



BIBLIOPHILE

News for and about publishing for our publishers.

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Happy Holidays to everyone! It's been a very busy month since the last newsletter. Actually I'm starting to believe that every month is a busy month for Biblio...I'm holding out for a slow July (2004). Sales have held pretty steady for us despite the difficult month that the economy has been having. Well, I have lots of great news to share with all of you this month so let's get started!

We recently replaced three of our rep groups—we hired Consolino & Watson in the Northeast, McLemore, Hollern & Assoc. in the Southwest and Proe & Proe Associates in the Mid-Atlantic. We are now using the same groups that NBN has used for years and we're delighted about it. These are some of the most respected, effective sales reps in the country and we're lucky to have grown to a size and stature that they're comfortable repping us to their accounts right alongside NBN. Not to mention the fact that Larry and I have worked with these folks for years, so it's a smooth transition. We've seen some real enthusiasm from them all and we're excited about it.

The Biblio team has also spent the last month brainstorming about how we might alter our sales schedule to better serve our publishers, reps and buyers (who all have different agendas and priorities that can be difficult to reconcile). We feel we've come up with a way that will make everyone happy. I will be sending out a separate e-mail before Christmas with an explanation of the changes and our new timing chart. Please make sure you read and understand it so you can truly be our partner while we all grow. As many of you have learned the hard way, it is crucial that your timing match ours.

DATABASE ERRORS

Please be aware that all of the book databases out there "talk" to each other regularly and if there's a problem on one then it's necessary to find the source. There are two source possibilities—Bowker and Biblio. Bowker (Publisher of *Books-In-Print*) is the only database that we do not currently communicate directly with, because Bowker requires changes be made by the publisher. This may change soon, but for now, you have to make sure both sources are correct.

Please be sure to carefully proofread your title template when Inventory Management asks you to so that you might avoid any unnecessary change fees once it's too late. You can check your Biblio information in the catalog portion of our website. If there's a problem, you can request that our MIS department investigate it. Please use the form in the Publisher section of our site:

www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/passwordprotect/datacorrections.shtml. You may check your Bowker listing through their website at www.bowkerlink.com and request changes directly with them.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

The selling of small press books is done a little differently than selling books from larger publishers. There were close to 200,000 books published in 2001 and we need to make sure your title rises out of that pack and is noticed by the buyers. This needs to be done on relatively small budgets which takes more creativity and a quality product.

For Biblio publishers, the most important thing you can do is keep to the promotion timeline. This is included in your Welcome Package and is the most important document to understand if you want to have a shot at being successful. It creates large problems if you promote to the bookstores before your official pub date. It will actually hinder both our efforts. That means NO booksignings before Biblio's suggested pub month—keep in mind that the pub date you have chosen is not necessarily the pub date we're using when selling the book. Every bookstore buyer has his or her own set of rules for the presentation of titles. The timeline enables us to make sure that your book is in all the appropriate databases before selling can begin. This process starts with the major wholesalers (Ingram and Baker & Taylor) and the large accounts and can take several months.

Our catalog with your book in it is then presented to the buyers. This can take place over a number of months for the independent stores since we have field reps who sell 3 times a year on their own schedule. The major national retail accounts (Borders/Walden, B&N/B. Dalton, Amazon.com) are presented your titles very early in the process on a monthly basis.

A typical sales call to B&N is done at the corporate headquarters in NYC and they make the rules for presentations. I present the monthly title list to the small press buyer who, in turn, passes the information along to the category buyers. B&N insists that we present a marketing plan for every book. If you do not supply us with a marketing plan (which is outlined on your tip sheet), your title cannot be presented to B&N. It will only be listed in the B&N database. Up to 50% of Biblio publishers do not supply us with a tip sheet (which is where we learn about the book's marketing plan) and that is currently a big problem for the sales department. Selling to Borders works the same way as B&N. And Amazon gets its data from our weekly file exchange and then buys their stock from Ingram.

That is the sales process in a nutshell. Of course, as you update us with your publicity hits and ongoing promotional efforts, we do notify the buyers with that information—giving them a reason to take a second look at your book.

Next time: "What it takes to REALLY get noticed." -Larry Fox, Biblio Sales Director

SUGGESTIONS FOR SETTING UP AN OFFICIAL BOOKSIGNING

We're delighted that so many of you are incredibly active in setting up bookstore signings. We'd like to do all we can to make sure that your signings are successful events, so we've talked to our accounts and come up with some tips that you might find helpful.

Once you set up a signing with a local store manager or events coordinator, please know that while it is the store's responsibility to order the books, it is the publisher's responsibility to make sure the store knows how to order and then actually does it on time.

Here's the timeline we suggest for the "safest" event scenario:

- 6 WEEKS** in advance: Arrange the time and date with the manager. Tell them they can order books from Biblio (a division of NBN) at **800-462-6420** OR they can get books from a wholesaler like Ingram or Baker & Taylor. BUT they may have to backorder the books from the wholesaler to get the quantity they need.
- 4 WEEKS** in advance: Call the manager and ask if there has been any trouble getting the books. In all likelihood they probably haven't ordered them yet—but this is a friendly way to remind them that they need to do it.
- 2 WEEKS** in advance: Call again and make sure they have the books. If they have them, great! If they still haven't ordered them, be kind but firm when telling them "now is the time." If they ordered them and tell you there was a problem, find out what the problem is and get specifics. Then please let Larry or me know: the store, the event date, the contact name & phone number and the specifics of the problem. Don't forget to include your name, publisher name, book name and ISBN!

