

BIBLIOPHILE

News for and about publishing for our publishers.

Published Bi-Monthly by Biblio Distribution, Inc.

Volume 3, Issue 4 July/August 2004

Contents of This Issue:

- **Notes From the Field** ("7 Things I Learned At Sales Conference")
- **ISBN Developments**
- **UPS Improvements**
- **Amazon Co-Op Policies**
- **Beyond the Bookstore** ("Become a Star on Home Shopping Networks")
- **Online Reports** (Backorders)
- **Your Monthly Accounting Statement**
- **Award, Review, and Other General Information**

Thanks to all of you who attended the Book Expo in Chicago at the beginning of June. We had a great show and a very successful three days of in-booth author signings. This success was due to the enthusiasm of our authors and publishers, as well as, a prime location in the hall. It was our first year doing these signings and we plan to have them every year, so if you were one of our "guinea pigs" and have any suggestions for us, please let me know.

Book sales this summer have been dreary, and many publishers have been hit hard with returns, but it's not all that unusual to go through a mid-year slump like this, so keep your hopes up and your promotion efforts in high gear. Stores should soon be done cleaning out inventory and making room for the holiday season. As most of you know, the book business booms in the fourth quarter, so you never know how your year will end until December 25 rolls around.

In addition to the holiday sales, we're hoping to boost things a bit with the release of our first complete printed and bound backlist catalog. We're offering up a special discount to our customers to accompany the catalog and encourage them to try some books that they may have passed on before. As we had hoped, a huge number of you are participating in the "featured backlist" section. With the special discount we're offering to get customers to actually review the catalog, this puts you in a prime position to get noticed. (This section is closed now, so for those of you who missed it, there will be another chance next year!)

Because of the slump in sales, we have made the decision not to travel for the regional shows so we can stay in the office and focus on increasing book sales. However, Biblio will be represented at every

show by the rep group for that region. The only show at which we will not be represented is NAIBA (New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association) in Atlantic City. This is a one day show at the end of the season and we have found that the attendance doesn't merit an exhibit every year. But if you live in the region, it's not a bad idea to walk the floor and meet some of your local booksellers and fellow regional publishers. It's a great place to network!

NOTES FROM THE FIELD: 7 Things I Learned at Sales Conference

Last week I was at the NBN sales conference in Annapolis, MD. Sales conference is held three times a year to review the titles for the upcoming season (Winter 2005, in this case). The entire sales and marketing staff attends and it really marks the beginning of a new season (although the season really starts for the marketing department and the publishers about 6 months prior to conference).

This kind of sales conference is typical for a major distributor and for major publishing houses. Smaller publishers and distributors usually hold their sales meetings twice a year in New York. Biblio does a combination of the two. In April and December, we travel to New York and spend three days meeting with rep groups individually to review the catalog. In August, we meet with any of the rep groups who are in attendance at the NBN meeting. The two groups that we don't share with NBN review the materials on their own and send us questions when needed.

I've attended nineteen NBN conferences now and there's always something new to be learned from the people in the room—whose experience ranges from those who owned, managed or worked at bookstores, worked for large accounts in a buying capacity, published books with small and large publishers, and people who sold books for major houses. Here are just 7 things I've learned from them about selling books:

- 1) **You cannot be over-prepared to sell a book.** Of the 100 books you're selling, you never know which one will pique the buyer's interest, so you have to know about them all.
- 2) **Books are judged by their cover.** By this, of course, they mean the packaging. If it's the wrong format, wrong price, or has an unappealing cover, then it shouldn't be published.
- 3) **Our industry is database-driven.** Even minor errors (like an ISBN typo or a transposed author name) can cause major confusion and getting a problem fixed is infinitely more difficult than doing it right the first time.
- 4) **The accounts are in charge.** We aren't entitled to anything when it comes to these folks—they are the customers. Ordering our books, or not ordering them, is their prerogative.
- 5) **Competition is good!** The reason so many people "copycat" books is because it works. If you have a book on low-carb dieting, it's far more likely to sell because of the success of Dr. Atkins. To say "no other book like it" will result in a smirk from most reps and buyers.
- 6) **Be willing to change.** Buyers and reps often offer criticism and advice, and nothing is more frustrating to them than to have it ignored. You should always consider the source carefully before changing your whole program for it, but if you publish religion books and the long-standing religion buyer at a major chain says your prices are too high then that's an opinion to take seriously.
- 7) **Have fun.** No one I know works in the book industry "for the money." If you're not enjoying it, then why do it?

ISBN DEVELOPMENTS

THIS IS FYI ONLY. YOU DO NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.

