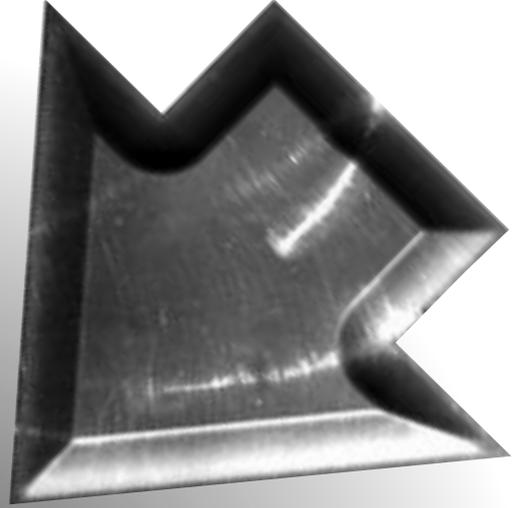
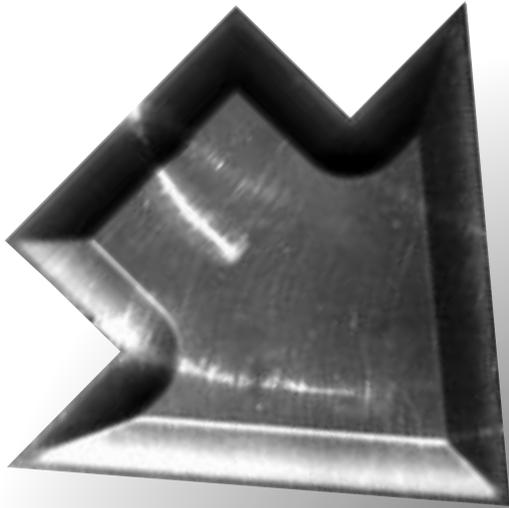
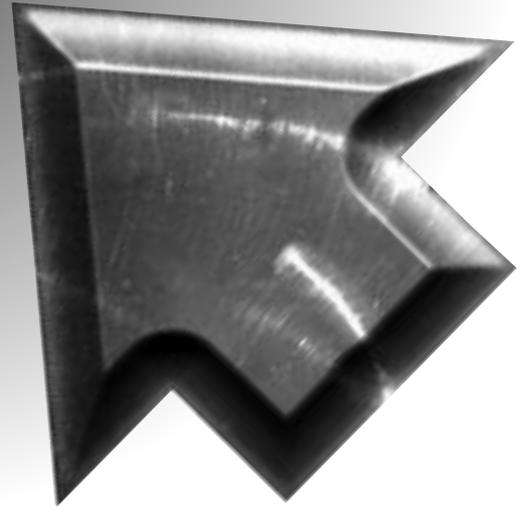
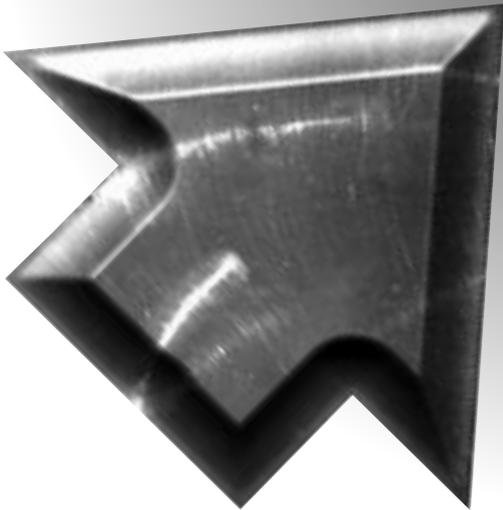


InterLit

International Magazine of Christian Publishing



Promotions



DECEMBER 2002

▲ PUBLISHING IN ORAL CULTURES

InterLit

COVER



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Do not focus on bestsellers if you want a viable publishing business.

by Isaac Phiri

Good Sellers Make Good Business

Many publishers dream of releasing bestsellers. They visit international book fairs to obtain rights to bestsellers. Since we work with many publishers around the world, I am sometimes in the awkward situation of “celebrating” with a publisher who just got the rights to a bestseller, and then a mere half an hour later “commiserating” with a crushed publisher whose house could not compete.

Bestsellers touch many lives, sell in large numbers and bring in good revenue. They help companies gain a good position in the market. They help backlist titles sell. Therefore, it is not hard to celebrate with our friends whose titles make the bestseller lists in their markets, or who are able to acquire titles that are already bestsellers in bigger markets such as the United States.

Perils of bestsellers

Our work at Cook Communications Ministries International is to help Christian publishers build viable organizations. What, then, do we say to the publishers who are crushed when the titles they so desired went to a competing house?

My answer: *Bestsellers do not build viable publishing companies.* Often, this is a surprise to these publishers. They reason that bestsellers are money-makers. The more money a business can bring in, the better.

I beg to differ. In the U.S., the U.K. and Germany, publishers of bestsellers often have financial trouble and can even be bought out by lesser-known companies. In emerging markets, we have also seen many “successful” publishers go out of business. One company in Eastern Europe published a bestselling title. Despite this, the company was in the doldrums not long afterwards.

Two strategic lessons

Strategic Lesson One: *Do not build your business on bestsellers.* Here is why: bestsellers are elusive. No one knows what

makes a book a bestseller. The author’s fame or the book’s timing may suggest it will sell in large numbers, but this is not a given. In the U.S., large advances have been given for titles that the publishers assumed would be bestsellers. Some were disasters, leaving the publishers in a worse situation than before.

Strategic Lesson Two: *Build a business on finding and promoting good sellers.* These are titles that fit your mission and market, are well-crafted, well-designed, and offered at an appropriate price. They may sell slowly, but they bring in revenue year after year. Over time, a good backlist creates a steady business and an enduring ministry. A viable publishing business is made up of a backlist of steady sellers and a promising frontlist of good sellers. This model of publishing is more attainable and is more conducive to balancing business with ministry.

Occasionally, a good title sells quickly in large numbers. It is bestseller material. Then, strategic decisions must be made to take full advantage of the opportunity. The bestseller should be handled so that it does not stop the publishing house from focusing on the acquisition and promotion of good sellers. Some publishers create a separate department to handle the bestsellers; others actually sell the rights to publishers better situated to handle such books.

Smart publishers realize bestsellers can be a blessing or a curse. Good sellers, in contrast, are always a blessing. They are the building blocks on which enduring publishing houses stand.

This *InterLit* issue is about promotion—getting people to know about and buy books. Our authors provide practical actions publishers can take to communicate with their markets and generate on-going sales. None of our authors claim that doing what they propose will create bestsellers. But, these strategies and tactics will make good books become good sellers. Go for good sellers. They make good business. ♦

Foundations of Marketing Strategy

Robinson Malkomes, editor at Edições Vida Nova in São Paulo, Brazil, provides a succinct overview of promotion and publicity for Christian publishers.

As a result of the nearly free and highly democratic dissemination of information via the Internet, consumers today are well informed and demanding people. This creates new challenges for publishers, both in marketing specific products, book series or product lines, and in marketing the publishing house's identity and brand.

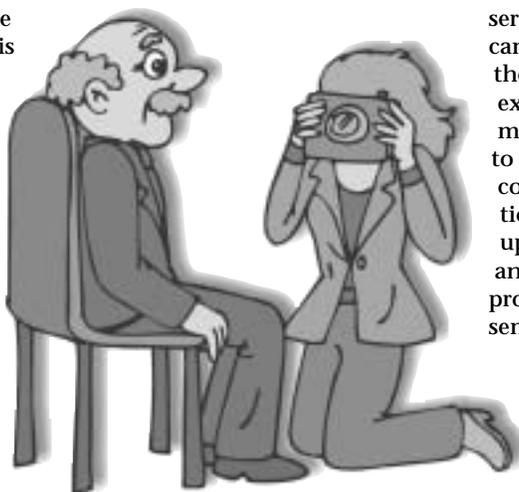
Marketing for a specific product

Marketing is a company-wide task and cannot be limited to one department. Whether a product is in the pre-publication, launch, or post-publication stage, remember that effective marketing requires teamwork.

