



**450 Bookstores.
A dozen exclusive books & art pieces.
One day only.**

Join the Party!

How to Make Bookstore Day a Smashing Success

The key to a great IBD is throwing a great party.

Independent Bookstore Day is not just about the limited-edition books and items we will be selling that day. It's about the culture of books, reading and indie bookselling. It is a *celebration* of everything we do right!

While the special items are a major draw (and certainly deserve a creative display and lots of attention), we don't want customers to simply pop in, grab what they came for, and leave.

This is a chance to surprise and delight loyal and new customers alike. It is a chance to show off our value beyond the merchandise we sell, and welcome customers into a chummy, close relationship with our stores.

Make sure you have things, no matter how small, planned throughout the day so that every customer, no matter when they arrive, feels like a part of the celebration.

Event Ideas

This collection of event ideas comes from real stores and booksellers. All ideas will not work for every store, but we hope they will get you thinking about creative and new ways to provide a fun, welcoming, insider experience for each person who enters your store on April 30.

Strut Your Stuff:

Bring customers in beyond the IBD display. We hope you will create a big and beautiful display of the IBD items and books, but we hope that April 30 is a record day for you storewide. Last year, while IBD items sold very well, most stores saw their major sales increases in regular inventory.

- Plant simple prizes, coupons or treasures throughout the store and sections. This doesn't have to be monetary. It could be a handwritten note from an author recommending their favorite books. It could be some simple positive reinforcement—notes that say things like, “You are smart and beautiful. We’ve noticed.”
- Re-curate sections so that regular customers don't just see the same old fiction, non-fiction, cooking, and kids sections. Instead they might see sections called “A cure for melancholia” or “Loveable criminals” or “Books that will make you sexy” over a clever display of books from across all sections and genres
- Offer quirky discount (e.g., 20% off all books with the word "book" in the title) or hourly alphabet sales (e.g., from 1pm - 2pm authors with last names starting with M or N are 10% off)
- Offer a morning, pre-opening "behind the scenes" store tour with coffee (make sure your peppiest bookseller gives the tour and be prepared with some good insider stories)
- Think about the programs and products you already offer and show them off with a drawing, or use them as prizes for other activities--store-themed shirts, mugs, book-of-the-month clubs, etc.

Author (& local celebrities) Events:

Author events should NOT be limited to the authors involved in IBD—anyone can participate!

- Quirky author events work best. Invite authors to read and sign, but invite them to participate in a quiz, sell books, or sing karaoke too.
- Ask a favorite author to make a list of the ten books that have changed their life and then create a display.
- Set up a “Psychology 5¢” booth with a funny author or local celeb.
- Ask a cookbook author to do passed hors d’oeuvres, or a famous libertine to mix cocktails.
- Get a children’s author to do a mini seminar on how to create a children’s book. Or draw a character. Can’t get an author? Do you have a talented staff member?
- Create a quiz show where authors have to answer questions about something far outside their expertise (see: NPR’s *Wait, Wait, Don’t Tell Me*).
- Create a "get your portrait drawn" station but have it run by an awesome illustrator. Think about the *How to Draw* contributors -- buy the book, get a one-minute portrait?
- Ask a writer to sit in the window for a few hours and write.
- Ask a local artist to do screen printing workshop/ demo

Feed the people:

- Have a food truck in front of the store during lunch or dinner
- Offer the first 25 or 100 customers a mimosa (or a bagel, or a muffin) in the morning or hold a different event for every hour you’re open. This can be as simple as “free donut hour” from 10-11. Mimosas from 11-12, and so on.
- Partner with a local beer, spirit, or wine maker to host a tasting.
- Invite literary and/or educational non-profits to hold a bake sale in front of the store that day.

- Create themed free food/drink hours--an F. Scott Fitzgerald cocktail hour, or a Jane Austen English tea.

Storm Social Media:

Our hashtag is #bookstoreday. Please use it throughout the day!

