



CREATING KILLER EVENTS

SPRING 2006

Why Host Events?

“Today’s retailer is acutely aware of the need to seek competitive differentiation. What’s new is the urgency of the imperative...”
– Retail Horizons Study, National Retail Federation

- Books are sold in an increasing number of traditional and non-traditional retail outlets.
- More than half of all books sold are sold in an outlet other than a bookstore.
- Traditional bookstores need to add value to the shopping/book purchasing experience to maintain market share.
- Hosting events has been a successful model for attracting customers, and for differentiating stores of all sizes from their competition.

General rules for creating a successful events program:

Assign one staff person to have overall responsibility for events

- Whether it’s you or someone else, it’s best for dealing with publicists, media, and authors to have one consistent point of contact. Also, too many cooks...

Create a media list

- No media outlet is too small. Contact local magazines (daily, weekly, campus), radio stations (public, private, college), television stations (broadcast, cable), websites, blogs, and any other organization that disseminates information.

Create a press kit

- A good press kit includes photos of your store, a fact sheet about the store, a bio of the owner, press clips about the store, and anything else you think will legitimately interest the media.

Get experience with authorless events

- Your first few requests for authors may be rejected because you don’t have experience with events. Counter this by creating and hosting authorless events – children’s story time, local political debates, guest lecturers from a local university, etc. – and use that experience to promote your store to the publishers.

Talk to your sales rep

- Your rep is your lifeline to the publisher. Let him or her know you're interested in hosting events in general, and be in touch about specific authors.

Get to know publicists.

- While your rep is your first point of contact, nothing will happen without the publicist's buy-in. Take time to slowly and carefully forge relationships with publicists.

Approach publishers at the earliest possible date

- You're competing not only with bookstores, but with many other venues for an author's time and a publisher's attention. If you have the catalog and have seen your sales rep, you might already be too late.

Create a generic author signing proposal

- A good proposal includes: contact information; sample newsletters, e-newsletters, postcards, Website copy, or anything else that shows how you promote events; reasons you're the right store to host the specific author being targeted; map of the region, showing your proximity to major highways, population centers, local attractions, etc.

Create a generic post-card e-post card for announcing event

- Create one template that can be used multiple times. This saves you time and money, and helps brand your events with a specific look and feel.

Arrange hotel deals in the area for authors, speakers, reps, etc.

- This will save you money and time, and will show publishers and others you're serious about events

Every event is different

- While there are general rules, each event will present its own unique challenges. Learn to be flexible, and know that there is a solution to every problem.