1. The pre-publication stage. Do not assume that before a book is published, all marketing responsibility rests with the editor. Here is an overview of marketing strategies that can take place before a book is launched.

Be committed to the product. Whenever possible, introduce new products to other staff members; sell the idea to them. One editor at Vida Nova was profoundly affected by a manuscript on church conflict management. During the publishing house's weekly worship service, he shared a

message based on a chapter of that book that had a great impact on his life, and his message influenced his colleagues. The sales staff still refer to that chapter in their communication with clients. Not only is their knowledge of the book an effective sales tool, but it communicates their commitment to Vida Nova's products. After all, why publish a book if the staff is not going to commit its efforts and resources to marketing the book so it can reach and bless others?



Get authors involved. Ask authors to fill out a questionnaire containing biographical data and a photo. Request the questionnaire even

before you make a commitment to publish the book, and then use it to evaluate the feasibility of the project. Authors are and always will be the best salespeople for their books. They are eager to see their "child" coming to the world in great style. They want to identify the exact audience for the product.

Ask the author to summarize the book and highlight its most useful and unique features. Should the publishing house choose to publish the book, the author's answers can serve as the basis for a marketing campaign. Contracts should specify the activities the publishing house expects the author to do to promote the book. Authors will want to announce that their "baby" is coming soon, creating an expectation in their future readers. Follow up with authors. Provide materials and support as they promote the product by speaking in churches, seminars and conferences.

Write intelligent promotional pieces. Prepare data sheets and book announcements. Write to the people most likely to buy and read the book. The author's questionnaire, the editor—and the translator—can assist the marketing team by expressing their thoughts on the product's value, what publishing expert John Huenefeld calls the "compelling

unique feature” of the product. To be really successful with a given product, it must be the first in its field. If it can't be the first, then it must be the best. Save time and money by composing promotional text that can be edited as needed for back cover copy, magazine ads, catalogs, or letters to reviewers and others in the media.

Prepare a media kit. It contains all the promotional pieces already mentioned and a press release. Attractive media packages are not optional; they are absolutely necessary. Otherwise, they will end up in the trash can. Find and cultivate the best media contacts. Marketing is a people business, so the more relationships a publisher develops, the more success he or she will experience. Patience, persistence, and attention to detail bring long-term rewards.

Seek endorsements. Include them as part of the marketing plan. Place them on the back cover, in a foreword, and in other resources. Obtain recommendations from opinion makers. Never minimize their influence, and treat them well. Minister to their needs and provide them with free literature and other information. Two-way relationships with opinion makers are a virtually indispensable avenue for any book marketing enterprise.

Publish book excerpts. Select book excerpts to generate interest in the product. One easily executable idea is to print one signature of the book and send it to the publishing house's preferential clients list. Quality printed material can have the effect of "making readers' mouths water." A sales department can collect book orders before the official launching as a direct result of such an initiative.

A house organ like a bulletin, a newsletter or even a small journal may also be an excellent avenue for promoting new books. Remember, though, that such publications should not be like cheese in a mousetrap, intended only to catch new orders. They must offer good information and not only advertisements. Combining product and

good service is more than a trend, it is a well-established marketing reality.

Use electronic media. Place news about forthcoming products on the publishing house's Web site. This is not necessarily expensive, and can expose the product to thousands of people, especially if the site is listed with the major search engines. Some products may deserve a special Web site available even before the product release. Use such sites to create the sensation that readers need the forthcoming product. As to e-mail announcements, avoid sending unsolicited messages. They may work against the company's image and product.

Provide distributors with quality information. For many publishing houses, distribution channels are both a blessing and a headache. There is always a feeling that distributors and bookstores could be doing a better job promoting the products. Spend time and energy convincing distributors, colporteurs and bookstores that they share the publisher's Christian mission, that they represent much more than mere revenues. Work to increase their commitment to the products they are selling.

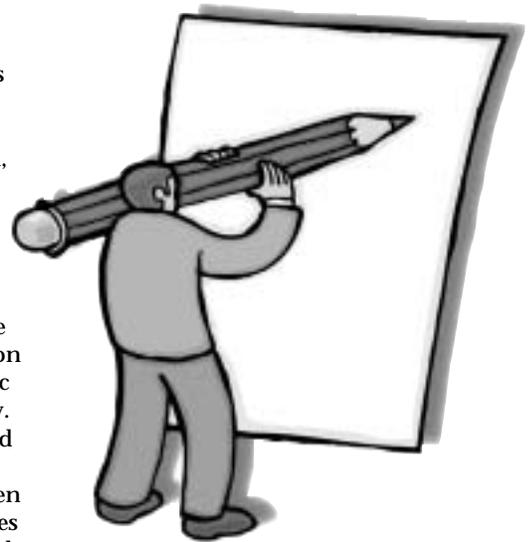
Commitment goes hand in hand with knowledge, instruction, and education. It implies high quality information. More than anyone else, the authors and publishers know how a particular book contributes to the Christian market. Therefore, they need to be wise enough to educate distribution agents. This might seem optimistic or naive, but it works. Give it a try.

2. The launch stage. Adapt and use some of the previous suggestions for the launch stage of a given product. There are some procedures especially appropriate to the launch phase, however, as listed below.

Arrange a public launch party. It can be a grand celebration or a modest party, depending on the expected performance of the product. Churches, museums, hotels, art stores, large bookstores, restaurants, malls, universities, and even amusement parks (for children's

books) can be good public places for book-launching events. Be creative. Also, remember that these events must often be packaged as more than mere book launchings. Regardless of the importance of the book or the fame of the author, add value to launch events by inviting a famous singer or band, a Christian man or woman engaged in sports, a respectable politician or a well-known Christian leader.

Autographed copies can be magical. Organize author signings. Obtain extra autographed copies and send them to bookstores with a sticker or a card that points out that these copies have been autographed. Autographs help readers feel they received special attention from the author. They seem to invest in books with more legitimacy or authority. Use autographed copies for reviewers or broadcasting contacts. If possible, send personalized copies to each key contact. They will get more attention than the ordinary ones.



Get the author on the road. Author tours can be a great way of getting public attention for a given book. There will be times when a title will justify a national tour investment, but even a mini-tour can have advantages, especially if it can be organized around the author's normal ministry or vacation travels.

One word of caution at this point: author tours bring better results with well-known personalities and when the subject is a current issue of interest to many people. And, remember: never underestimate the reality that the publishing house must liberally supply the author with material for tours. Also, the publisher must ensure that there are enough books in the stores to answer the anticipated demand. Failing at this point can be synonymous with wasting the author's entire effort and the publisher's financial investment.

Organize a virtual tour. This is a less expensive way of exposing an author and his or her book to the public. Have the author give a virtual speech immediately followed with a question-and-answer real time session. Though this idea has limited reach in some countries where the Internet is still far from being a democratic way of communication, it can appeal to certain audiences.

Use mass media. Appearances on mass media are a very powerful way

of getting publicity, but are more effective when handled by a public relations professional. Any PR specialist can flood the media with information about a book or author. Compare public relations to scattering seeds from a windy mountain top. The seeds will fly away in all directions. Many of them will certainly bear good fruit.

Use advertisements. The easiest way to publicize a book or product is through advertisements. Place ads with care. Consumers today are not naive persons. Send a clear, direct and brief message in product ads; do not state the obvious. Respect the consumer's intelligence.

Take advantage of other marketing paraphernalia. Bookmarks, stickers, buttons, key rings, T-shirts, caps, calendars, shopping bags, balloons, postcards, and pens are useful book promotion tools. They need not be expensive, but must be attractive. Other items for bookstore publicity may also bring very good results but can also cost much more and require bookstore cooperation. Such items may include cards or labels

that draw attention to books on the shelf ("shelf-talkers"), counter displays, window displays and floor displays, posters, in-store video ads and special handouts.

