



Inventory & Ordering: Best Practices and Takeaways

When it comes to getting titles on shelves, both independent presses and independent booksellers face major challenges. Over the course of three conversations, booksellers and publishers came together to identify those challenges and seek solutions. Meeting with sales reps, officials from Edelweiss, and the directors of regional associations, these conversations focused on three pain points that currently prevent efficient and effective inventory & ordering processes:

- Building Relationships
- Creating Awareness
- Establishing Procedures

Best Practices for Building Relationships

Relationships (both in terms of knowing individuals and knowing brand identities) are key to cutting through the noise of the modern book industry. Knowing more about the people and companies you interact with allows you to focus on and prioritize their offerings and needs. Both publishers and booksellers can improve their relationships by taking the following steps.

Booksellers can:

- Host rep nights with other bookstores or for customers
- Create individual accounts for booksellers in your Edelweiss account
- Nominate titles for indie next and submit reviews so publishers know who you are and what your interests are
- Indie-specific programs (subscriptions, book clubs) increase your store's visibility to publishers

Publishers can:

- Develop more versatility in newsletter sign ups, using tags and segments that allow booksellers to select which types of promotions they receive.
- Include brand identity information in edelweiss pages, and make sure reps are conveying that branding during calls
- If possible, use Edelweiss' Publisher360 to analyze which booksellers are responding to their catalogs
- Attend and participate in in-person trade shows to the extent possible (regionals will work with you on pricing)

Best Practices for Creating Awareness

Independent publishers have to compete with major international corporations for booksellers' attention, not to mention the day-to-day responsibilities of working in or running a bookstore. Even booksellers that prioritize indie presses are not able to stay on top of the newest releases from all of the indies putting out books. Here are some ways to create awareness:

Publishers can:

- Simplify co-op requirements and clearly state guidelines and deadlines
- Work with their regional associations directly to find promotional opportunities that fit their budget
- Submit your specials to NAIBA's "Publisher Offers" spreadsheet (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RsqvM9tKfu8Yqc5euj60jLLC2hVHE6lcURUfje50BFE/edit#gid=0>)
- Access regionals' "Bookseller Reading Preferences" databases, if available, for targeted promotions and galley mailings

Booksellers can:

- Use "Saved Filters" function in Edelweiss searches to quickly and easily see catalogs from presses they prioritize
- Use Edelweiss Communities to learn about titles in specific genres
- Participate in your regional's "Bookseller Reading Preferences" database, if available

Best Practices for Establishing Procedures

The efficiency and efficacy of inventory and ordering procedures depend on the tools available and the information included within those tools. Here are some ways booksellers and presses can improve ordering procedures:

Booksellers can:

- Separate indie press ARCs from big five presses and keep them longer
- Buy indie press titles before big 5 each season
- Attend indie pub events online and make staff aware of them
- Sign up for the Independent Publisher Caucus's bookseller newsletter: <https://www.indiepubs.org/booksellers>
- Send Edelweiss suggestions for ways to improve the process: support@abovethetreeline.com

Publishers can:

- Be as thorough as possible with BISAC codes so bookseller filters will catch titles of interest
- Have all graphics uploaded to Edelweiss on time
- Clearly communicate date ranges and other important details of promotions in advance of the promo start date