As a reminder, the book industry will undergo a major change in product numbering by January 2007. Your current 10 digit isbn number will change to a 13 digit number. You already have your 13 digit isbn assigned for current books. It is the number underneath your EAN bar code on the back of the book, starting with 978, continuing with the first 9 digits of your isbn, then ending with a different digit. We will be updating you as it is time to make changes to your book.

Biblio is in the process of converting the necessary databases to be able to take orders for your product in the 13 digit format and to communicate the new isbn to all the accounts.

Book Industry Study Group (BISG) has a writeup on the isbn which is a thorough explanation of the change which will be made and why it is being made. The organization, which we belong to, is also working on a guideline for implementation and a timetable of when the changes are needed. Those writeups will be posted on their website in late September or early October. The web site is www.bisg.org.

UPS SHIPMENT IMPROVEMENTS

UPS has agreed to changes in the way they ship product into our warehouse for new books receiving. Until this week, UPS was sending all product to one location. Since we receive multiple skids from them each day, it took time to separate the skids, and delayed receiving of your new books.

They are now separating product based on the building identified in the label, which should greatly speed up the receipt of your UPS shipments to us. Please make sure all UPS shipments are marked as follows:

National Book Network

BUILDING D

15200 NBN Way

Attn: New Books Receiving

Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214

Please note: The green "New Books Receiving" labels are only necessary on brand new titles! You do not need them when you send in reprints.

CHANGES AT AMAZON.COM

Amazon's new co-op policies are the buzz of the industry right now. There are many different opinions on the situation, and Amazon has been relatively quiet about it in public. Many small and medium-sized publishers (and their distributors in some cases) are trying to figure out what tact they're going to take when faced with Amazon's decision that publishers must spend at least 3% of their Amazon sales in promotional dollars on the site. If publishers decide not to, then their books will not be discounted and they will not come up easily in searches.

NBN is currently going through major negotiations with them right now to try and work out a solution for its publishers, however, Biblio publishers and their books have not yet been mentioned by Amazon

as an affected vendor. The assumption being that our publishers are still too small. But I suspect they will get to us eventually and how we react will be based on what happens with NBN.

This kind of situation is a really good reason why publishers should subscribe to *Publishers Weekly*. While I know it is expensive, the news that they provide is invaluable to serious publishers regardless of size.

The primary reason that I haven't mentioned it in *Bibliophile* before now is because I haven't heard anything worthwhile to share about it. Since we have yet to know how it will affect Biblio publishers, we can't tell you what we're going to do about it. Basically, Amazon is a retailer and is allowed to run their business how they see fit. Their obligation is to the consumer first & foremost.

"BEYOND THE BOOKSTORE"

Brian Jud, President of Book Marketing Works, LLC, a marketing consultancy firm for independent publishers, has a book out called *Beyond the Bookstore: How To Sell More Books Profitably to Non-Bookstore Markets*. He has generously given us permission to reprint portions of his book in *Bibliophile* to help spread the word about the benefits of non-bookstore sales.

Nancy Mosier, author of the low-carb diet books *Eat Yourself Thin Like I Did* and *Eat Yourself Thin With Fabulous Desserts*, is a big hit on QVC with many repeat appearances. I know there are quite a few Biblio authors with QVC-potential, so I thought it appropriate to include info this issue on becoming a home shopping star like Nancy has done.

Strategy # 50: Become a Star on Home Shopping Networks

Home-shopping networks reach millions of people every day with information in a wide variety of products, including books. Before you try to reach these buyers, consider your products' salability on television. Does it meet their criteria? Does it:

- **Demonstrate well in eight minutes of airtime?** That is not a lot of time to sell your product, so it must have unique and demonstrable benefits that are easily and quickly communicated.
- **Solve a common problem or make life easier?** This gets back to the need for which you created your product in the first place.
- **Appeal to a broad audience?** Titles of interest to a small group of people will not make it past the first decision-making round.
- **Have unique features and benefits?** How is your product different from and better than competition?
- **Relate to a topical or timely subject?** If your product is associated with a current event it is more likely to be selected than one that is not.

Pitch your product from the perspective of what is important to the viewer. Exclusive product launches and unique products offered for the first time are always of interest to them. Typically, programming is thematic; part of the product selection criteria is based upon how they will fit within existing programs.

QVC's viewing audience is idiosyncratic to the topic of the show. For instance, *Make Life Easier* is for people who are looking to save time, work and money around the house so that they can enjoy life to its fullest. It features cleaning solutions, electronics and appliances, even self-help books and health-related products. *Now You're Cooking* presents cookware, kitchen gadgets, gourmet foods, cookbooks, small appliances and more, for everyone from the occasional cook to the gourmet chef. *For Race Fans Only*®, airing every Friday evening during race season, draws a primarily male audience. QVC continually strives to expand its appeal to an ever-broadening customer base by increasing the variety of products available to their audience of over 84 million homes.

