

The following list was compiled with the help of Jamil Zaidi, who led the discussion on Wednesday morning, March 28, at the Annex for O'Connor's in Portland, from 9:00 - 10:15 am, immediately preceding the ABA education and Forum held there. These are the promotions, events and changes that various PNBA members stores have tried during the last twelve months that actually enhanced traffic and sales in their stores. I apologize that, in a few cases, we were not able to identify the author of the statement, but we wanted to include as many of the ideas as we could.

One Great Idea That Worked in My Store PNBA Forum 3/28/12

Jamil from Elliott Bay Book Company in Seattle said that they moved their nature section from the front of the store and now display new non-fiction up front. It is now much more heavily browsed and sales from the display are up while sales from the nature section have not suffered from the change.

Will Peters from Annie Bloom's in Portland reported that they moved their rotating monthly display table to the very front area of the store and promoted the change via social networking. Browsing and sales have increased as a result.

Mary Ann from Sage Bookstore in Shelton, WA, said that they moved their book club selections up in the front of the store, and sales have zoomed.

Maggie from (the original) Parnassus Books in Ketchikan, AK reported that since she moved their entire store, from an upstairs location to a street level location a block away, their sales have doubled.

Tegan from Queen Anne Avenue Books in Seattle reported that they have started producing a regular Book Talk session, in which employees discuss their recent favorites, and sales of the featured books have increased noticeably.

Sally from Broadway Books in Portland says that they started charging \$5 to attend their Book Talks, and then give those people (with paid tickets) a \$5 credit on their purchases at the event, and sales on those nights are HUGE.

Someone (not sure who) has started doing events with groups of authors stationed around the store and then customers would go around and visit with the authors and have cards stamped (much like Buzz Books at the PNBA Show). Authors and customers both love it.

Someone (not sure who) said that they started doing author luncheons for the public, with customers paying \$20 per person to have lunch with an author and get a paperback copy of the book. Both the authors and their customers love it.

Jenny from Waucoma Books in Hood River, OR mentioned that they now produce virtually ALL of their events now in conjunction with some other local businesses, which has helped more than double the publicity for their events.

Jennifer from Green Bean Books in Portland said that she increased the number of events that they have, which has caused people to ask What is the next event?

Terri Graham from Graham's Book & Stationery is a major participant in the annual Lake Oswego Reads program, including displaying local artists' works (and selling a lot of them), and attracting about 600 people over the weekend, including selling food! They provide and sell small food items, that can be held as one walks around. The idea being that people want to buy "something" from you when they come to an event, but aren't always willing to shell out the cost of a book. Those little munchies can provide a nice extra little bit of income.

Christie from Secret Garden in Seattle says that they now offer authors a place for their new book launches, inviting author's family and friends and other authors, including local self-published authors.

Sylla from Third Street Books in McMinnville, OR has started opening the store on Sundays from 10 – 4, and have found that they do a brisk business, because so little else is open downtown.

Roberta from Broadway Books in Portland discussed how last year, in response to customers' asking how the store is doing, issued a "State of the Industry" statement, which listed ten things that the store would do during the upcoming year to improve their services to their customers, and ALSO listing ten things that their customers could do to help ensure the store's success. The statement was included in their monthly (print) newsletter, was posted on their website, and was sent via email to that customer list. Their customers overwhelmingly appreciated their honesty and including the customers in their plans for the future, and they felt that it was such a successful effort that they have recently released and distributed a 2.0 version of the statement one year later.

Someone (not sure who) produced postcards with photos of their store cat and display them at the register and they sell a ton!

Someone else (again, not sure who) creates an open dialogue with their customers via social networking. Customers like to feel like they are in on what is going on at the store. Can also give away ARCS via social network contests.

Jenny from Waucoma Books say that their punch cards can only be punched if the customer pays with cash or check.

Someone else (not sure who) suggested being cooperative with other local indie bookstores, not competitive. If you don't have book in stock and customer needs it right away, call other local stores. The other store will appreciate the referral and customers will remember your going out of your way to help them.

Jenny from Waucoma Book also suggested doing a giveaway with a minimum purchase. At Waucoma Books they give away bags with their store logo. The customers love them and you see them all over town. Free advertising!

Sylla from Third Street Books said that "Reaction Events" can generate a lot of buzz in your community. Their "Ditch Amazon Day" didn't get a whole lot of people to actually ditch Amazon, but it did get a lot of people talking.

Someone (again, not sure who) produces a game night during which games that you sell in the store are played. This brings people into the store and, when they have fun, they buy the games.

Susan Richmond from Inklings Bookshop sends one postcard a week saying "Thanks!" to a customer who was in that week. This creates a marvelous personal touch that re-emphasizes the difference between a small independent store and a large behemoth that cares only about the bottom line.