- Create a city- or state-wide hashtag like #seattlebookstoreday
- **Tweet and Facebook secret social media codes to be whispered to booksellers for prizes**
- Create little hashtag signs people can hold up for selfies and post to social media #bookstoreday #yourstorename
- Give a prize or coupon to anyone who shows you an IBD-themed social media post.
- Set up events that are **easy to Instagram or share on social media**. Attention-getting displays, funny signs, or other in-store attractions are great. Creating contests that specifically require entry on a social channel is another method. (Facebook or Instagram your favorite IBD item and tag our bookstore in your post for a chance to win that item.)

Partner up:

- **Organize with other bookstores in your area to create a passport with stamps and prizes for customers who plan to visit multiple stores. You're the only bookstore? Do a passport with other local businesses.**
- Work with neighborhood businesses on cross-promotions. Show a receipt from your store and get a free cookie at the local cafe. Free food donations, etc. Ask a local brewery to donate a keg of beer...

Play!

- Set up an arts and crafts table for kids and/or adults. Maybe "Drawing Your Favorite Characters." Maybe "Collages from your favorite books." Make bookmarks or notebooks.
- Post a giant piece of butcher paper and invite customers to write titles of their favorite books or why they love their local independent bookstore on it. Make it visible to people outside.

- Set up a treasure or scavenger hunt: one for grown ups and one for kids. Have customers use a clue sheet to find authors with certain initials, or a book with the word “dog” in the title, etc. Completed sheets can be included in a prize raffle or turned in for discounts. This can go on throughout the day.
- **Photo booth. Create a little corner where customers can create their own funny photo shoots with costumes and props (make sure you get some shots too!)**
- Create a book-themed Mad Libs station or a public Mad Libs hour
- Meet & greet book swaps for customers. Each customer gets one minute to talk about the book they brought. At the bell, everyone is invited to swap!
- Hold a blindfolded gift wrapping race for prizes and bragging rights. See if customers can beat your best staff wrapper.
- Have a literary quiz “show” for customers. Customers against staff? Authors against staff? Authors against authors? Offer prizes and bragging rights.

Entertain:

- Have a book club led by a staff member or customer to discuss the newest book by one of the IBD authors (Ann Patchett?). Their fans are going to be there anyway- offer them some community and a lively discussion.
- Hire belly dancers, jugglers, or other performers.
- Set up a microphone and a large collection of poetry books and invite customers to read their (one) favorite. This could be ongoing all day.
- **Have a balloon animal maker, face painter, on-the-spot-poet, tarot reader or caricature artist in the store.**
- Invite a local band to play in the store or have a small jazz trio play browsing music during “cocktail hour.”

Free Stuff:

- **IBD has a selection of free items in the catalog. Use these as prizes and treats for contests and games.**
- Have “blind dates” with galleys of not-yet-released books wrapped in brown paper with a funny written description
- Free literary temporary tattoos (although how fun would a real tattoo artist be...)

- Hourly drawings for prizes.
- Have a children's prize treasure chest so every kids that comes in gets little something (fill it with stickers, super balls, erasers, small toys, pencils, etc.)
- Offer a different small giveaway to the first 10, or 5 or 2 customers every hour

A word about merchandising & displays:

- Remember: Some customers will come in knowing what they want, but most will need an introduction to the IBD items
- Plan displays ahead of time. Think about creating context for the items. IBD provides printable teasers and shelf-talkers for the exclusive items on the website. Keep in mind that eyes start to glaze when there are too many signs with too many messages. Keep it clear and simple.
- Create displays with other books by the same author. Order a few extra books by IBD authors (suggestions and special terms are included in the IBD catalog)
- Unbox and unwrap so that customers can see the items.
- Enlist the talents of your staff and get creative
- Have fun!

And don't forget to decorate!
Balloons and streamers. Displays. Life size drawings of the IBD logo!