

BIBLIOPHILE

News for and about publishing for our publishers.

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It's great to finally be back from six weeks of non-stop travel and have an opportunity to catch up on how all of you are doing. I did get to meet a lot of great publishers on my journeys but it was difficult to be away from the office (and my e-mail!) for so long.

Sales have been strong here thanks to your active promotion and excellent books. September and October are always the biggest sales months in this industry and Biblio has been no exception—now let's just keep our fingers crossed (and our marketing efforts moving along so) that it all stays out there and we avoid returns in January.

Speaking of 4th quarter activity, I'm sure many of you remember how slow our accounts were last fall in getting orders in and getting database corrections made. This was primarily caused by the activity of the holiday shopping season. During this time of year our accounts are focused primarily on customers and store maintenance and less on ordering or responding to events and special requests. As a former bookstore manager, I know that nothing but customer service happens from October 31 to December 26. So, please be patient with so that we might be patient with and supportive of our bookstore personnel who are on the "front lines."

REGIONAL SHOWS REPORT

This year I had the opportunity to attend several regional bookseller shows for the first time and learned a lot about the vast differences between shows. Some regional bookseller associations are far more active than others are—I was surprised by the disparity. At Biblio, we base the "success" of a regional show on several different factors: bookseller attendance, orders placed on site, the chance to visit with our clients, peripheral business accomplished (i.e. publicity, marketing programs, etc.), and new business opportunities.

SEBA (Southeast), held in Ft. Lauderdale, was well attended by booksellers, but they were not much of a presence on the trade show floor. Many of the educational programs overlapped with exhibit hours, which made for some frustrated publishers. This is definitely not an order writing show although it's great for networking. Thanks to Steve Hopkins, our Biblio rep, and Jim Barkley, our NBN rep and a SEBA legend known by everyone, I was able to meet many lovely booksellers (after-hours) and had the opportunity to visit the gorgeous Books & Books in Coral Gables.

NEBA (New England), held in Providence, was a shining star among regional trade shows. Never before have I seen so many orders written at a show! The combination of such a small territory along with the strength of the Independents in New England meant there were plenty of booksellers in attendance. Our reps, Consolino & Watson, were constantly busy with buyers.

NAIBA (New Atlantic), held in Philadelphia was not well attended by booksellers. I understand the educational seminars held all day on Sunday were worthwhile and the organizers wisely limited exhibit hours to one day allowing attendees the rare luxury of not having to choose between the exhibits and the seminars. We did have two Biblio authors who arranged signings through the show which gave them the opportunity to meet some booksellers and personally spread the word on their books. It was great to see such enthusiasm!

If you haven't already, you should definitely consider getting involved in your regional bookseller association and having your own table at their annual Fall show for acquisition, networking, publicity, and rights opportunities. It's an excellent way to get to know the booksellers in your own backyard as well as seeing what your competitors are publishing.

CRANKING UP YOUR MEDIA MACHINE

Savvy publishers of all sizes understand the importance of media exposure as a tool for maximizing sell-through. It is critical to have a media relations system in place to garner the attention your book deserves. Remember to extend your sights beyond the book review, focus on the newsworthiness of your book to attract feature attention. Ideally, this system is in place long before publication of your book. But, it's never too late to start.

Choosing the right media outlets depends on knowing which media target the same audience you wish to reach. While you want to be comprehensive and build the broadest list possible, you should also be discriminating and select only those media who will be interested in the book. It is important to also know the market. Reviewing media directories which are available at your local library will help you identify and list all publications in which exposure would help your marketing efforts.

Basic media to include on any list:

- Major dailies for the top 50 markets (Use the Census to derive a population-based list of cities)
- News syndicators (i.e. Associated Press, Knight Ridder, Copley News Service)
- Top news magazines (i.e. Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report)
- Top national morning magazine programs (i.e. Good Morning America, Today Show, Early Show)
- Top national radio shows (i.e. Daybreak USA, Morning Edition, All Things Considered)

Also, become familiar with the publications. Spend some time perusing the magazines and newspapers on your list. Watch the television shows and listen to the radio programs. Develop a sensitivity to the content, format, editorial slant and tone of each one. You may very well find yourself tailoring several press releases and/or cover letters to different outlets.

To develop the individual contact list, check the newspaper and magazine mastheads for addresses, phone numbers and other pertinent information. Media directories will also provide this data for broadcast outlet. When building the media contact list, remember the high degree of turnover in these positions. Unless you have access to a live database such as Bacons or Burelle's, call each contact personally to confirm the accuracy of all information. Calling them also gives you the opportunity to introduce yourself and promise forthcoming press releases and story ideas.

Update your contact list regularly, including fax and email information and determine the preferred method for each to receive materials. And always respect deadlines. The 6 PM news is not the 6:10 PM news hour. One special tip to bear in mind: reporters at major dailies are more accessible during the earlier part of the day before a story is put to bed.

The process for building a viable media list is long and often tedious. But the benefits you will reap once your media machine is in gear will be counted in dollars and cents.

(Courtesy of Carole Juárez G.; The Lynxx Group, Ltd, www.thelynxxgroup.com)

ONLINE REPORTS: SALES/RETURNS BY ACCOUNT/TITLE

This information is summary information only for each title. There are other reports which have detailed information on activity for your titles.

The report where you can look at this detailed information during the month is the Sales/Returns by Account/Title report. This report is updated on a daily basis during the month in the area noted as Daily. Year-to-date information for the entire calendar year EXCLUDING the month we are currently in is shown at the bottom of the online reports.

