

Throw a Beach Bash in Your Store

by Stephanie Bond

To encourage your customers to buy those latest romance releases to read by the pool this summer or while on vacation, consider throwing a beach bash right in your store! Here are a few tips to organize an event that would make even Frankie and Annette proud:

- Make your beach bash an occasion. Plan to have the bash for an entire week or a long weekend.
- Post vacation posters and book posters in your store window to bring in traffic.
- Have your employees dress the part—Hawaiian shirts, plastic leis, sunglasses.
- Put summertime props in your store—folding beach chairs, bright towels, big umbrellas, and beach balls.
- Put up posters to encourage your customers to stock up: Do you have enough romance novels to get you through the summer?
- Feature endcaps of ‘Sizzling Summer Reads’ and include employee picks.
- Offer incentives to buy in bulk such as ‘Buy Four Books, Get One Free.’
- Consider printing up ‘postcard’ bookmarks with a summery theme and a slogan to reinforce the message of stocking up on summer reading material to give to customers.
- If you have a mall or strip mall location, post a dressed-up employee outside the door and pass out the bookmarks to passersby.
- Consider giving away a canvas tote (beach bag) for purchases over a certain dollar amount.
- Have a drawing for a beach bag tote full of romance novels, suntan lotion, beach toys, etc.
- Sponsor a multi-author signing, and encourage the authors to dress in the beach party theme.
- Have an employee emcee the event, playing beach music and shmoozing with customers about where they’re going on vacation.
- Serve fruit punch to your customers. Give out ‘tanning tattoos’ as door prizes.
- Consider posting your romance expert employee in summer garb relaxing in a folding chair under an umbrella, surrounded by stacks of romance novels. He/she can give recommendations to customers.
- Arrange for a travel agent to set up a table in your store with vacation brochures and freebies (such as keychains, refrigerator magnets, et cetera) for your customers.

With a little creativity and ingenuity, you can bag a hot sales week of steamy summer reads—and have fun in the process! ~**SBond**

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