



## 2008 GUIDEBOOK

Promoting Independent Bookstores

PASSION ■ PERSONALITY ■ CHARACTER ■ COMMUNITY ■ KNOWLEDGE

**Book Sense** is the marketing campaign launched in 1999 by the American Booksellers Association on behalf of its member bookstores with storefront operations. The goal of the Book Sense program is to increase visibility and raise consumer awareness of the unique qualities of independent bookstores. The **Book Sense Publisher Partner** program was established to provide an efficient and effective way for publishers to reach this market and increase sales.

There are six key components in the Book Sense Publisher Partner Program:

- The **Book Sense Picks** Lists, including regular monthly, Quarterly Children's, annual Summer Paperback and Reading Group Suggestions, and seasonal Specialty Top Ten Lists
- The monthly **White Box and Red Box** Mailings, Quarterly Children's Mailings
- The **Advance Access** Program
- The weekly National and Regional Book Sense **Bestseller Lists**, and **biweekly Specialty Bestseller Lists**
- The National **Book Sense Gift Card** Program
- **BookSense.com**

Book Sense partners with publishers as a means of underwriting the program. Partnership is available to any publisher with at least five titles currently in print. Book Sense seeks a commitment of a portion of unclaimed independent bookstore co-op funds or other funds legally available to any marketing program solicitation. These funds, by mutual agreement, will primarily support the Book Sense Picks Lists, monthly mailings, and other Book Sense marketing and advertising opportunities.

Publishers not wishing to become formal Publisher Partners may, at the discretion of staff, be allowed to participate in some of the Book Sense programs. Please see each description below for special terms.

Publishers may participate in the Book Sense program in the following ways:

### **I. Monthly White Box and Red Box Mailings, Quarterly Children's Mailings**

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These mailings invite direct publisher participation and include communication and information sharing opportunities with over 1200 Book Sense stores. Materials provided by publishers feature news and updates on publishing programs and include galleys, Advance Readers Copies, and finished books that booksellers read, consider stocking and handselling, and nominating to the various Book Sense Picks Lists.

- **The White Box Mailing** is sent to 900 participating Book Sense stores and is comprised of galleys, ARCs, excerpt booklets, posters, sell sheets, blads, easelbacks, shelftalkers, and other promotional materials that Publisher Partners would like to make available to independent booksellers in support of their marketing programs.
- **The Red Box Mailing** offers publishers a faster way to get time-sensitive materials into the hands of booksellers. Designed to serve as a monthly "In-Store Marketing Action Kit," the Red Box contains the store's initial quantity of the latest Book Sense Picks fliers, any scheduled Top Ten List pads, as well as other timely news and information from ABA and Book Sense. Items that publishers may provide for the Red Box include shelftalkers, easelbacks, bookmarks, posters, or other point-of-purchase materials to tie into those titles chosen by booksellers as Book Sense Picks and other recent releases; seasonal catalogs; sell sheets and/or catalog copy for any off-the-list titles; special offers with

specific deadlines; and other late-breaking news about titles, authors, tours, confirmed media appearances, etc. Red Boxes will land in all 1,200+ Book Sense bookstores by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

- The **Quarterly Children's Mailings** offer publishers the opportunity to have a combined Red and White Box mailing dedicated solely to materials of interest to children's—only stores, as well as those stores with active children's sections. Mailings are scheduled for mid-February, mid-May, mid-August, and mid-November, and carry galleys, ARC's, F&G's, finished books, and other materials that a Publisher Partner wishes to make available to this target audience. Launched in 2007, the Children's Box is sent to all 900 stores currently receiving the monthly White Box.

*While there is no guarantee that participation in a box mailing leads to a title being named a Book Sense Pick or Notable, there is a demonstrated correlation between inclusion and subsequent selection to the various Book Sense Picks Lists.*

Details on the White Box, Red Box, and Quarterly Children's Mailings, including sample rates and schedules, are attached as Appendices A through F.

Publishers who are not Book Sense Publisher Partners may participate in the White Box, Red Box, or Quarterly Children's Mailings at the discretion of Book Sense staff, and at a different rate schedule than those shown in the Appendices.

## **2. Advance Access**

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The Advance Access Program allows Book Sense stores to learn about galleys, reading copies, or finished books that are available for review by way of bimonthly aggregated email offerings. Bookseller responses and requests are sent directly back to the publisher. Non-Partners are charged a participation fee of either \$50 or \$100 per title for this program; the fee is waived for Publisher Partners.

