

# BIBLIOPHILE

*Bibliophile. News for and about publishing for our publishers.*

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Happy Holidays to everyone! As our busiest time of year comes to a close, we're pleased to report that Biblio has seen a huge increase in sales over the last month and we're predicting that the season will end on a high note after a year long, industry-wide slump in book sales. Let's all keep our fingers crossed—and our promotional efforts in full swing—so that we won't have a larger than usual increase in returns come January.

Having managed bookstores through three holiday seasons and knowing the kind of chaos that ensues, I always take a few minutes at this time of year to feel grateful for the booksellers. From Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve, booksellers are working longer hours—spending time after the store closes tidying up sections, restocking shelves, fixing signage, stickering books, cleaning bathrooms and processing special requests—all after a long day of helping customers who are often disgruntled, don't know what they want, aren't happy about the busy shopping mall and the traffic, and are annoyed that the bookstore clerk can't tell them what to buy for Aunt Mildred or doesn't know what book was just mentioned on *Ellen* that afternoon. I'm well aware of the flaws of the retail industry and its underpaid, sometimes unmotivated, staff; however, at this time of year, in particular, I try to be extra patient and cut them some slack—knowing that just by working in retail at the holidays, much of the magic of the season is lost for them. After I left retail to join NBN, that first Christmas was one of the best ever.

As you all know, as of January 1, Davida Breier will be taking over as Manager of Biblio Distribution, so this is the last issue of *Bibliophile* I will be writing. You can expect to see Davida's first issue early

next year. She has a lot of excellent insight and marketing ideas to share, so I know I'm looking forward to reading it and I hope you are too!

## **FREE, GUARANTEED PROMOTIONAL IDEAS! (Just kidding.)**

Many of you have asked us to tell you what marketing you can do that is guaranteed to work but won't necessitate taking out a second mortgage on your home. Unfortunately, no one has the answer to that question, but we can tell you our basic philosophy of marketing and what activities we recommend—based on the assumption that, as a small, independent publisher, you have a limited budget.

The most important group of people to reach when promoting your book is the niche consumer audience for your title. Before publishing a new book, consider its core audience and focus on them. What periodicals (magazines, journals, newspapers, etc.) do they read? What television shows do they watch? What radio stations do they listen to? Whose endorsement would they respect? Are there any popular websites on the topic? How will you let them know about your new book? If you can't pinpoint a core audience or answer the above questions, you might reconsider publishing the book. But assuming you answered these questions, then you have just written your basic marketing plan.

- Review Copy Mailing (Top 100 Periodicals)
- Ad in Bradley's Radio/TV Interview Report
- Radio Tour (Top 25 Markets)
- Website Linking Campaign
- Endorsements from Dr. Know-It-All and Dr. Trusted-In-His-Field
- 3-City Author Tour: Baltimore, Washington, DC, Richmond (There must be three major cities within driving distance from you!)

While we strongly encourage publishers to focus on consumers, there are a few industry-specific promotions you can do to reach an audience of booksellers, producers, rights agents, and other industry professionals. All publishers should consider incorporating these activities into their marketing plan:

BookSense Advance Access: The American Booksellers Association (ABA) began a program five years ago called BookSense. The program was designed to link all of the independent booksellers together so that they could have some of the same clout and advantages as the chains—a shared gift certificate program, a bestseller list of their own, and making it easier on publishers to access all of them at once for marketing purposes. They have one program called Advance Access that consists of a weekly e-mail sent out to the stores with a list of available review copies. If the bookseller sees one they're interested in, they e-mail the publisher and request a copy. This program is free to Biblio publishers. For general info, see the website: <http://www.bookweb.org/booksense/>. To participate, contact [meg@booksense.com](mailto:meg@booksense.com) and tell her you are a Biblio publisher (please cc: Davida).