3. The post-publication stage. "Most publishers have a front-list mentality," says David Chilton, a self-published author. "They put all their sales efforts into the first six months the book is out. That does not give you enough time for word of mouth to help. Make readers your marketing team." Chilton encourages publishers to consider efforts beyond the launch stage. While many of the suggestions above may also be adapted to the post-publication stage, additional ideas include:

Offer seminars and consultations. Many books lend themselves to seminars and consultations. Invite experts, opinion makers and others for a one-morning seminar on a subject covered by the book. Maximize the author's presence at such events. This kind of initiative does not need to be time-consuming nor expensive.

Venezuela's people do not love reading, and most believers have little interest in literature. To succeed, promotion efforts must be well thought out.

Fronty publishes and distributes materials for children and youth. We have tested many ways to promote our material. Our efforts range from personal promotion to presentations at churches, in libraries and in doctor's offices. We wanted to have a greater impact, so we focused on adolescence and youth, a topic of great interest to Christian and secular audiences. In this area, Fronty has products that are unique and satisfy the necessities of the market.

We contacted Lucas Leys, an author specializing in this topic, and shared our dream of bringing him to Venezuela. He agreed to come, so we planned a series of workshops, conferences and even sporting events, taking into account the different market segments who could have interest in the subject of adolescents and young people, and directing the publicity towards them. We invited pastors, church leaders, youth workers, Sunday school teachers, parents and, of course, the adolescents and young people of Maracaibo.

We partnered with a new ministry specifically for adolescents and young people that had the resources necessary to support the workshops we planned. Our organizations had compatible goals, and a strategic alliance would help us to successfully bring about the events scheduled for July 4-7, 2002.

This effort had five principal results. 1) We saw the greatest retail sales in Fronty's history. Though the author we had invited



Lucas Leys, an Argentinean author, autographs books at a Fronty workshop in Maracaibo, Venezuela.

was not well-known in Venezuela, the quality of his workshops compelled the public to buy his books. 2) We had a wonderful opportunity to promote Fronty and its ministry. 3) Our position in the market as a company that offers excellent services and products was reinforced. 4) Our line of products entered into new bookstores and new distributors. 5) The ministry we partnered with plans to repeat this type of activity in the future, offering us an open door to promote our products.

We had no experience organizing events, and few staff members to devote to the effort, but we took a risk, and it paid off. Each risk is an investment in the company, and we look forward to the risks to come. — Zeida Severeyn and Esther Alcántara

Organize study or discussion groups. These do not always require the physical presence of people. Take full advantage of the Internet's capacity for multisynchronous meetings, where effective communication can occur regardless of the time and place.

Use advertising inserts. Sent with customer invoices and statements from banks, phone companies and credit card issuers, statement stuffers, flyers and other inserts can reach potential readers at a low cost. The costs must be low enough to justify the risk of sending advertisements via a negative buying environment (the recipients are being reminded of a debt).

Marketing a product line or series

Product lines or series can give a publisher recognition for expertise. The publishing house can issue books on a given subject written by many different authors, or it can specialize by publishing the books written by a specific author. Both strategies will help to build name recognition for the publishing house. Audience age and even specific formats or media (paperbacks, e-books, CD-ROMs, audio-cassettes) can define a product line or series.

The suggestions presented above on marketing a specific product are adaptable to marketing of a product line or book series. Here are a few more thoughts:

Be present as an insider. The series editor should be an insider in the communities of readers that the publisher is attempting to serve. He or she must understand their needs and expectations. If a company decides, for instance, to publish a series on Christian counseling, the series editor's budget should permit him or her to obtain key reference books and competitor's titles in the area, to purchase subscriptions to important periodicals covering the subject, to attend relevant seminars, and to have membership in the most important special-interest organizations associated with the series area of knowledge. Knowing the right audience for the series and being known by potential commu-

nities of readers can make all the difference for effectively marketing a book series or a product line.



Seek counsel.

Invite qualified people to serve on advisory or reference boards. This will make it easier to keep in fine tune with the exact audience for your product. Specialists can enthusiastically suggest projects for the publishing program and serve as influential cheerleaders for a product line or book series, enabling wider distribution.

Marketing strategy

A publishing house's general marketing plan should build the company's image. Have a clear picture in mind of the image that the company should present to the public. Ingredients like confidence, loyalty, commitment, association between product and service, concern over environmental matters, and so on, are increasingly present in today's marketing initiatives. Companies rise and fall according to their marketing strategies.

Make sure the public identifies with the publishing company's priorities. When Vida Nova recently celebrated 40 years of service, one Brazilian pastor clearly identified with the organization: "Christian publishers love and publish books

because they point to the Book. They love the Book because it points to Jesus." Vida Nova's marketing has successfully connected with its public.

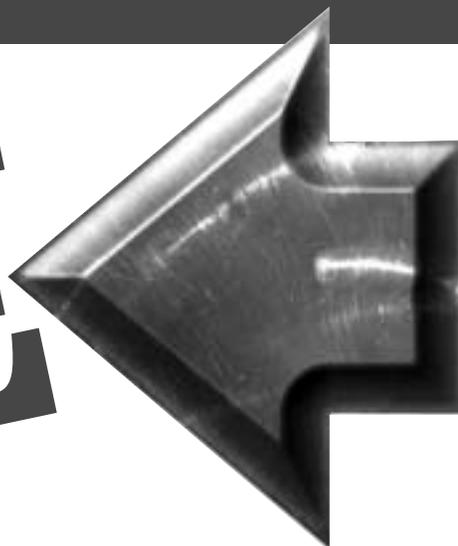
While consumers do not have time to pay attention to every book that comes to the market, remember the key is, as much as possible, to keep the audience informed and excited about the products.

Do not forget that both publishing and marketing are a people business. Dealing with people requires attention to details, empathy and cordial service.

Last, but not least, commit the publishing house and its products to God in prayer. Experience God's presence.

Rely on God's guidance to be a real blessing for His church and for this world. ❖

The Promotional EDGE



James Ogolla, a Kenyan writer with publishing experience, prays that Christian publishers will be challenged to invest in promoting their titles. "Promotion makes the difference," he says, "Do not light your candle and keep it under a bushel!"

The African market is quite complex. Functional literacy levels, on the average, are 65 to 70 percent. However, reading is a lifetime joy for only 30 percent. The good news is that both literacy and readership are growing tremendously fast, despite competition from electronic media and social and educational activities. Even so, in many an African publisher's warehouse, the records in each book bin indicate only two or three copies of a title were sold in the first year. The books were published but not promoted, and consequently, few copies sold.

How can publishers promote their titles? How can they make titles succeed in Africa's complex markets?

The beginning point

First, recognize the value of promoting titles strategically. In Africa, many publishers run to promotion when they sense the danger of what seemed to be a promising book turning into a financial disaster. To avoid the panic that accompanies such a situation, promotion needs to be viewed as the heartbeat that begins when the author comes up with an idea or concept. As they imagine how beautiful and useful the book will be, they should ask,

"Who am I writing for?" With that critically thought out, promotional and sales challenges will be halved.

Unfortunately, many writers and publishers fall prey to untested fantasies. It is critical for both the author and the editor to convince the sales force that the manuscript has value, that there is a potential market for the book, and that it is worth pursuing.

Once the potential market is well understood by all parties, the technical writing, editing, design and production matters can be handled so as to correctly position the title for promotion. Issues of size, font, leading, tracking, illustrations, style and the cover must be decided so the book can be user-friendly, distinctive, and attractive to potential buyers. Promotion planning can begin at the pre-publication stage. It is not necessary for a bad book to occupy warehouse space for useful promotion to start.

Resounding entry

Having worked out the initial market preparation, the courageous publisher will want to make a resounding entry to the marketplace. Many titles in Africa "sneak" on to bookshop shelves. Potential readers stumble upon them by chance. The risks in allowing this to

happen are too high! A publisher has already invested money in the title; good market entry strategies are necessary.

To date, established publishers have been the most likely to use new book announcements, such as leaflets, posters, and letters. These promotional items are costly and need to hit the right market at the right time. They cannot be too early, of course, or the book they advertise will be forgotten. They cannot be too late or they will not help bookstore buyers to prepare to stock copies of the title. They need to be attractively designed and strategically placed. They should precede the release date by at least a month.