To have your product evaluated for possible airing on a home shopping network you typically must submit completed Product Information Sheets with a photo or brochure of your product. Each network has its own forms, so go to each site and follow their directions.

For an example on how to submit your information to QVC, go to <http://www.qvcproductsearch.com/>. Here you will find the QVC Product Submittal forms. Print out each completed page, attach a color photo or brochure and mail it to: QVC Studio Park, Vendor Relations, 1200 Wilson Drive, Mail Stop #128, West Chester, PA 19380-4262.

If your product is of interest to the network, it will move to the next level of evaluation. At this stage a sample will be requested and will be evaluated against rigorous Quality Assurance requirements. If a sample has been approved, your buyer will work with you to create a sales strategy for your product, a purchase order will be written and you will ship your goods to a designated warehouse.

Minimum initial purchase orders are usually not less than \$20,000 to \$25,000 per individual item at its wholesale cost. QVC prefers to air products with a selling price of \$15.00 or higher so you might consider bundling several titles or products to build the price of the package.

QVC does not sell products in the following categories: guns, furs, tobacco and all related products, subscriptions, 900 phone programs, service-related products, and products with bounce backs or consumer solicitations such as sweepstakes, questionnaires, etc.

For a list of the major home-shopping networks, with contact info, buy a copy of Brian's book! (Reprinted from *Beyond the Bookstore* by Brian Jud, Reed Press 1-59429-005-9; See Brian's website at <http://www.bookmarketingworks.com/>)

ONLINE REPORTS

--Reports supplied to Biblio client publishers on-line show a wide range of information for the publishers' daily use. Information provided includes information on sales, inventory, receipts and low stock.

--Reports are in two formats - Microsoft Excel for any calculations the publisher might need to do with the numbers, and Monarch, which is the information formatted in a easy to use report. Monarch can potentially be used on MACs using a couple of short cuts. If you have a MAC and are interested, please contact Karen Mattscheck at kmattscheck@nbnbooks.com.

BACKORDER REPORT (PROBKP)

Some of you may have received a call recently from Eliza Dyar, our in-house sales representative, about current backorders that we have in the system that we'd like to fill before they cancel. We would hate, as I'm sure you would, to see any orders go unfilled—losing money and disappointing customers. Please make a habit of checking your backorder report once a month (you can also check backorders daily by reviewing your title list—there's not as much detail, but at least you can see at a glance what books we need more of).

The backorder report provides detail on transactions that are pending due to a lack of inventory availability. This report is run at the end of each month and is current as of the last business day of that month. This is how to read it:

ISBN: ISBN without dashes

Fmt: Format of book

It St: Current item status. Not a calculated field.

AV = Active (i.e. IN PRINT; this does not reflect physical availability of product; Physical availability is determined by QAV)

NF = Not yet published

OP = Out of print

IH = On inventory hold for research purposes

DS = Out of stock indefinitely (unknown ready date)

CX = Cancelled; never published

Bill-to Customer: Name of customer to be billed for this transaction

City: City of bill-to customer

St: State of bill-to customer

Order Number: NBN order number

Ord Sta: Status of this order (B = order is in backorder status)

Bko Qty: Quantity of books on backorder

Unit Price: List price of book

Discount %: Percent of discount applied to list price, based on customer classification, and item product category

Net \$ Value: Dollar value of order that equals the quantity ordered multiplied by the discounted price

Cancel Bko Date: Date on which the order will be cancelled if inventory is not received

If you have any questions about any of your online reports, please contact Karen Mattscheck in Inventory Management at kmattscheck@nbnbooks.com.

YOUR MONTHLY ACCOUNTING STATEMENT (Get Out Your Abacus!)

Each month our Accounting department generates and mails a statement of account activity to each publisher. While this statement can be very difficult to understand, it is an important document for you to use to run your business. We are working on an easy-to-read, step-by-step "cheat sheet" of it for our publishers (and our staff!), similar to the online report explanations. We have an Accountant-to-English translator working on it right now. In the meantime, here are some hints on understanding the different columns (left to right) on the "Aged AP-Until Due-Detail-Publishers" document:

Vendor Ref Nbr: Our vendor reference number. This is for Biblio's purpose only.

Name Inv Nbr: This column under your publishing company name is a description of what transaction is being accounted for in that particular row, and what month/year the transaction occurred.

120 Day/150 Day: These rows show the money that will be coming due to you for book sales. For example, if it says "04/04 120 Day" then the payment would not be in the current column until 120 days from 04/04 sales, so it would be due 8/31/04, which is 120 days from 04/30/04. (See "InvcDate" below.)