Publishers Weekly / Library Journal Announcement Issues Listing: Twice a year, for the spring and fall publishing seasons, PW and LJ (the leading industry publications) put out extended "announcement" issues with line listings of new books for the upcoming season. This is free—although not all submissions end up being listed—and all the publisher has to do is submit the requested information on time. For more information, see their websites:

PW: <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA471950.html?text=call+for+information>

LJ: <http://www.libraryjournal.com/index.asp?layout=forReviewersLJ>

Regional Trade Show Exhibit: Every fall, each regional bookseller association holds a trade show for its bookseller members. At these shows, publishing houses exhibit their backlists and promote their forthcoming books. While few orders are written at these shows, it is a chance to network with local booksellers, media and other publishers. This is also a great place to arrange for your author to do a book signing. For more information, see the corresponding website:

NCIBA (Northern California) [www.nciba.com](http://www.nciba.com)

PNBA (Pacific Northwest) [www.pnba.org](http://www.pnba.org)

MPBA (Mountains & Plains)

[www.mountainsplains.org](http://www.mountainsplains.org)

MSIBA (Mid-South) [www.msiba.org](http://www.msiba.org)

SEBA (Southeast) [www.sebaweb.org](http://www.sebaweb.org)

UMBA (Upper Midwest) [www.abookaday.com](http://www.abookaday.com)

GLBA (Great Lakes) [www.books-glba.org](http://www.books-glba.org)

NAIBA (New Atlantic) [www.naiba.com](http://www.naiba.com)

NEBA (New England) [www.newenglandbooks.org](http://www.newenglandbooks.org)

Enhanced Content on Online Retail Sites: Online bookstores like Amazon.com, BN.com, and Booksense.com are playing an ever-increasing role in book sales. They also have become significant reference tools for buyers, sales reps, media, rights agents, and everyone else in the industry. It's important that you make sure your listings on these sites are as complete and up-to-date as possible. While it can often take a long time to get these sites updated, it is worth it once it's done. When you list a new book with us, you're given the opportunity to supply reviews, table of contents, author bio, and descriptive copy—all of which is posted on our site as well as being sent along to the online retailers. Many publishers do not take advantage of this—and could be losing opportunities as a result. To add content to your listing, please use Section 4 of our data update form:  
<http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/passwordprotect/datacorrections.shtml>  
(username: bibliopublisher, password: bigsales)

There are no guarantees that any of these promotions will result in actual book sales, but there is a possibility of other benefits: a producer for *The Today Show* may see your book in *PW* and have you on the show as an "expert"; an editor at Random House might see your book at a trade show and decide to buy the paperback rights; a bookseller might request a copy of your book, nominate it for the Booksense list and it ends up in a nationwide promotion at independent bookstores. Not all promotion has a direct link to book sales and very few of the promotions above have any impact on sell-in. But sell-through is far more important for a small publisher and these promotions can influence demand and sell-through ultimately causing an increase in sales—and paving the way for the next book as well.

Have you had a marketing success that your fellow publishers might benefit from? If so, we'd love to hear about it and share it in our next issue. Let us know!

## **NOTES FROM THE FIELD: SALES CONFERENCE**

Every season, we meet with our different commission sales rep groups—usually in New York and sometimes in conjunction with the NBN meeting in Virginia. We get two hours with them to run through the catalog, answer questions, and get feedback from them on how they're doing with Biblio and on their territory in general. Whenever we get specific feedback on a title, we share it with the publisher directly, but I thought I'd share some of the overall advice and comments that we received.

- **Backlist Catalog:** The backlist catalog that Davida orchestrated was met with rave reviews. They praised its organization, print quality, and inclusion of a featured title section. It was unanimously agreed that they'd be able to use it on visits with their accounts and are confident that sales will result. Thanks again to everyone who participated.
- **Prices:** While many of the new books are priced appropriately, the overall consensus is that many of our publishers are still pricing their books too high. Bookstore buyers have been sensitive on pricing for quite a few years now—feeling that prices are rising too quickly and the competition within the entertainment industry is getting fiercer. Books aren't just competing with each other—they're also competing with movies, video games, music and all other entertainment options.
- **Tip Sheets:** Many of our sales people use the tip sheets to sell from, so this is the single most important sales material that you provide to Biblio. It's crucial to include as much objective information as possible, and there's nothing that we request on the tip sheet that's superfluous. If you're unsure how to write an effective tip sheet, please let us know.
- **Publisher Catalogs:** A few of our publishers print their own catalogs and these can be quite useful to our sales reps as long as the publisher has enough titles to warrant it (more than five is a good rule of thumb). Producing a catalog of your own should depend on the kind of money you have. If it means you'll have to skip something on your promotional plan, then don't do it. And definitely don't do it just for us—we have a catalog. But, if you decide to do one for your own reasons—media, rights sales, acquisitions, etc.—then we'd love to have 50-100 copies.
- **Author's Hometown:** We need to know where the author lives. Telling us this information will not limit your sales in any way—it helps us make sure that the books are in the author's local stores and that the local rep has a heightened sensitivity to it. Telling us that the author lives in Florida, rather than telling us Boca Raton, Florida, doesn't mean that we'll get the books into all stores in Florida—it just means there's a greater possibility that they won't be in the Boca Raton stores. This makes for an unhappy author.

