

# *Establish Your Own Bestseller List*

by **Stephanie Bond**

The *New York Times* has one. *USA Today* has one. Waldenbooks has one. *Essence* has one. If you belong to an independent bookstore association, the group might have one: a bestseller list. Bestseller lists are popular among customers because, in general, people want to do what everyone else is doing, including reading the same books. From the bookseller's perspective, a bestseller list can be an effective merchandising tool, a way to winnow down a store's selection for the reader into one convenient list. For time-pressured readers, bestseller lists help ensure that they'll get a good read for their money. You can use a big-name bestseller list to guide your sales....or you can create your own.

Establishing your own bestseller list:

- allows you to promote the types of books your customers are actually reading, no matter how obscure or how old the printing.
- will make your customers feel that their literary choices are being acknowledged, and that you are in touch with their reading preferences.
- can generate publicity for your store if you offer your weekly list to a local newspaper.
- can generate clout for you and recognition for your store if your list becomes recognized within the industry or genre.
- can lend synergy to your sales since readers can get standard bestseller lists anywhere, then pick up additional reading suggestions from *your* bestseller list.

If you decide to create your own bestseller list, don't keep it a secret!

- Post the list prominently in your store with a corresponding display of titles. In addition to offering the list to local newspapers, check with regional newspapers who often list localized bestseller lists in tandem with national bestseller lists.
- Send the list to all the public libraries in the area.

**(continued)**

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- Let publisher sales reps and publishers know about your list and equate the list into units sold.
- Consider giving your list a catchy name to make it more marketing friendly and try to get the list posted on a newspaper website or a news channel website.
- When a book makes the list, send the author an email to let them him/her know and ask them to post the recognition on their own website. Authors whose books aren't eligible for or don't have a large enough print run to make one of the bigger lists will be pleased to know they've found a niche audience in your customers.

You already track sales in your store, so why not go one step further and create your own bestseller list? With a little organization and publicity, your bestseller list could become a watched sales barometer within the publishing industry! ~**SBond**