

## ***Could Your Bookstore (or Library) Benefit from a Reader Greeter?***

**by Stephanie Bond**

If your customer service is waning, or if you feel as if you're not able to communicate special deals and programs to your customers effectively, consider employing a "reader greeter." The idea of a "greeter" isn't new—major discount retailers have employed greeters to great success. Greeters typically are the "face" of the retail business, and give customers that warm fuzzy we're-glad-you're-here feeling. Think of the greeter as the host or hostess for your store while you and your staff handle the nuts and bolts operations. If you have a free-standing or mall store, the greeter can meet the customers just inside the entrance and hand out bookmarks, newsletters, coupons, sales bulletins, etc. If you have an independent location with passing foot traffic, consider placing a greeter outside the door to try to lure customers inside.

Who makes the best greeters? Traditionally, retired persons are employed in these positions for their dependability and general good manners, but don't overlook other people who might be interested in a part-time job, such as teenagers, teachers or college students on break for the summer, or even pre-teens who are too young to obtain a work permit, but could work a minimal number of hours a week as contract laborers. Also, consider individuals who are physically challenged. The only requirements for a bookstore greeter are enthusiasm, a friendly demeanor, and a love for books! In fact, if you're looking for a greeter, you might want to approach some of your best customers, who might be willing to be work a few hours a week in return for deep merchandise discounts.

Consider implementing a greeter program for a trial period, then track the direction of sales and general customer satisfaction to see if a reader greeter can make a difference in your bottom line. ~**SBond**