I'm sure the above advice is old news for many of you, but these are things we hear from the reps at every sales meeting, so it surely bears repeating. I know everyone wants to know what they can do to help the sales reps sell books, and just getting the basics down pat makes a world of difference.

## GOOGLE PROGRAMS

There are a couple of new programs out from everyone's favorite search engine, Google. Both of these may prove extremely fortuitous for publishers and I recommend that you check them out—

**Google Alerts:** <http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en>

"Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc) based on your choice of query or topic. Some handy uses of Google Alerts include: monitoring a developing news story keeping current on a competitor or industry, getting the latest on a celebrity or event, and even keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams."

**Google Print:** <http://print.google.com/publisher>

"Promote your books on Google for free! Open your books to the worldwide audience that's searching for them. Whether you're a large publisher or a small press, the Google Print program enables you to add your books to Google's search results: increase your books' visibility at no cost, attract new readers and boost book sales, drive qualified traffic to your website, and earn new revenue from Google contextual ads.

## **ISBN 13 Update**

To update everyone, BISG (Book Industry Study Group) is finally adding information to their website (<http://www.bisg.org/pi/index.html>) about making the transition to ISBN 13. In the write-up, there is a section called "implementation & guidelines" with a publisher section broken out ([http://www.bisg.org/pi/bisac\\_publishers.html](http://www.bisg.org/pi/bisac_publishers.html)). It tells publishers when they can start implementation, when it should be completed and what needs to be changed.

Random House, Time Warner, Scholastic and Harper Collins are all currently changing their systems for this and expect to be in compliance in the spring next year with front list titles. They are also beginning the process of removing UPC codes from the backs of their books and only have the ISBN there. These are the kinds of changes all publishers should begin thinking about. -Karen Mattscheck, Inventory Manager

## **NAMING YOUR LITERARY BABY** by Davida Breier

There are hundreds of books about naming your newborn, but based on a quick search of the Internet, not a single title exists offering publishers the same advice about their literary babies. Sometimes the book will name itself or inspiration will strike during a feverish night of hunting and pecking. Other tomes require intense brainstorming with colleagues, friends, and family.

Before you commit to a name consider a few simple questions:

- Does the title convey the content?
- Is the title easy to search for?
- Does it have that "snap" that makes it memorable?

If the title is vague about the content, a potential customer may not realize that your book is exactly what they are looking for. Compare "Home Maintenance" with "Low-Cost Home Repairs for Retirees," "DIY Deck Building," or "101 Ways to Be Your Own Handyman." Specific words in either the title or sub-title will help your book stand out from the 175,000 new books released annually. Don't rely on your sub-title to explain the title.

Speaking of those thousands of new books and millions of existing titles, think about how consumers and retailers look for them. Unless there is an author name recognition factor, the title is what consumers will be looking for. It is unlikely a consumer will walk into a store with the ISBN, author, and title memorized and may ask the clerk to look it up in one of several databases. If the customer says, "It's about making cookies and I know the word cookies is in the title..." the clerk will probably

use "cookies" as the keyword. I checked and one wholesaler lists 950 books and another lists 551 with the word "cookies" in the title. It's that easy to bury your title.