A custom Advance Access email program is available for Publisher Partners only, at the cost of \$100. This single-publisher offering must contain a minimum of five titles, with a maximum of 20. The timing of the email will be determined by Book Sense and the Publisher Partner.

Further details on Advance Access, including the format and submission directions, are contained on Appendix G, attached.

## **3. The Book Sense Picks**

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Each month 1,200 Book Sense bookstores receive the printed Book Sense Picks fliers containing the heart and soul of the Book Sense Program – bookseller recommendations. The fliers are distributed via the monthly Red Box mailing. Participating booksellers provide recommendations for books that they have enjoyed reading and look forward to handselling in their bookstores. Book Sense collects and tabulates these recommendations and produces monthly Book Sense Picks lists, as well as a variety of specialty lists throughout the year including quarterly Children's lists, Summer Paperback, and Reading Group Suggestions, as well as themed Top Ten lists tied to industry initiatives such as Poetry Month, Audiobooks Month, and Banned Books Week, and seasonal promotions for Halloween, Valentine's Day, and Easter/Passover.

For books chosen to the Book Sense Picks List and other Specialty Lists, a Publisher Partner may produce easelback posters, shelftalkers, or other promotional materials to be included in the monthly Red Box mailings. **Once a book is chosen for a Book Sense Picks monthly or specialty list, the Publisher Partner will be asked to pledge funds to support the printing and distribution of the Picks List according to the suggested Book Sense Picks Rate Card, attached as Appendix H.**

## **4. Advertising**

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Publisher Partners receive discounted pricing for advertising in *Bookselling This Week*, the e-newsletter produced by the American Booksellers Association for the bookselling and publishing trades. Currently, *BTW* has a circulation of 13,000, comprised of booksellers, publishers, agents, writers, distributors, and wholesalers. *BTW*, found online at [news.bookweb.org](http://news.bookweb.org), is updated several times during the week. Once a week, subscribers receive an email, the *BTW Front Page*, with headlines and teasers for new articles. *BTW Front Page* contains five ad positions. For more details and rates for *BTW* advertising, which also includes classifieds, see Appendix I, attached.

## 5. Electronic Gift Card Sponsorship

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Publisher Partners have the opportunity to produce custom co-branded, limited edition electronic Book Sense Gift Cards with coordinating presenters for use in participating Book Sense stores nationwide. The sponsor will design the cards and presenters as specified by Book Sense, with a minimum quantity of 10,000 cards and 10,000 presenters per promotion, or 20,000 exposures. Sponsors have the option of up to four different face designs per card order.

For more on costs and production specifications see Appendix J. (**Distributors:** Please contact us for details on how you and your publishers can participate in this program.)

## 6. BookSense.com

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The BookSense.com Co-op Reimbursement Program is designed to help publishers promote and increase the sales of their books. It also gives booksellers a way to claim unused newsletter co-op that may be used to offset a portion of the monthly cost of their BookSense.com web sites. Participating Publisher Partners determine the titles and parameters of their promotion, and the store is required to place a minimum order of at least five copies or as is prescribed in the publisher's guidelines. In addition, stores must feature the books in an in-store display with signage noting "As Seen on Our Web site." Bookstores participating in the co-op program must also report weekly to the Book Sense Bestseller List.

Please contact either Mark Nichols ([mark@booksense.com](mailto:mark@booksense.com)) or Len Vlahos, Director of BookSense.com ([len@booksense.com](mailto:len@booksense.com)) for more details on designing an offer for BookSense.com.

### Additional Publisher Partner Benefits

Other benefits of Partnership include the free use of the Book Sense store mailing list (a \$500 value) up to four times per year; the use of the Book Sense logo in advertising and other publications, Book Sense stickers and other promotional materials, a first look at the weekly National Bestseller List, and first access to future programs.

### Becoming a Publisher Partner

Becoming a Publisher Partner involves pledging either unused co-op funds or marketing dollars that would be legally available to any store, chain, or organization. The current suggested minimum pledge for a calendar year is \$2,500. These funds remain totally in the Publisher's control until a published title is chosen for a Book Sense Picks List and/or the Publisher participates in one of the monthly mailings, advertising, or other Book Sense marketing programs. Publishers receive an invoice for a previously decided upon amount only after the marketing effort is completed. If, at the end of the year, there are unused funds remaining, those monies are the Publisher's to either roll into the next year's Book Sense pledge, or simply absorb back into assets. **At no time are Publishers invoiced for any amount not tied to an actual marketing initiative.**

All Publisher Partners must become ABA Associate members. You may do this by completing the form located at: <http://www.bookweb.org/membership/join/supplemental.html>. If you have questions about membership, please call Joe Dawson at 914-591-2665, x 6632.