Returns: Since returns are always deducted in the month they occur, if it says "04/04 Returns" then the deduction will be taken by 4/30/04. (See "InvcDate" below.)

A/R Stmt: This is the total of all miscellaneous charges, usually for marketing programs like Book Expo or advertising, and is always deducted in the month they occur. Individual invoices for these are printed and mailed throughout the month and should be received by the publisher to reconcile with the end-of-month statement. (These are the things you get that say "invoice" on top and "not an invoice" on the bottom. Do not pay them.)

Reserves: Per the contract, we hold a certain portion of your payments for one year as a reserve to cover returns. This money is paid back to the publisher on the invoice date. (See "InvcDate" below.)

DocType: Positive amounts (VO) are amounts owed to the publisher. Negative amounts (DB) are amounts owed to Biblio.

Vend Stat Doc Stat: "A" means it's an active account. "H" means the account is on hold for some reason (usually the publisher has terminated with Biblio).

InvcDate: This is the date when the amount in that row will be in the current column.

-Days Until Due-

Current: Payments are due when the amount in this column is a positive number. This amount must be over \$500 and you have at least \$250 in your reserve account. Otherwise a partial check or no check will be issued. If you have less than \$250 in reserve the difference between what is in your reserve account and what you will be paid may be deducted from your current payment amount. That leaves us with a minimum of \$250 in reserve (per the contract).

Checks due to the publisher, should reach you around the 15th of the following month. If your current amount is negative, there is NO need to make a payment to Biblio, unless you are contracted directly. Negative amounts will be deducted from the payment Biblio would owe the publisher.

30 Days: This is the approximate payment you can expect for the following month, less returns and/or any marketing or co-op charges due for that month. Remember: Returns are deducted immediately, so never think this "30 days" column is a sure thing.

60 Days/90 Days/120 Days or >: This is the approximate payment to expect in the following months, less returns and/or marketing charges due for that month. The higher the number of days at the top of the column, the further away the payment is due and the more likely it is to change.

Balance: This is the amount due to the publisher over a period of time as of the end of the current month. This is NOT the amount Biblio owes the Publisher at this time, and it will change with every passing month.

If you have any questions about these statements, please e-mail Candi Rahn at crahn@nbnbooks.com. She will either be able to help you, or find someone who can. (I definitely will not be able to help you...remember, I'm in marketing.)

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AWARDS

PMA (Publishers Marketing Association) invites all members to enter the 17th Annual Benjamin Franklin Award® Competition for excellence in publishing during the year 2004.

Since marketing is the primary focus of PMA, they look for the most impressively marketed title for the Book of the Year for Excellence and Innovation in Marketing Award. Other awards recognize excellence in editorial and design, which affect the successful outcome of marketing programs.

To help the judges to have a sufficient amount of time to go through all entries they are having two Calls for Entries again this year. The First Call for entries has passed. The Second Call for Entries is primarily for books published July 1 through December 31, 2004, although they will accept all books carrying a 2004 copyright at that time as well. Deadline for the 2nd call is December 31, 2004.

For more info: <http://www.pma-online.org/>

PW CALLS FOR INFORMATION

The only current PW "Call for Information" is for Large Print Books, but if you want to submit your new book to PW for their regular review section called "Forecasts" (as all publishers should!), here's the link to instructions on how to submit properly:

<http://publishersweekly.reviewsnews.com/index.asp?layout=submissions&publication=publishersweekly>

INFORMATION THAT BEARS REPEATING

To Correct Online Retailer/Database Errors AND to Add Reviews:

<http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/passwordprotect/datacorrections.shtml>

(Username: bibliopublisher ; Password: bigsales)

Publicity Updates: If you have an update about your publicity and you want the sales reps and our buyers to know about it, please put it into our preferred publicity update format. The format can be found on our website at: <http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/marketing.shtml>

A Plea From the Biblio Staff: Please identify yourself in your e-mails to us. We have quite a few publishers now and we need you to include your name, publishing company, title and ISBN when you contact us. Not including that information will delay response to your request.

Here are a couple of ideas for getting all-important industry information and for networking opportunities:

SUBSCRIBE TO *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*: www.publishersweekly.com

JOIN PMA: <https://pma-online.org/membappl.cfm>

SUBSCRIBE TO THE *SPAN NEWSLETTER*: email Lurina@SPANnet.org and type in "SUBSCRIBE."

Attention Publishers: Back issues of "Bibliophile" are now available on our website at:

<http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/bibliophile.shtml>

If there is anything you would like to read about in an upcoming issue of *Bibliophile*, please e-mail your idea to me at jlinck@bibliodistribution.com. Thank you! -Jen

biblio
DISTRIBUTION