The report shows transactions to all retail and wholesale accounts. It does not include transactions to individuals and non-customer accounts. It also does not take into consideration any billing corrections. This means it will not tie into the Gross/Returns/Net report. You will need to wait until the end of the month to see all transactions tying into the Gross/Returns/Net report. The report is intended to serve as a guide to account activity only and cannot be used for accounting purposes.

The Sales/Returns by Account/Title report is an invaluable tool—answering your questions on what accounts have purchased your title or returned it. It summarizes information for each account.

The report begins by listing the Bill-To account number (BT NBR) and the account name (COMPANY).

The report also shows the customer type (CTM TYPE). This code indicates what type of customer this is. The customer type determines the % discount the customer gets, in tandem with the item category which is shown for each title on the Gross/Returns/Net report. The N designates the account as an NBN/FaithWorks/Biblio customer. The middle part of the code shows what type of account it is. RT is a retail account while WHL is a wholesale account. The last letter typically shows whether the account can return product or not. An R is a returnable account while NR is non-returnable.

All titles with activity during the report period are shown on a single line in summary fashion. You will see how many units were shipped or returned, but you will not see how many times that happened during the month.

The title of the book is shown in the field named TITLE.

Format of the book is shown in the field named FMT. Common format abbreviations include BTP for paper, BTC for cloth, PPK for prepack, BC for a book and CD, CAL for calendar and 000 for miscellaneous (not already defined in our codes).

Date of publication is shown under PUB DT. This date indicates when the title was first received in the Biblio warehouse.

The current status of the item is shown in the field named ST. Common statuses of titles are AV (active in print), NF (not yet published), RP (out of print, in returns period), OP (out of print, no returns accepted), DS (indefinitely out of stock) and CX (cancelled, never published).

PRICE shows the retail list price of the book.

GROSS SALES indicate the total shipments of that title to that account in the report period. We show both units and dollars.

RETURNS indicate the total returns for the title from that account in the report period, shown in both units and dollars.

Again, this is provided so you can see who has been shipped your title during the month. It is geared to show activity for retailers and wholesalers only. Other month-end reports should be used for accounting purposes.

(Courtesy of Karen Mattscheck at kmattscheck@nbnbooks.com)

DONATE BOOKS TO A GOOD CAUSE

Did you know that by donating rather than destroying your surplus books you can make a humanitarian difference and for profit publishers can benefit financially as well?

The International Book Bank is a Baltimore, Maryland-based 501 (c) (3) organization that will accept your book donations. IBB receives donations of books at its 32,000 square foot warehouse. The books are entered in a database such that recipients can select the books that are most suitable to their needs. Last fiscal year, IBB sent over 1,000,000 books of which over 85% went to Africa.

The IRS permits publishers to deduct up to twice the manufacturing costs of donated books. For further clarification on this "special rule" see the Federal tax code's section 170 (e) (3) (A).

If you are interested in learning more about IBB or would like to make a donation please contact me by phone at (410) 362-0334 or by email at b.vogt@internationalbookbank.org. There is also information available on the IBB website.

IBB is in need of books in all categories, including: textbooks (at all levels), reference books, fiction, non fiction, poetry and religious books. There are so many children in need, will you help them?

BOOK CLUB BONANZA

Book club sales, though they won't make you rich, can add great value to your overall PR campaign. The more places people see your title, the better, even though they may actually buy the book in a bookstore or via another venue. Many of the major clubs are under the umbrella of BookSpan. It includes everything from Book-of-the-Month Club, the Literary Guild, and Quality Paperback Club (QPB) to such specialized ones as Black Expressions, The Good Cook, and Outdoorsmen's Edge. To get

a copy of their submission guidelines and various clubs, simply call 212-522-4200 and request that they fax you contact information and requirements. (Courtesy of SPAN)

ARE YOU POSTING YOUR URL IN IMAGINATIVE PLACES?

You've heard me preach before to always include your Web address on letterhead, envelopes, mailing labels, business cards, your book cover, etc. But let's take that a step further: What about stamping it on a label that's affixed to your luggage to influence bored travelers? Could you do a bumper sticker or a removable magnetic sign to put on your vehicle? Have you included it in your voicemail message? Think "outside the box." One wine manufacturer stamps its URL on all their wine corks. Where can you get extra exposure? (Courtesy of SPAN)

LOOKING FOR "ZINGER" WORDS TO FRESHEN YOUR COPYWRITING?

A list of more than 1,000 words and phrases await you at <http://time4success.com/1000.html>. There are great idea starters here for crafting a compelling news release headline, writing email subject lines, ad teasers, etc. And you might even find a pithy notion for that title or subtitle that's been eluding you. (Courtesy of SPAN)

INTERNET RADIO STATION WANTS YOU!

BookCrazy Radio Network sponsors 14 book-related shows on the Net. Our friend and SPAN member, Carolyn Howard-Johnson, does verbal reviews on "All Things Literary" every day. You can hear the show live, or otherwise, with a Window Media Player program. The station offers a free download on their site, which is at <http://www.BookCrazy.net>. Send your new books and promotional material to Carolyn at 3324 Emerald Isle, Glendale, CA 91206. (Courtesy of SPAN)

CREATE YOUR OWN PERSONALIZED NEWS CLIPPING SERVICE

Looking for an easy, no-cost way to track down information for research on your book -- or to hook it to a timely PR angle? Look no further. Just go to <http://news.goggle.com/>. Here you'll find more than 4,000 continuously updated news sources you can browse. Just input the term you want to research and prepare yourself to be inundated! A further hint: You can sort by relevance (which brings up the most likely pieces first and is ideal for editorial researching), or by date (so you can piggyback on breaking news). Just click on the link and you're immediately transported to the article or news release. Have fun! (Courtesy of SPAN)

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