

## Sidelines Can Add to Your Bottom Line

by Luanne Kreutzer of St. Helens Book Shop in St. Helens, OR

If you're looking to boost your bottom line, sidelines (non-book items) are just the ticket. Not only will you earn more profit on sidelines because their mark up is 100% or better, they add a dimension of interest to your store that your customers will appreciate. In this article, I'll highlight some items that do well for us and/or in other PNW bookstores. I've listed various contacts for most of the sidelines, too.

A few of the basic sidelines often found in bookstores are greeting cards, journals, and reading lights. A couple of winning vendors: Walleye Cards – watercolor field note cards/journal, [www.wildtales.com](http://www.wildtales.com); Oberon leather journals and checkbook covers —[www.oberondesign.com](http://www.oberondesign.com). Rayovac has a new & very functional reading light on the market - <http://www.rayovac.com/products/reading>. (Haven't tried it yet, but we're all excited about it!)

Have you ever thought of selling decorative lamps? We did and will again this fall. Vintage Veranda (Rep: Bunches in Seattle 1.800.669.0549) offers many beautiful lamps (and bookends) of fine quality at reasonable prices. Best to sell during fall/winter months – when natural light wanes.

Jewelry under \$20 has proven to be a great seller for us: sterling/precious stone dangle earrings handcrafted by independent artists; rhinestone stretchy bracelets (at any gift show in the “vault” area, or Pearl & Beads ([www.brunabeads.com](http://www.brunabeads.com))); and Brighton-inspired silver bracelets with black leather from Gemma Bella ([www.braceletspecialist.com](http://www.braceletspecialist.com)).

Funky gifts are always fun: Kikkerland (.com) for music boxes, moleskine journals, and sleek office goods; Universal Specialties for kids' impulse items (1.800.728.5299) – low minimums. Accoutrements (.com) have boxing nuns and wackier items that are great.

Office and fine art supplies: PPI Wholesale Office Supplies— 1.800.232.2080; C2F, Inc. ([www.c2f.com](http://www.c2f.com)). You'll find pens, calligraphy sets, journals, sketch books, origami paper etc. with these guys. Low minimums, too.

Where do you find different and unique sidelines? Visit the regional gift shows in Portland and Seattle ([www.weshows.com](http://www.weshows.com)), and the vendors at the Seattle Gift Center ([www.seattlegiftcenter.com](http://www.seattlegiftcenter.com)). Browse fellow booksellers' stores and ask them what's selling well. Many of the items I've mentioned here were discovered in this way. (Thanks, guys – you know who you are!) Visit art fairs and make connections with the artists.

Once you start adding gifts to your store, your customers will come back often to see what's new. Adventure into new sidelines and take a risk. It's worth the extra effort.

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