



## Sectioning & Displays: Best Practices and Takeaways

The third theme in the Indie-to-Indie Conversation series looked at the various strategies for sectioning and displays, as well as what influences, hinders, or incentivizes this crucial aspect of book discovery.

Over the course of three conversations, booksellers and publishers discussed the following opportunities to focus efforts to maximize the impact of their marketing, further diversify inventory between stores, and build more consumer awareness about the value of independent businesses:

- How and whether co-op informs ordering, displays, and events
- Sectioning best practices and the value of consistent branding
- Online promotions and reciprocity

### Takeaways

#### What is Co-op?

- The term “co-op” can apply to compensation in exchange for bookstore promotion, discounts for order quantities, or credits based on sales.
- Bookstores consider it a credit toward marketing expenses, a credit toward COGS, or revenue for services rendered.
- Bookstore marketing generates sales outside of their channel, and co-op is a way to compensate booksellers for sales they’ve generated for which they didn’t earn the sale.

#### Co-op is an imperfect system

- requires so much work to pursue it mostly cancels out the benefit, unless a store is of a size that can afford the personnel to focus on it
- Publishers are getting more demanding for co-op qualifications, driven by consolidation
- Distributors often generate and/or dictate co-op offerings indie presses can offer
- Sales reps should know and communicate available co-op opportunities
- Services like Candlelight Co-op will perform co-op collection for a fee

#### Press-focused displays

- are a way to create an aesthetic identity for a bookstore
- Educate customers about presses’ identities and tastes

- Help generate repeat customers

Consistent branding highlights the appeal of books as physical objects.

- Trim size (eg Dorothy, Two Dollar Radio)
- Design (eg Charco)
- Cover formatting (eg NYRB)
- Prominent colophon placement (eg Europa)

Social Media promotions

- Primarily a way to increase brand awareness (not sales driver (yet)).
- For publishers, booksellers reviewing on Edelweiss is akin to intertrade social media.

### Best Practices

- Booksellers and Publishers should use the publisher promotions spreadsheet created and distributed by NAIBA  
(<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RsqvM9tKfu8Yqc5euj60jLLC2hVHE6lcURUfje50BFE/edit#gid=0>)
- Any automatic co-op will be more impactful
  - Sales-based credits like HarperCollins' program
  - Discounts on order quantities
- If conducting an event or a focused display, reach out to publishers and ask for compensation.
- Including the colophon or logo in focused displays helps customers make the connection between books and the press's identity
- Including QR codes to presses' websites allows curious customers to learn more about presses that interest them
- Booksellers can tag titles included in a specific display to more easily pull sales data
- Displays in the front of the store tend to generate more sales than those in other parts of the store
- Directly email smaller presses that don't have traditional distribution to get inventory
- Indie-to-Indie's Playlist is an easy way to source indie presses for themed displays
  - Broadens awareness about indie presses
  - Contest twice a year offers \$500 prize
  - Info sheet:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V0clrivpXXI9Xph2qHy-mWS8Uim6Y4pz/view>
  - Contest signup:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfAd6HP\\_Z8I5TQQ7OnRMMyUBSsJcytoWvJx1q\\_ObegwN45Ax1w/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfAd6HP_Z8I5TQQ7OnRMMyUBSsJcytoWvJx1q_ObegwN45Ax1w/viewform)
- Promotions on social media should go out multiple times, or have multiple posts per campaign to avoid getting lost.
- Include graphics in Edelweiss listings that booksellers can lift and use in promotions.

## Ideas & Action Items

- Build sections out of indie presses and non-traditional distribution channels to increase unique inventory. One-stop shops - Asterism, Antiquated Future, IPG, SPD, and even IPC - ways to make featuring indie presses easier.
- Put together a working with indie presses handout, best practices, links, ideas, resources.
- Partnering on preorder campaigns can be impactful and there may be room to grow.
  - works better with an excuse: signed copies, swag, etc.
  - Publishers doing the lifting of creating assets increases the uptake
  - Indie-to-Indie could be a place for pre-order campaigns to live
- Bookstores that feature indie presses in a focused display could be reciprocated by a publisher highlighting that bookstore on their newsletter or website and driving sales through that bookstore's website. There are also publishers that help build the press-focused display and/or offer an extra 5% for those orders.
- Publishers can use Edelweiss to link to social media campaign assets in book descriptions.
- Could someone create and maintain a co-op clearinghouse, similar to how Batch works for invoice processing or Edelweiss for catalog viewing?
- Author/Press takeovers, where authors who are friendly with the bookstore determine which books are featured in a display (prioritizing indie press books of course)