

Is Your Bookstore a FUN Place to Shop?

by Stephanie Bond

Early bookstores took their marketing models from libraries: creaky wooden floors, soaring shelves of tightly-packed volumes, low-lighting, and relative disarray, complete with requisite moldy-book smell. *Yawn.*

To be competitive with other shopping venues and to attract new customers, bookstores should consider transforming their retail spaces into more exciting places to shop. How?

Turn up the music. Choose a fun, upbeat radio station, like Motown Oldies, and turn up the volume. Your older customers will love it, and remember that younger customers are being introduced to classic Motown via shows like *American Idol*.

Show your true colors. Painting the walls and ceiling a light, vibrant color is one of the most inexpensive and quick tools for a dramatic change to your store's atmosphere. Organize a paint party!

See the light. Bad lighting—too dim or too harsh, can impact a customer's decision to buy. Many home improvement stores will send lighting consultants to your location for a free consultation. An additional light fixture or even different types of bulbs might be all that's needed improve the overall shopping ambiance.

Go for the unexpected. Consider setting aside a portion of your store (a window?) for wonderful, unexpected displays that are related to books—or have nothing at all to do with books! Imagine the attention your store would get from the following displays:

- a woman in a bathtub of sudsy water enjoying a book (wearing a swimsuit, of course)
- a huge ball of twine
- a man in a bed enjoying a book (again, dressed)
- a big dollhouse with all the trimmings
- a hip new motorized scooter

Do your homework. Take a stroll through other kinds of retailers—clothing stores, grocery stores, music stores, electronics stores—paying special attention to fixtures, color, display techniques, and employee attire. Where are the crowds and what are they attracted to?

Get together with coworkers and employees to brainstorm new ideas. By turning your bookstore into a fun, exciting place to shop, you'll be doing double-duty because it will also become a more fun, exciting place to work! ~**SBond**

© Stephanie Bond, Inc. All rights reserved.

Article first appeared in *Romance Sells*, a publication of Romance Writers of America.