Miscellaneous Tips:



Make sure the event is publicized in some way. You may have to share ad costs with the store or you may have to figure out a way to promote the signing yourself. Be creative!



If the event is a local one, make sure your friends and family attend—a busy event will attract shoppers over who might have been shy otherwise.



A booksigning is not a place to give away free books! Don't let friends and family off the hook. The best way they can support your publishing endeavor is to shell out \$20 or so and keep the demand up in the stores.



If no one shows up for your event, don't be forlorn or angry. I guarantee you that the manager and staff will be feeling very bad for you and the best thing you can do is be cheerful and talk to as many people as possible. Ric Edelman (author of *The Truth About Money*) signed at my store and the staff loved talking to him about their finances. He was a great sport!

Here are the rules outlined for us by Marcella Smith at B&N for doing an official, recognized signing at Barnes & Noble:

1. The process starts 6 weeks before planned event.
2. The event must be set up through the store's CRM (Community Relations Manager) You must present the CRM with a finished book and your complete marketing plan to be considered.
3. The signing is not an automatic gimme—the CRM may turn you down.
4. To be a recognized B&N event, the signing must officially be on the store's calendar.
5. The book must be in stock either at Ingram or in the B&N warehouse. In stock at Biblio does not figure in the equation.
6. The store will order a sign to promote your signing.
7. You need to supply the store with a mailing list for their mailing. The CRM will give you details.

8. They strongly recommend that you have some sort of active promotion (newspaper article, radio show) going on in the area and within a week or two of the event. If you are on the radio or in the newspaper, please remember to mention the store, the date and the time of your signing.

Online Reports: Low Stock Report

This month we are providing a writeup on the low stock report, which is updated daily in the online reports. The low stock report is an exception report. It lists any of your titles where inventory available totals less than the last 4 full months of shipments from the warehouse. These shipments include both invoiceable orders and gratis units sent out on your behalf.

The report is provided for your information only. Each publisher is responsible for deciding when to send a shipment to the warehouse and what quantity should be sent. The 4 month number was selected based on input from several publishers. Many use a higher number of months' inventory, others use fewer. We do ask that we get books into the warehouse before we run out of stock. The report is provided for your information and review.

- Our unique code for your publishing company is shown under **Owner**
- **Title** is the title of the books.
- The format of the book is shown in **FMT**. Common format abbreviations include BTP for paper, BTC for cloth, PPK for prepack, BC for book & CD, CAL for calendar and 000 for miscellaneous (not already defined in our codes).
- The current status of the title is shown in the field titles **Itm Sta**. Common statuses are AV (active in print), NF (not yet published), RP (out of print, in the 6 months returns period), OP (out of print, no returns accepted), DS (indefinitely out of stock) and CX (cancelled, never published).
- **PD** is a flag for imprints that we own. (You may disregard.)
- The number of units that are currently available for sale show in the field **Qty Avail**. Any orders which are in the process of shipping have been deducted from the quantity we have in stock.
- Units shipped and invoiced from the warehouse in the last 4 full months are shown in the field **4 Month Sales**. For example, reports run in December show shipments from August through November; January reports show shipments from September through December.
- Free copies sent from the warehouse for the past 4 full months are listed in the field **4 Month Gratis**.
- The receipt date of your title into our warehouse is shown as **Pub Date**.
- The carton quantity of your title, based on the last time the book was received is shown in the column titled **Ctn Qty**.
- The system generated recommendation for a fulfillment order is shown in the field **Requesting Qty**. This is the projected number of books needed for the next four months based on the last four months of activity. This quantity is a guideline only and should be reviewed carefully before making any decision on the quantity of books to send to the warehouse. The decision on what quantity of books to send, if any, is a publisher decision.
- If the book was received within the past four months, there is a note made in the **Comment** field.

If you have any questions about this report, please e-mail me at kmattscheck@nbnbooks.com

-Coutesy of Karen Mattscheck, Inventory Management

BOOK EXPO AMERICA

Next year, BEA is in L.A. from May 31 to June 1, 2003. Biblio will have an exhibit adjacent to NBN. Information will go out to you early in 2003 about arranging to have your book displayed in the Biblio booth. We expect the fee to be the same as last year (\$100/title), but we will let you know once the arrangements are final. If you'd like to have your own exhibit at the show, you should inquire with show management about availability in the Small Press exhibit area. Please see their website to read more about BEA: www.bookexpoamerica.com

Just a note: PMA University coincides with BEA and is money well-spent for any independent publisher. Please be sure you investigate the opportunity at their website: www.pma-online.org

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: If there is anything you would like to read about in an upcoming issue of *Bibliophile*, please e-mail your idea to me at info@bibliodistribution.com. In future issues, we hope to have additional contributions from our sales, accounting and inventory management departments.
Thank you! --Jen