

**Looking for ways to get your book into our bookstores? Here are some tips from NEIBA and New England independent booksellers**

**Your Book**

First, congratulations on having your book published! We applaud your creativity and commitment.

Second, we need to bring up one cold, hard truth. Whatever the subject of your book, however long you've labored over it, and as wonderful as you've been told it is by friends and family, there is no guarantee that a bookstore will choose to or be able to sell it. Booksellers are inundated with catalogs and solicitations on a weekly basis. Buying decisions are based on their experience and knowledge of their customer base, but other factors can also exert influence — price of the book, space in the store, even money in the bank.

So you can't expect a bookstore to stock your book just because you live down the street or because your writing group loved it. That said, here are ways to maximize your chances of getting your book onto independent bookstore shelves.

**Approaching Bookstores**

**1. Know The Marketplace**

NEIBA has over 200 independent bookstore members throughout New England and parts of New York, all with distinct personalities and communities of readers. Many are general bookstores, but we also have specialty stores that sell subject-specific titles (Travel, Children's, Poetry, etc.) and even general bookstores don't stock every subject category.

With that in mind, do some research before you approach bookstores. Visit stores in your area and note their clientele. Do they look like potential readers of your book? Bookstores arrange titles largely by category or subject matter. Where would your book be shelved? Is that a strong section in the store?

**2. Who And How To Contact**

Every store has at least one book buyer; larger stores may have several. Some bookstores require you to make an appointment; others may see you on a drop-in basis.

Your first step should be to identify the store buyer. A phone call is usually all it takes. Ask for the book buyer and be prepared to briefly describe your book and in which section(s) it might fit. If the buyer's not there, find out when she or he will be in the store so you don't waste a trip.

Alternatively, look up a store online — virtually all have websites — and send an email to the attention of the 'buyer'. You can tell them briefly about your book, but the main thrust should be to find out if you can make an appointment or if they'd rather initially handle things via email.

If and when you get down to brass tacks, they'll want to know if you're doing any promotion (not the store's job) and how your book is being distributed. Is the book stocked at regional wholesalers like Bookazine, or nationally by Ingram and Baker & Taylor?

**3. Terms**

Many bookstores will ask about consignment, and we urge you to consider this option. You have a greater chance of having your book stocked if you agree to leave copies on consignment. Some bookstores have their consignment policy stated on their website so that's a good place to begin... Also, if your book is a print on demand only title, ask the store book buyer what their policy is as it may differ from published books.

You may have heard that a 60-40 split on the sale of the book is common (you get 60%), but many stores ask for a 50-50 deal. Also, you will likely be asked to check back with the store about sales, usually in 3-6 months (not every week!). If the book sells, great. If not, be prepared to take it home.