Book launching ceremonies have been the domain of the aggressive publishers. Most titles on the market have not benefited from a book launch. Costly as it may sound, a book launching can be very beneficial; it is a time to create a lasting impression on potential buyers. Launch ceremonies need to be controlled based on the potential value of the guest list. It is critical that the invitations reach the target audience in good time. The most essential guests are ones who will propel a title on to bookshop shelves and into other readers'



Rev. Mutava Musyimi (left), General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, was the guest of honor at Cana Publishing's first launch ceremony, September 2001. Also pictured, left to right, are Rev. Dr. Manasses Kuria, Dr. Jeremiah Nyagah, and publisher David Waweru.

hands, such as booksellers. The media are also important guests; their accolades for a book can reach hundreds of thousands of trusting readers. Opinion leaders in the book's subject matter can give their recommendations—and these sell books. An effective book launching ceremony motivates guests to become enthusiastic non-commission sales representatives for the new releases.

After the launch

Special functions at strategic venues are useful both in the introductory phase and when a title must be revitalized in the market. Publishers need to think of creative and unusual ways to attract the public at book fairs, author signings and other special functions.

One Kenyan company issued three new children's titles at a time when others in the industry thought it unreasonable to publish high quality, full-color books. With a good understanding of its potential market, the publishing staff set up attractive special promotional and sales displays in non-book environments—the walkways of major shopping malls in Nairobi. Despite the books' slightly higher prices, they instantly became a hit. Booksellers who had been reluctant to stock them started calling for

copies of the titles. The company set new trends for the entire marketplace; other companies quickly followed suit and reaped good benefits.

Book reviews have been the common effort of all publishers in Africa.

Whether in print or in electronic media,

reviews cost little and are especially attractive to publishers on a shoe-string budget.

However, just obtaining one or two favorable reviews is not enough. Good relations with strategic media houses must be established so a publisher's books can remain in the limelight. This helps the publishing house's press releases reach the audience to bring long-term results.

Often, television and newspaper advertising is dreaded by publishers in Africa as a costly shot in the dark

that can take a company into the red. However, smart dealing and properly positioned advertisements can bring windfall profits. A fairly young bookseller in Nairobi took advantage of 10-second prime-time spots on a Christian TV station. His patronage rapidly grew and so did his stock turn over. An educational publisher dared the unusual and advertised a new Primary mathematics series using 10-second spots with one slide and a voice-over. The cost of the spots was a mere 15,000 Kenyan shillings [approximately U.S.\$200], production included, for a week of advertising. Suddenly, the series was recognized throughout the country, beat the competition and the corporate image of this firm was greatly boosted. Now other publishers are doing the same. Dare to be creative and smart. Make a difference and earn a profit.

Mixing different strategies at different stages of a title's life can keep a title going strong and make it profitable.

The most important strategy

Book incidence in the market far outweighs all other promotional strategies. Books that are promoted aggressively but which lack appropriate incidence in the market are non-starters. A book must be immediately available at the closest point of purchase for potential buyers. For maximum synergy, remember the market should be able to get to know, readily view, and conveniently purchase a publishing house's books. ❖



At the 2002 Cairo International Book Fair, the stand for The Bible Society of Egypt, pictured on the second floor, is crowded with interested buyers.

Match Right Product With Right Buyer

Praveena Balasundaram, former senior editor of the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (www.ispck.org.in), in Delhi, India, describes ways that Christian publishers can promote their products in developing countries.

For Christian publishers, promotion and publicity are critical. Their books are not ordinary products—they present the Gospel. They are not only useful, but have transforming potential. Therefore, Christian publishers must explore strategies that reflect both missionary zeal and business sense.

C. V. Vadavana, director of Sathyam Literature Service (SLS,

“India is ripe for the harvest. Sathyam is committed to God’s work in India,” but implementing effective promotion and publicity strategies for Christian literature “can be difficult,” he says. “We need to learn different methods for promotion.”

Help is already available for publishers to learn many publicity strategies through Web sites, books,

Target specific readers

“Christian publishing houses can succeed if they leverage their intimate knowledge of local consumers by creatively segmenting the market,” says Ashish Amos, director and general secretary of the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK). One of the leading Christian publishing houses in India, ISPCK has its headquarters in Delhi, and branches in Calcutta, Ranchi, Bilaspur, and Darjeeling, as well as retail outlets in Jabalpur, Hyderabad and Chennai. It targets all kinds of readers: men, women, children, youth, clergy and lay people. It may not be possible for smaller companies to target as many categories, but publishers must still be aware of the range of readership available. They must have ears to hear and eyes to see what consumers want and what they are interested in.

Offer the right product mix

“Publishers must offer a good range of products,” says Amos. They may be general or special interest books. They may be books that will create awareness or satisfy curiosity. Readers may seek liturgy or have an interest in gospel music. The publishing house staff must keep abreast of changing trends.

People in direct sales need to know what is available and what is



“Sathyam Literature Service’s mobile bookshop,” says publisher C.V. Vadavana, “allows us to reach the most remote corners of the country with our books and tracts.” Vadavana dreams of having a vehicle for every one of India’s 28 states and seven territories.

www.sathyam.org), with offices in Kerala, India, and Norwalk, California, United States, wants to develop better promotion strategies. “It truly is exciting to be a part of building God’s Kingdom,” he says.

seminars, and so on. However, tips and ideas must be adapted to a particular national situation or market.

What promotion and publicity strategies have the Christian publishers in India employed?

in the pipeline. They must not hesitate to inquire from the marketing manager or even the editor. At the same time, editors should look for ways to use available technology to create projects that will bring in revenue for the publishing house.

ISPCK is looking at creating greeting cards for domestic and international markets. Designs will

reading among people in many developing countries.

Invest in joint publishing

“Network with others to avoid duplication,” says ISPCK’s Amos, “and cut operation costs.” He identifies two kinds of joint publishing opportunities.

“One takes place when two or more units in different regions bring out a title jointly,” he says, “sharing the production costs, with both units promoting and distributing the stock.”

The other kind happens when “a study center or institute publishes jointly with a publisher, sharing the investments.” Such networking often yields meaningful literature. It shows “that pooling resources maximizes benefits.”

Print promotional material

Information on new titles can be sent out as seasonal, pre-publication flyers two or four times a year. Flyers should carry the

title of the book, the name of the author, a summary of the content, one or two lines from reviewers, the approximate number of pages, and the price. Flyers should have a detachable order form with an incentive or a reduced price for early orders. A condensed version can be prepared as a leaflet for distribution to bookstore customers.

A well-designed catalog with an appealing cover is a great tool for promoting books. It should not only list the products, but also include a description of the organization, annual events, ministries, and partnerships.

Promotional pieces can be sent to pastors, churches, seminaries, Bible colleges, missions, women’s societies, and other Christian and secular publishers and distributors. The effective use of pre-publication promotional flyers, leaflets and catalogs also requires an up-to-date database.

In most developing countries, traditional mail-order promotion is more viable than the telemarketing that is so popular in the West. This is because, even for local telephone calls, the tariff rate is very high so telephone promotion is usually not a workable option. Experiments with e-mail promotion are in the early stages and have not yet proved successful. Therefore, print promotion is essential.

Obtain book reviews

Build a panel of experts to whom a manuscript may be sent for review. The panel members may be theologians, clergy or lay people, or professionals. Request their comments and permission to use them in promotional material. Seek endorsements. Give complimentary copies to experts and Christian leaders to encourage them to share the books and promote them in their circles of influence.

Partner with authors

Author involvement is critical to promotion and publicity. No one can speak as passionately about a book as an author. Provide advance copies to authors and encourage them to offer them to interested parties. Ask them about book release opportunities. Recently, a senior Hindu bureaucrat published a book on Christianity in India with ISPCK. The publisher organized an event where a government minister presented the book to a large secular and Christian audience. This brought tremendous publicity and encouraged others to publish with ISPCK.

