.

**strengthen human connections.**

## smart business.



All of us love to see children fall in love with reading, but how can we be more effective than selling just one book at a time?

Roberta Rubin, owner of [The Bookstall at Chestnut Court](#) shipped books to

362 children during the month of June. That's quite a bit of recurring business that happens every month, thanks to their [Children's Book-of-the-Month program](#) which they've offered for seven years. Just imagine, each month shipping hundreds of pre-sold books (at \$16.99+ each) to children who are delighted to open a package that has arrived addressed to them.

Children's department manager Robert McDonald and his team file information about each child's age and interests ... and credit card details too.

Everyone wins ... grown-ups are guaranteed they'll benefit from personal selections and your caring customer service. Kids are thrilled over and over again. And you increase sales, profits, and customer loyalty.

**make a long-term sale.  
create life-time readers & customers.**

## unmistakably indie.

We love the whole idea of **wabi-sabi**, the *ancient Japanese art of finding beauty in things that are impermanent, imperfect and rustic*. Emerging in the fifteenth century as a reaction to the prevailing aesthetic of lavishness, wabi-sabi reveres *earthiness and authenticity*.

This wonderfully worn, comfortable chair is situated in the heart of the children's department at [Watchung Booksellers](#) in Montclair, NJ. Children gather around the storyteller during mornings and the chair is enjoyed by large and small customers all day long.

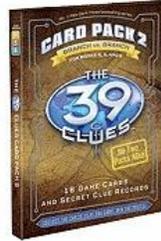


In the center of alcoves throughout [McNally Jackson Books](#) in New York City, small tables with a few carefully selected titles greet customers. Here, a little bowl offers some promotional materials. An imperfect table with a blemished top can be covered with fabric and topped with merchandise. Look for furniture items with interesting details and character.

**authenticity adds warmth and  
comfort in a crazy world.**

## price point watch.

A recent T. Rowe Price survey of parents indicated that nearly half give allowances to their children. Kids age 8 to 10 pocket an average of **\$8.02 per week** while kids age 11 to 14 have an average of **\$11.57** available to spend.



What do you offer that fits within kid-size budgets? Do you have merchandise displayed by price point anywhere in your children's department? Even a shelf-talker can help direct young customers with thin wallets.

**ensure that every customer can find something at your bookstore.**

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 we're much more affordable than you might think.



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

**Warm regards,**

*Donna + Mark*

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

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