(Editor's Note: Keep in mind that many databases only hold a certain number of letters in the title field, so yours may be truncated before it gets to the point. A good rule of thumb is to get your main search word into the first 19 characters, so, for example, instead of naming your book "101 Ways To Be Your Own Handyperson," title it "Be Your Own Handyperson: 101 Ways to Do It Yourself." Or "A Menu Reader Guide for Travelers: Italy," call it "Italy: A Menu Reader Guide for Travelers." Also, don't start your title with a word that might be confusing or misspelled. For example, "The 21<sup>st</sup> Century" could end up as "Twenty-First Century" or "21 Century" or "21<sup>st</sup> Century" and it will most likely be entered differently at some accounts, making it hard for a clerk, or a customer on barnesandnoble.com, to find.)

Also consider that many people search on the Internet for information. Just last night I wondered if there were resources for trip planning along the Pacific Coast Highway. I typed "PCH 101 book" into a search engine and the first thing found was a traveler's guide for sale on Amazon. A few well-chosen keywords will help your title immensely.

Lastly, a good title is memorable. Do you remember a few of the books you read as a child? Last year? What made them unforgettable? A good title can be clever, offer vivid imagery, have memorable cadence, or show absurd humor.

Here are a few good examples of book titles that are hard to forget:

- *Pardon Me You're Stepping On My Eyeball* by Paul Zindel
- *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis
- *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner
- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- *The Temple of My Familiar* by Alice Walker
- *Me Talk Pretty One Day* by David Sedaris
- *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* by Lynne Truss
- *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

For further reading: *The Chronicle Review*

"Untitled" by William Germano (<http://chronicle.com/free/v47/i41/41b01001.htm>)

## 2005 ALA MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

Exhibit Dates: January 14 - 17, 2005

Deadline to Participate: December 29, 2004

### Special Offer for Biblio Publishers!

The Combined Book Exhibit (CBE) is pleased to be organizing a cooperative Biblio display at the American Library Association Midwinter Conference in Boston, MA on January 14-17. When you participate in this event, they will waive their annual membership fee of \$95 which allows you to enter any of their shows in 2005, including this one, at reduced rates.

The American Library Association, is the oldest and largest library association in the world. With almost 110,000 public, school, college and university libraries in the U.S., national book shows such as the ALA-Midwinter conference provide exposure to this multi-billion dollar market. The ALA-Midwinter provides publishers a unique opportunity to expose their titles to thousands of librarians nationwide. Attending this meeting will be librarians at the highest levels of their libraries from across the nation with the power to make purchasing decisions.

The American Library Association has not scheduled their conference in Boston in many years, and pre-registration has doubled over last years conference at this point in time. A large number of attendees from the Northeast states is anticipated. Due to CBE's seniority with ALA, they have once again secured a prime location at the entrance to the exhibit hall. This will give your publications maximum exposure to the thousands of librarians expected to attend.

Your titles will be displayed prominently within the CBE exhibit and organized by the Dewey Decimal System. This is the preferred method of reviewing titles by librarians. All books will have a number affixed to the front cover of the book which will correspond to the exhibit catalog they prepare that lists all titles on display for the show. This enables librarians to quickly review a large number of titles and take away with them a record of what they saw.

An e-mail went out yesterday to all of you with additional information about this offer. You may also contact Jom Malinowski at [jon@combinedbook.com](mailto:jon@combinedbook.com) for additional information. [www.combinedbook.com](http://www.combinedbook.com)

## **PW CALLS FOR INFORMATION**

Feature: Parenting and Child Care

Issue: February 28, 2005

Send info to: Daisy Maryles

Deadline: December 22, 2004

NEEDED: This category closeup will look at new trends and will include a listing of forthcoming titles. We're interested in new and unusual marketing/promotional campaigns as well, along with new lines, imprints or series. We'd also like to hear about sales successes in nontraditional venues. What part is the Internet playing in this category? Please send your thoughts on the preceding topics, along with title information for books published between January 1 and September 30, 2005. Also suggest ideas for related sidebars. Mark packages "Parenting" and send to:

Daisy Maryles  
Publishers Weekly  
360 Park Avenue South  
New York, N.Y. 10010

Please do not respond via e-mail.

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>

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## INFORMATION THAT BEARS REPEATING

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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 & networking opportunities:

**SUBSCRIBE TO *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*:** [www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com)

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

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE *SPAN NEWSLETTER*:** email [Lurina@SPANnet.org](mailto: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 Davida at [dbreier@bibliodistribution.com](mailto:dbreier@bibliodistribution.com). Thank you!

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