Collaborate with Christian organizations

Churches are places where there are many categories of consumers—children, youth, women’s society



A catalog that attractively showcases new titles and its strong backlog is critical for ISPCK's promotion and sales efforts.

be created in-house. Revenue from this line of products could help sustain traditional book publishing.

Alternative communications can enhance the ministry and spread the good news.

“Music,” says Amos, “targets not just the clergy or theologians, but Christian homes.” It provides spiritual experiences that can motivate people to seek books to deepen and sustain their Christian walk.

Vadavana agrees a good mix of products is essential. He adds that new methods of communication must be developed to counter the problem of a lack of interest in

members, Sunday school teachers, Bible study leaders, and visitors. In 1997, ISPCK began a church book table ministry; now, it has a regular outreach to 24 congregations. ISPCK sales and marketing staff contacted pastors for permission to set up book tables to display and sell their products on church

good sampling of books, music, videos, Bibles, calendars, cards, and souvenirs. Include sale and half-price items in the display. People like bargains, and thus may be encouraged to browse for other items too. Keep leaflets, flyers, catalogs, and business cards handy. Arrange the displays in a logical

to contribute toward the costs of participation at national and international events. Traveling to the Frankfurt Book Fair may be feasible when local and international sponsorships are available.

Seek new distribution venues

While the purchase or lease of property is a formidable task and requires long-term planning, it is possible for publishers to partner with theological colleges and Diocesan offices to organize and establish new bookstores.

Another alternative is a mobile ministry. "Sathyam Literature Service's mobile bookshop," says Vadavana, "allows us to reach the most remote corners of the country with our book and tracts, and also serves as a preaching platform." SLS combines book promotion with tract distribution and evangelistic preaching.

Seek international distribution. To do so effectively, offer quality products. Both Amos and Vadavana have expressed commitment to improving the quality of their products so that these can have a greater chance of success in the international market.



Sathyam not only participates in Christian book fairs, but also arranges its own events that are open to the public. Above, one of several Sathyam fairs held last year in Kerala, India.

premises. This not only benefits the congregations, allowing them easy access to Christian literature and music, but benefits ISPCK with wide exposure.

Christian publishers can also capitalize on denominational conferences, council meetings, revivals, and seminars. Details on such events may be secured in advance, through personal contacts or regular mailings. Some events allow participation only from entities affiliated with the sponsoring denomination, others welcome everyone. Space limitations may limit the number of publishers that can participate, so requests must be made well in advance. Church-related events are usually free and do not require extra staffing or additional funds, apart from payment for extra help to pack and move the product.

In setting up book tables at churches or conferences, take a

manner so items can be easily retrieved.

Whenever possible, hang a banner above or behind the book table. A neatly handmade banner works well when budget constraints do not allow for a professionally produced one. Signs attached to the front of a table are useless once people crowd around it. Whether it is a banner on the wall, a poster, or a cardboard sign, make sure it is securely set. Nothing is as ugly as a falling and crooked banner.

Participate in national book fairs

If budget permits, seek exposure at national book fairs and secular events. Of course, the angle of promotion will differ from that used at Christian conferences. Books with crossover appeal, on topics such as spirituality, world peace, interfaith dialogue and other current issues, can easily be promoted in many secular venues. Look for sponsors

Measure promotion success

Remember a reader matched with a book may indicate a sale, but a customer returning for more books is successful promotion. Measure your success and keep seeking improvement.

During an Evangelical Christian Publishers Association dinner at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Chris H. Johnsen, managing director of Christian Art Distributors in Vereeniging, South Africa, warned publishers that they will be held accountable for how they promote and handle their products. "To our readers," said Johnsen, "we sell a lifestyle, a Christian walk, an idea of God's will and a view of who God is." Christian books have the power to inform and transform readers' lives. ❖



Three factors are vital to ensure consumers have positive experiences with your promotions.

by Kim Pettit

Are Your Promotions a Nuisance or a Service?

How do you define promotion? Is it the act of telling someone something they do not want to hear about a product that they are not interested in and have no desire to buy? When you think of promotion, do you picture a pile of unsolicited mail, an in-box flooded with spam, a telemarketer's call interrupting a leisurely dinner, or a flurry of annoying inserts in the Sunday paper? Is promotion essentially a nuisance?

Or, do you define promotion as an organized set of activities designed to inform a specific segment of the market about available goods and services? When you think of promotion, do you picture an attractive display at your favorite bookstore, a colorful bookmark included with your purchase, a seminar with an author, or an intelligent review? Do you consider promotion to be a service to the consumer?

All of us have been on the receiving end of someone else's promotional efforts. Why are some promotions more successful than others? What makes the difference?

One critical issue is the *relevance* of the commercial message to me as a potential buyer. I do not have time to waste. I receive at least a dozen commercial e-mail messages each day, and a pile of direct mail solicitations. Radio, television, movies, and the Web contain more ads. Magazines and newsletters are filled with product information. How do I decide which messages are important? Promotional communications need to be targeted to my interests, or they are ignored or go directly into the trash. Therefore, market research is key. Focus your promotions. Target specific audiences, and tailor your message to the persons you want to reach.

A second issue has to do with the *context* of the promotional material. Is it an interruption, a pop-up window blocking my view of a site I am exploring? Is it an insert with an invoice I dread having to pay? Is the promotional communication expected and welcome, like a preview in a movie theater? Is it a flyer enclosed with the book I am looking forward to reading? Is it ugly or attractive? Review the ways you communicate product information to potential buyers. How can the communications be a pleasure rather than an intrusion?

Consumers quickly judge promotional messages.

A third factor pertaining to the success or failure of promotions is the *value* that they offer to me as a consumer. I prefer to receive one evangelical publisher's e-mail bulletin, which includes excerpts from forthcoming books, than the communication of their competitor, which only lists titles and prices. I would rather have the chance to hear a favorite author give a presentation than go to an event where all he or she does is sign autographs. Think about how to offer more to potential customers. Is your material merely informative, or does it minister to and inspire readers?

Are your promotions a nuisance, or a service? It will only take me a few seconds to make a decision, one way or the other. Your commercial message has to be about something that matters to me, presented in a pleasant and attractive manner, and worth an investment of my time.

What makes promotions successful? For me, it is relevance, context, and value. ❖



BRAZIL

PUBLISHING WORLDWIDE

BUILD POSITIVE RIGHTS RELATIONSHIPS

Judith Ramos, of Editora Sepal in São Paulo, Brazil, discusses the relationships of Brazilian publishers with their counterparts in North America.

The evangelical publishing industry in Brazil is, to a large extent, dependent on translated works, acquired mostly from U.S. publishers. According to a 2001 study commissioned by the Brazilian association of Christian publishers, Associação Brasileira dos Editores Cristãos, (ABEC), 89 percent of surveyed publishers had translated books from English, 28 percent from German, and 22 percent from Spanish. Of the almost 600 titles published in the same year, 40 percent were translations from English. In past years, the percentage has been even greater—75 percent in 1998, and nearly 79 percent in 2000.

The prevalence of translations from English is due to a couple of reasons. First, evangelical publishing in Brazil was initiated by American missionaries. Therefore, most early literature in Brazil was translated from English. Second, most independent evangelical publishers in Brazil are emerging businesses. Constrained by a lack of

resources to develop local products, they find it expedient to acquire rights to proven titles, translate these into Portuguese and move them quickly to market. In this way, they can expand their product lines, offer full catalogs and publish proven authors.

The U.S. is the key target for rights acquisitions by Brazilian publishers because, compared to other English-language markets, it is perceived to have the most mature and professional evangelical

30,000-copy initial print run. This is rare in Brazil, but they could afford the risk because the book was already a proven bestseller in the U.S. In the same way, when Editora Vida published the Portuguese translation of Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Zondervan), it sold over 35,000 copies. Other titles, such as the Left Behind series, have also had great success in this market. In contrast, publishing a national author demands extensive editorial work, managing

publishers sometimes receive from their U.S. counterparts.

