

2015 ABA Spring Forum: Exploring New Markets

Increasing Sales to Existing Customers

- Valentine's Day cards and/or other holiday cards/birthday cards: Send cards to your best customers every year. Include a small store credit and a thank you for their business.
- Pop-up-bookstores at a customer's workplace: For a short time and tailored to that customer's needs.
- Secret password sale: If the customer says the password during a three day period, she/he receives a percentage off one item.
- Suggest a title: Provide a centrally located bulletin board for customers to post their own reviews, raves, and suggested titles. Provide a thumb's-up icon for other customers to "like" the review.
- Ingram Shipping Direct to Home: Offers customers an option for shipping special orders to their homes.
- Curb side delivery: Offer to bring the title out to the customer's car.
- Rainy day delivery: Offer to hand deliver titles to the customer's home.
- Create an annual party for your preferred customers: Black tie!
- Offer personal shopping hours featuring some of your best-known and/or best-loved booksellers.
- Implement variations on loyalty clubs based on customer purchases. Most POS systems allow you to create frequent buyer programs.

MY NOTES:

Reaching the Millennial Market

- Book Clubs hosted by staff in their 20s. For example: Start a Comedy Book Club. Invite local young comedians to read the same title and perform a five-minute “riff” on the title. This gives the comedians valuable performance experience and raises the profile of literature and the store among millennials.
- Stay open later to cater to the “going out” crowd.
- Expand authorless events to include social events such as speed dating, and DJ nights, and community interests, such as CSAs, etc. And host author events in hip places. Example: One ABA member store hosts drinks with an author (called Pints & Pages) in a local bar.
- Keep an active and updated social media presence. Include QR codes, your Twitter handle, and website address on outgoing printed materials, such as bookmarks.
- Start a story time for adults who want to gather and listen to a story read aloud.
- Stay active in neighborhood events to help promote your town and your store.
- Be creative with shipping offers. Offer customers an option for shipping special orders to their homes.

MY NOTES:

Reaching Generation X

- Offer free downtown delivery for customers who are at work.
- Offer free gift wrap.
- Remember: Keep all web content and social media content updated.
- Extra benefits for special orders: One ABA member reports that when they take a special order they give customers the convenience of 50% off any coffee drink when they return to pick up the book.

MY NOTES:

Reaching the Baby Boomer Market

- Friend of the Grandparents program includes a book-of-the-month club for grandchildren, as well as curated shower and baby gifts, etc. Also ask grandparents to provide birthdates and interests of grandchildren so you can send them reminders of the child's approaching birthday. Include title suggestions for that child.
- Friend of the Bookstore program offers special discounts, preorders, and an appreciation evening. Help to feed the meters during the event.
- Women of a Certain Age Discount Mondays linked with visits by experts on finance, health, skin care, etc. for WOACA.
- Add vinyl records and/or generational CDs during the holidays. Create a music display featuring The Beatles and related records, books, and gift items. Example: Baker & Taylor programs such as NPR Discover Songs and Vinyl Lives.
- Many boomers enjoy increased mobility and relocate seasonally or throughout the year. Provide low cost shipping for them no matter how many books are in the box. One ABA member says this helps the store stay in touch with boomers.
- Boomers on staff can help you reach boomer customers.
- Books and Breakfast: Serve muffins, coffee, juice, water, and talk about new books and authors. Breakfast clubs can create community goodwill.
- Keep a file for customers who want to keep wish lists physically in the store.
- Work with a local tour company to create local, national, and even international literary tours.

MY NOTES:

Reaching Young Readers

- ALWAYS say “Yes” when a teacher wants to do an event or provide kids’ programs to the store.
- Create projects like BookSmartArt once a month that are easy, season-based art and craft projects, which take about an hour. Charge \$3 – \$5 depending on the craft.
- Create a Teen Advisory Board. Have teens apply to join and then have a hand in marketing and hosting events for teens.
- Provide internships/work study programs where permissible (check local and state regulations) for ages 13 – 15.
- Provide book talks for kids 8 – 12 once a month.
- Host writing and illustration contests to promote enthusiasm for reading.
- Create an interfaith story time with the help of local interfaith councils or other local religious associations.
- Create a BINGO reading contest in the summer. Customers read book choices from a BINGO card. Hold a party before school begins again.
- Offer a Happier Hour where the store offers happy hour specials to children and adults that includes a story time for the children.
- Organize Second Saturday, First Friday, etc. events in collaboration with the local Library.

MY NOTES:

Reaching a Diverse Customer Base

- Look for data on your community composition. Don't assume you know who is in your community. Schools often have this information.
- Hire diverse staff to better reflect your community.
- Host a bilingual story time for children. As it becomes popular increase selection of Spanish/other bilingual titles.
- Create in-store displays for various cultural groups in your community.
- Hold bilingual readings of popular foreign authors. One ABA member store held a bilingual reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The moderator chose short passages in advance and had one presenter read the passage first in Spanish and then another presenter read the same passage in English. Participate in cultural festivals when possible.
- Partner with local religious/cultural/service groups to cultivate events and customers. Example: Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

MY NOTES:

Reaching Online Shoppers

- Be creative with your shipping options, including discounts and special programs.
- Continue to integrate the online and in store experience. Some ABA member examples include:
 - In-store displays with signage that reads, “As Seen on our Website.”
 - In-store signage that advertises the store website.
 - Post store hours and directions prominently on your homepage.
 - Remember to keep webpage content fresh!
- Offer coupons in your email newsletter for customers to print and use in the store. Also, provide coupons in the store for online purchases.
- Create an online portal for your book-of-the-month club. For example:
(<https://thebookdrop.cratejoy.com/>)

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