Thank you for your generous support of independent bookselling! Please feel free to contact any member of the Book Sense Marketing team with questions.

Sincerely,

Mark Nichols, Meg Smith, Jill Perlstein, and the Book Sense Marketing Team

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# PUBLISHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHO ARE THE BOOK SENSE MEMBERS?

There are 1,200+ independent bookstore members in the Book Sense program; 500+ of these stores report to the Book Sense Bestseller List on a regular basis and ALL stores are eligible to nominate books for the Book Sense Picks List and other Specialty Lists.

## WHAT IS THE BOOK SENSE PICKS LIST?

Hundreds of independent booksellers nominate both their favorite new and/or backlist titles and from those submissions, an eclectic and diverse monthly list of books is created. Each month, the top 20 bookseller-nominated books—Book Sense Picks—are produced in a printed flier, complete with jacket image, bibliographic information and a bookseller quote. A second group of 20 titles, the Book Sense Notables, is line-listed on the back page of the flier, posted on the ABA website ([www.bookweb.org](http://www.bookweb.org)) for booksellers to download, and at Book Sense.com for consumers. Each of the 1,200+ Book Sense stores receives a quantity of the printed fliers for use in displays and for customers. This monthly flier has a total circulation of over 450,000 copies. The titles on each list become eligible for in-store promotions with special placement and signage at the discretion of the store, taking into account their customer base and market focus.

## HOW DO I GET MY BOOK ON THE BOOK SENSE PICKS LIST?

First you must get your book in the hands of the booksellers. There are two ways to do this—the Advance Access Program, and the Book Sense Monthly White Box and Quarterly Children's White Box Mailings. After that, it's up to the booksellers to send a nomination for the book to Dan Cullen, Book Sense Picks Editor-in-Chief. The final Book Sense Picks are based on the quantity of nominations received as well as quality of the nominations (i.e., how passionate the booksellers are about the book). Nominations may be emailed to [picks@booksense.com](mailto:picks@booksense.com), faxed to 914-591-2720, or submitted using a convenient electronic form found at <http://www.bookweb.org/booksense/picks/nominate>

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BOOK GETS ON THE BOOK SENSE PICKS LIST?

Making the List opens up your book to a variety of marketing possibilities. The book will be placed on Book Sense tables and in window displays at independents across the country. You will be given the option of using the Book Sense logo on reprints of the title or in your catalogs or to create shelf-talkers. And, if all goes well, this promotion may possibly catapult the title onto the Book Sense National or Regional Bestseller Lists!

Initially, when your book makes the List, you are asked to commit a mutually determined amount of marketing dollars to the Book Sense program. These funds go toward covering the cost of the production and mailing of the consumer fliers to all stores, as well as to the cost of other marketing materials produced by Book Sense in support of your titles.

## WHAT IS THE BOOK SENSE BESTSELLER LIST?

Over 500 member bookstores regularly report their weekly sales to Book Sense and this data determines both the national and various regional Book Sense Bestseller Lists. A title does not have to be on the Book Sense Picks list to make the Bestseller List, but it gives it a better chance at increasing sales and, consequently, a better chance at making either the National or one or more of the Regional Bestseller lists.

## HOW DO I GET MY BOOK ON THE BOOK SENSE BESTSELLER LIST?

The first step is to get your book or a galley of the book into the hands of the booksellers through one or more of the marketing programs offered by Book Sense. Independent booksellers are experts in the art of "handselling" a title. Your goal is to have these professionals read your book, pass it along to colleagues to stir up further excitement, order copies for their stores, and passionately recommend it to their customers. The resulting sales may lead to achieving a ranking on the Book Sense National or Regional Bestseller Lists.

## WHAT IS BOOKSENSE.COM?

BookSense.com is a central traffic-aggregating site AND hundreds of individual store sites (including TatteredCover.com, BooksandBooks.com, BooksInc.net, and many more), all sharing a 3-million-title database, state-of-the-art transaction and fulfillment processes, and sophisticated content management tools. Customers use BookSense.com to search for their closest independent bookstore as well as see the latest *Book Sense Picks* and Bestsellers.

We ask that any publisher who lists sources for ordering on their website (i.e. B&N.com, Amazon.com, and other sites) also include a link to BookSense.com .