Brazilian publishers often find that the rights and licensing staff of U.S. publishers only speak English. Little effort is made to find multilingual staff to handle international rights. If a Brazilian publishing house does not have an English-speaking person on staff, communication stalls.

In other cases, only one person handles all international requests, and delays are extensive. At the CBA international convention, for example, it is not unusual for internationals to wait in line while a publisher's sole "international" staff person scrambles to meet their needs. However, this is just at conventions. Even with correspondence, e-mail, reading copy requests and so on, Brazilian publishers are made to wait for months for a simple reply.

Brazilian publishers wonder why they receive such treatment from evangelical publishers seeking to spread the Word. Perhaps the North

Improve the treatment Brazilians receive from U.S. publishers.

publishing community. The U.S. is seen as a very competitive, demanding market. Therefore, a title that is successful in the U.S. suggests less risk for the Brazilian publisher. For example, when Mundo Cristão acquired rights to Multnomah's *The Prayer of Jabez*, they could afford to risk a

authors' great expectations, developing artwork, and laying out the book, and despite all this sales are often limited.

However, obtaining rights requires positive relationships between U.S. and Brazilian publishers. Much remains to be done to improve the treatment that Brazilian

American market is so large that they do not need revenues from international markets. Perhaps royalty receipts are such a small portion of their total income that they are not all that interested in encouraging international publishers. Clearly, the fact that books translated in Portuguese will touch souls not only in Brazil but in Angola, Mozambique, Portugal and other parts of the world does not seem to matter.

Moreover, when the contract finally arrives, Brazilian publishers find themselves dealing with inflexible standardized agreements that demonstrate little understanding of, or interest in, the problems faced by publishers in poorer countries where Christians have limited resources and poor reading habits. According to the Câmara Brasileira do Livro, the Brazilian book chamber, at 2.4 books per person, Brazil has one of the worst per capita reading indices in Latin America. In this environment, publishing is a challenging ministry, yet some U.S. publishers continue to ask for high advances, not understanding Brazil's economic realities.

Admittedly, some Brazilian publishers have failed to honor commitments, such as payment of royalties. This could be due to dishonesty. However, in most cases it is the environment that causes publishers to fall behind on payments. It is hard for U.S. publishers to understand some of the laws Brazilian businesses

are subject to. For example, when a publisher wants to make a foreign currency payment, the government deducts 15 percent in taxes. To remit U.S.\$1,000 costs an additional \$150 in addition to other bank fees involved in the transaction. This can be difficult at times.



Judith Ramos, of Editora Sepal in São Paulo, Brazil, is an active and informed member of the evangelical association of Christian publishers in Brazil, the Associação Brasileira dos Editores Cristãos (ABEC).

Because of these mitigating circumstances, U.S. publishers must attempt to understand the situation of their counterparts before making negative conclusions. CBA's international conventions can be an important place for fostering relationships and developing trust and understanding. Brazilian publishers who visit the conventions agree that having personal contact facilitates relationships, acquisitions, and service. However, U.S. publishers must remember that not all Brazilian publishers can attend CBA events. The costs are high. For example, in the last six years Sepal has only been

represented at CBA once, and that was at Anaheim, California in 2002. Not all publishers can attend CBA every year.

Pointing out the downside of U.S.-Brazilian relations is not to say there are only negatives. There are positive models for relationships.

Cook, for instance, has professional representatives who regularly visit publishers and endeavor to offer products that match their publishing lines and areas of competency. In addition, the representatives speak Spanish or Portuguese, which facilitates the relationship for everyone. Aside from Cook, other publishing companies have sought to offer better service and want to help Brazilians to publish products that will be well accepted. Other U.S. publishers have subsidiaries in Brazil.

Also, bringing up the challenges of publishing in Brazil does not mean

that the industry is not making progress. Brazil has a strong Catholic and spiritist background, but evangelicals already comprise 15 percent of over 160 million inhabitants. In the past two decades, the Brazilian church has been one of the fastest-growing in the whole world. More Bibles are distributed in Brazil than in any other country. It surpasses Protestant nations such as England and the United States. Therefore, despite some limitations, Brazilian publishers can successfully transform U.S. titles into national bestsellers and provide cash flow to U.S. publishers. Tim LaHaye, David Wilkerson, and many others have been successfully published in Brazil for over three decades. The more publishers understand the realities of doing business in Brazil, the better will be the ministry of taking the Word to all people God created and placed around the world. ♦

RUSSIA

Sakha Christians Crave Literature

David Cameron and Marilyn Kay Henry (henry99707@yahoo.com), missionaries stationed in Yakutsk, Yakutia, Russia, describe their publishing work in this Siberian region.



The homeland of the Sakha, sometimes called the Yakut, is in the vast northern Republic of Yakutia in the Russian far east. The capital, Yakutsk, is located due north of North Korea.

The Sakha, numbering more than 400,000, are the dominant people group in Yakutia. God threw open the door to evangelism and the public preaching of the gospel in the early 1990s. Today there are more than 300 evangelical Sakha believers; all new Christians since the fall of Communism.

The emerging Sakha Church craves more Christian literature and media. Sakha believers receive some literature in Russian, but this is not their heart language. Also,



Young people at the 2002 Christian Yakut conference.

many who live outside the capital, have limited ability in speaking and understanding Russian.

Older Sakha Christian literature includes the four gospels on extra large pages dating from the end of the 19th century. It was written in an archaic orthography, before the Russian government and linguists modernized the alphabet in the 1930s.

The first modern Christian publication was the illustrated *Life of Jesus* in 1994. This Cook publication has been translated into many languages. InterAct Ministries, an American mission, partnered with a Russian mission, Gospel to the East, to sponsor 50,000 copies for every Sakha home.

A Sakha professional translator worked on the

text. A pastor tediously copied the Sakha translation by hand in preparation for printing.

This allowed the longer Sakha translation to fit into the characters' speech balloons. The pastor was assisted on the project by a beautiful Sakha woman; they fell in love while working together and married.

The large galley sheets were sent to Japan for mass printing along with other similar projects. The books were sent in a container by ship to Russia, then by railroad to the southern region of Yakutia, and finally by truck to Yakutsk.

In 1995, the Institute for Bible Translation produced a high quality Bible storybook with full-page illustrations. Since then, they have also published three preliminary Sakha translations for distribution and review: the *Gospel of Mark*; the *Gospel of Luke and Acts*; and the *Gospel and Epistles of John and James*. They plan to print the *Sakha New Testament* in 2003.

Scripture Gift Mission in England has also helped meet the need for literature for the Sakha by producing two illustrated booklets: *Jesus Christ Has*

Power to Save Us and *The Teachings of Jesus Christ*. They are compilations of appropriate Scripture portions from the Gospels.

There is movement in the direction of writing original literature in Sakha. A young Sakha pastor drafted an original tract for unbelievers. The tract asks basic questions about everyday life to help people think and to give them a hunger to know God.

Seven years of devoted work by 22 gifted Sakha musicians—with the Lord's help—have produced the first hymnal, *Praise to God*, with 120 Sakha songs. The hymnal—with the national flower, beautiful Sakha lilies, on the cover—was launched at the Fourth Annual Sakha Christian Conference, held in Yakutsk in March 2002. Copies of the hymnal were received from the publisher one day before the conference began.

The hymnal was a grassroots project, started when Sakha people came to the Lord. They began singing Russian hymns and translating them into

Sakha. These translated songs served as the bridge to original Sakha songs. Several people have composed songs blending beautiful Sakha music and poetry. More than 10 percent of the songs in the hymnal are original. Eight new Sakha hymns have already been composed since the hymnal was printed. Several audiocassettes using these hymns have been distributed.

Various Sakha people have also been involved in all phases of making two Scripture calendars for 2002. They chose to highlight the dates for Christmas and Easter, but not June 21, a national celebration to the sun and nature, which is a public holiday in Yakutia.

The large calendar cites Matthew 4:4 where Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." The picture shows a Sakha barn with several piles of hay, representing the basic diet of milk, milk products and beef. Many families have one or more cows which stay inside most of the winter as they contend with -40° or -50° weather.

The pocket-size calendar cites John 4:14 where Jesus said, "But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The picture shows a calm lake with a canoe setting in the grass on the edge. A lake represents pure water, which

you can scoop up in your hand and drink.

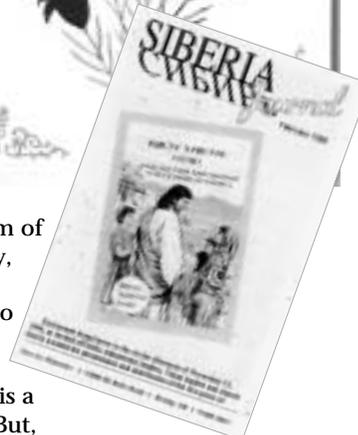
Sakha believers have created bookmarks, posters and souvenirs.

One current project is a booklet of 20 testimonies written by Sakha believers that will encourage Christians and also be useful in evangelism.

Another project, in the initial stages, is the translation of teaching materials from Bible Visuals. Spiritually mature Sakha believers critique every item for biblical accuracy and literary correctness. Trial editions have shown that this is extremely important before any formal printing takes place. In 2000, a Sakha Christian Literature Committee was formed to help insure this.

Traditionally, believers in the West have provided Christian literature free of charge. These outside sources are giving less since Russia has been "opened up" to the gospel. This form of funding, unfortunately, has made the Russian and Sakha churches too dependent on other believers for their own Christian literature. It is a hard cycle to change. But,

as the Sakha Church grows and believers crave more literature, there is hope for more indigenous writing and publishing. ❖



International PUBLISHING EVENTS

November 30-December 15, 2002
Guadalajara International Book Fair
Guadalajara, Mexico
www.fil.com.mx

January 23-February 7, 2003
Cairo International Book Fair
Cairo, Egypt
www.cibf.org

January 29-February 1, 2003
Christian Booksellers Association
Expo, Indianapolis, IN USA
www.cbaonline.org

February 8-11, 2003
National Religious Broadcasters Convention, Nashville, TN USA
www.nrb.org

February 11-16, 2003
Taipei International Book Exhibition
Taipei, Taiwan
www.tibe.com

March 6-8, 2003
London Book Fair
London, United Kingdom
www.libf.co.uk

March 9-20, 2003
"Financial Administration," International Christian Publishing Institute, Cook Communications Mins. Intl. Colorado Springs, CO USA
www.ccmi.org

March 13-14, 2003
Evangelical Christian Publishers Association Christian Editors Conference
Colorado Springs, CO USA
www.ecpa.org

March 21-26, 2003
Salon du Livre: Paris Book Fair
Paris, France
www.ebook-europe.com

March 27-April 7, 2003
Bangkok International Book Fair
Bangkok, Thailand
pubat@inet.co.th

April 2-5, 2003
Bologna Children's Book Fair
Bologna, Italy
www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it

Stay Upbeat in Down Times

by Richard Ensman

Facing tough times? Although difficult circumstances present many challenges to publishers, perhaps the greatest challenge is maintaining a positive, even enthusiastic, workplace atmosphere. How? Here are twenty simple ways to create a dynamic business atmosphere during good times and bad. Select a few, and build a business environment to encourage and motivate your staff.

1. *Celebrate success.* Whether it is a major book sales victory, or simply an administrative accomplishment, take note and smile. Successes, large and small, boost morale.

2. *Break tasks into components.* When things seem tough, obstacles seem insurmountable. When obstacles loom, separate tasks into discrete activities with specific timelines. The result: more realistic goals.

3. *Maintain open communication lines.* Ask staff how things are going. They appreciate expressions of interest, and their information may be vital.

4. *Confront rumors.* The minute you hear a rumor, squash it. Either admit its truth with the best face possible, or dismiss it clearly and publicly.

5. *Acknowledge uncertainty.* When you cannot predict how things will go in the months ahead, say so. Those around you will appreciate your candor.

6. *Offer updates.* Keep your people informed. Provide reports at every staff meeting. Post sales and profit statistics on employee bulletin boards.

7. *Seek updates.* Obtain regular reports from staff. Check sales statistics. Keep your eye on the numbers. Glean every last bit of information about the health of the business.

8. *Invest in training.* During slow periods, staff may have the time to upgrade their skills. Use the time productively for formal training.

9. *Promote continuous learning.* Encourage employees to read, to seek education on their own, and to become involved in professional organizations.

10. *Foster teamwork.* Involve your staff in problem-solving. Sound communication, group-based tasks and goals, and employee empowerment can bring newfound commitment to the work at hand.

11. *Have fun at work.* Maintain an upbeat spirit. Play music. Hold pizza or ice cream breaks. Host a meeting in a pleasant location.

12. *Seek advice.* Identify persons who can offer suggestions, both inside and outside the publishing house. Pose the thorniest problems to them.

13. *Give advice.* Boost credibility and performance by helping others: employees who want to learn new skills or upgrade their own performance, peers in non-competing organizations, and association members attending trade meetings or conferences.

14. *Stay clear and direct.* A clear and confident communication style helps inspire confidence in others.

15. *Be available.* Let employees see you. Be ready to answer questions at any time.

16. *Seek hidden talents.* Look for value-added skills employees can bring to the business. Does the sales clerk have a hidden talent for ad design? Does the receptionist handle customer service problems well? You may find powerful new skills available, at little or no cost.

17. *Be grateful.* When times are tough, nothing beats a simple thank you or another small token of appreciation.

18. *Look for feedback.* Constantly ask those around you: "How are we doing? What can we do better?" Listen to their responses.

19. *Offer leadership opportunities.* Encourage staff to assume leadership—as team chairs or project managers, for example. The result: greater commitment and more participation in problem solving.

20. *Feel good about your work.* When things are tough, remember your past successes. Remember the vast reservoir of skills you and your staff bring to the table each day. Remain forward-looking and optimistic, and share your enthusiasm with the people around you. The goal: long-term business vitality and growth. ♦

Richard Ensman (publisher@compuserve.com) is a business writer in Rochester, New York, United States.

Publishing for Literates in an **Oral Culture**

by Mark Snowden

In the Philippines, doctors, lawyers and other business professionals often prefer Bible studies told as stories, followed by oral discussion. A missionary in Venezuela reports that the nurses and college professors in his Bible study made him stop reading the Bible and communicate the stories verbally. What was going on? Why were highly-literate Christians preferring a non-literate approach to Bible study? In both cases, Bibles had been purchased and had been opened to the corresponding reference, yet listening and discussion were the preferred learning style for internalizing the information.

Christian publishers know that illiterates and functional illiterates exist, but often consider them outside the concerns of their publishing ministries. However, few Christian publishers take into account that literates living among non-readers might prefer a different learning style. If an oral preference exists, what should a publisher do?



Assess the needs

Look around. What are the actual literacy capabilities of customers, colleagues, and co-workers? At what levels can they read best? Is reading comprehension a problem?

There are numerous reasons that people cannot or will not read. Blindness, dyslexia, cataracts and other eye diseases can force someone to be a non-reader. Other physical handicaps, such as deafness, can have that effect as well. Missionaries among the deaf regularly report non-hearing adults prefer an "oral" approach through signing.

Ability to read is different from preference for reading. Just because someone is literate does not mean he or she has a literate learning preference.



Tailor the text

Help writers address readers who live in oral cultures. How? Here are some ideas:

- Remember that the story IS the message.
- Load your story with a central truth or theme.
- Keep in mind that testimonials work better than advice and that personal experiences work better than lectures.
- Order thoughts chronologically rather than at random; never jump ahead.
- Use timelines as a thread of cohesion.
- Address the cultural bridges and barriers to an idea's adoption within the culture.
- Use stories to fill-in knowledge gaps to help readers overcome barriers to learning.
- Use a conversational writing style.
- Provide suggestions for personal application of the message.
- Use songs, poems, drama, myths, legends, sayings and proverbs.
- Avoid an analytical breakout of the text (like this!).
- Make word studies the rare exception.
- Never dumb thoughts down; minds can be quick despite literacy issues.
- Think of tips for mentoring, rather than manuals.
- For a series or curriculum, begin the sessions by including a section that allows the teacher and the students to review what was done at the last encounter (Did the students "get it" last time?). Include activities to help the teacher assess student comprehension after the lesson (Did they "get it" this time?).



Add visual appeal

Incorporate attractive visuals. Use design and colors that do not distract, but rather enhance the message. Look for photographs and illustrations to support and augment the text. What role do teaching pictures play in your inventory? When the former Soviet Union opened, the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was bombarded with requests for Russian-language materials. Missionaries were advised to purchase a good set of teaching pictures. Teachers and evangelists had tremendous experiences using pictures with small groups.



Heighten auditory appeal

Publish materials with rhythm, alliteration, rhyme, and other literary devices that work well with oral traditions. In East Africa, the Yao people straddle three countries: Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. In that culture, stories of cultural significance are danced to a chant. Publishers wanting to reach the Yao can ask writers to incorporate poems and chants in their work.

In Sudan, Dinka-Jurmodo people were struggling to memorize Bible stories. An American missionary was very concerned about the situation, yet patiently kept working with the people. After several frustrating weeks, a man in the group timidly asked if he could sing the Bible story. When the missionary encouraged it, Bible stories were put to music. Soon, over 100 Bible stories were being sung throughout the villages.

Experiment with music, books on tape, video and other means to communicate the message. Note, however, that a change from print to audio or electronic media does not automatically mean that a publisher will effectively reach persons with an oral learning preference. Producing television, radio, videotapes or audiocassettes does not mean you can resume a literate approach. If a videotaped speaker gives a sermon with “three points and a poem”, the viewers will not relate,

just as they would not relate if the same sermon were provided in print. Good storytellers do not always make great writers and vice versa. Choose the appropriate delivery vehicle for the message.



Promote interaction with the text

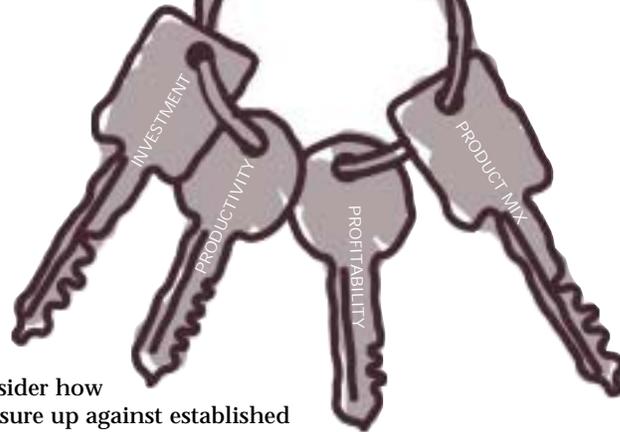
Create opportunities for oral experiences of written material. Organize events where authors can read their works out loud and interact with their readers. Encourage dramatizations of fictional stories. Form groups where readers can retell the stories and discuss the books they just read. Sponsor non-print cultural events. Publishers will likely find the interaction will increase interest and generate additional purchases.

One brilliant publisher sighed and admitted that he was strictly in the “ink and paper” sales business. That publisher is likely missing untapped market opportunities. Reach out to literates with an oral learning preference. There may be huge numbers of potential customers to whom you can minister more effectively than ever before. ❖

Mark Snowden (msnowden@imb.org) is the Communications Director for the Office of Overseas Operations of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

For more information, visit:
www.ChronologicalBibleStorying.com
www.newway.org
www.storytellingcenter.com

Key Sales Indicators



by Randy Scott

Many sales managers only consider how their sales measure up against established sales targets. If the revenue received matches or exceeds the goals, they think this is sufficient. There are, however, a number of sales indicators, apart from net receipts, that are also important. Consider such items as profitability, the ratios between front and backlist sales, and the performance of each distribution channel. Whenever those items do not meet expectations, the company might have a serious problem.

Measure return on investment. If a publishing house is going to do a marketing campaign on a particular title or a series of books, it needs to have some objectives as to what kind of sales it aims to increase and how many units it needs to sell. For example, measure the number of orders resulting from a direct mail campaign. If the average return for such efforts is two percent and responses received are fewer, there is a problem with that particular promotion. Every marketing program should be designed for a particular market segment, and should include measurable goals.

Measure sales productivity. This is one of a publisher's biggest challenges. There are always a million reasons to explain a lack of sales. Is the sales force doing the job that they should do? To ensure performance, set sales objectives for each channel. The sales force for a publisher in the United States, for example, might visit 1,700 to 1,800 stores four times each a year. Suppose it takes two to three hours to present the product line. If the publisher's individual sales persons are not making at least ten appointments a week, or two a day, they will likely not sell sufficient product. Monitor the

number of sales calls as well as actual appointments. When a particular staff person's numbers fall below expectations, find out why. Perhaps he or she needs to be better trained on how to make appointments. Track the revenue generated by each salesperson, as well as the average income per order.

Track product profitability. Do not consider only total sales, or total units sold, but whether the particular product sold is profitable or not. Maintain profit and loss statements per product. In addition, review warehousing and customer service costs. When support areas do not perform properly, a publisher can quickly run into trouble. Are products shipped correctly? Is the customer service department treating customers well? Is a particular product generating an unusual amount of complaints, and contributing to mounting costs?

Review the product mix. The term "frontlist" refers to new titles, published within the past year. The "backlist" consists of titles that have been on the market for a full year. In the United States, usually 70 percent of a publisher's sales come from the backlist and 30 percent from the frontlist. Perhaps the proportion between these figures is different in other regions. Whatever the case, the key is to monitor the ratio and to maintain the sales levels necessary to generate budgeted profits. Review which titles are generating the most sales and the most revenues, and ensure that it is those titles that are being sold to the bookstores and emphasized in your merchandising. ♦

Randy Scott is Vice President for Business Development at Cook Communications Ministries.

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Commitment to training is critical for publishing enterprises.

by David Mehlis

Hone Your Craft

Recently, I had the privilege of introducing Jerry Jenkins, co-author of the phenomenally successful *Left Behind* series, to a group of publishers gathered at our offices for our International Christian Publishing Institute. I have known Jerry for a long time; in fact, for a brief time he even worked for Scripture Press, an organization that is now a part of Cook Communications Ministries.

In his career, Jerry has written hundreds of articles and stories, and more than 150 books. Something I have always admired about Jerry is that over the years he has continued to work hard and to push himself to develop his craft as a writer. That push for continuous improvement, that desire for excellence, for mastery of his craft, is an example that speaks to me as a Christian and a publisher.

At Cook Communications Ministries, we continually work to increase our skills and capacities to more effectively fulfill our mission. This desire for excellence in our company was present from the very start. David C. Cook, who founded this ministry in 1875, often prayed: "O, God, make all you can of my life." We depend on God to multiply our efforts. At the same time, we seek to maximize the use of resources He has given to us. One way to do this is to increase our emphasis on mastering our craft as publishers.

Mentor your staff. Having employees who have mastered their tasks will make you more

effective as an organization. For example, no organization can publish every manuscript it receives; very often it is necessary to say "no." Trained editors can quickly determine whether a manuscript is valuable and fits the mission. They can streamline editorial processes so that manuscripts are ready to be published on time.

Cook Communications Ministries wants to be as effective in its use of financial resources as any secular money-making business. We want to reduce the cost of goods of all products, and the costs of fulfillment. Inventory must be kept at acceptable levels. We want our operations systems to provide great customer service at a cost appropriate to our business model.

The chief executive officer of an organization must do everything in his or her power to stimulate the staff to focus on competencies and to collaborate to achieve success. Inspire your staff to be better today than yesterday. Trained people know what tasks are most important and can allocate their time accordingly. Help your employees to achieve the same mastery of their tasks that Jerry Jenkins has modeled for us. What will it take to have that level of commitment to craftsmanship, artistry, excellence in your publishing company? Encourage your staff, pick them up when they fall, and motivate them to go forward, to hone their craft. ♦

David Mehlis is president of Cook Communications Ministries International.

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