

# *Selling Romance to Your Boss*

by Stephanie Bond

You're completely sold on the fact that romance customers are the type of loyal, volume-buying customers your store should be trying to foster. But your boss is another matter—never read a romance novel and doesn't plan to, begrudgingly sets aside one measly rack for those 'trashy books,' and ignores your ideas to cultivate romance customers. So how can you convert your boss into a romance-friendly bookseller?

**Numbers don't lie.** Visit the RWA website "statistics" page, then print it for your boss. It's hard to ignore the fact that the romance genre represents over half of the paperback fiction sold in the U.S. Point out that your store isn't getting its share of those incredible sales dollars.

**History is behind you.** Inform your boss that many *NYT* Bestselling authors got their start in romance—Janet Evanovich, Sandra Brown, Tami Hoag, and Iris Johansen, just to name a few. And point out how many books on the current bestselling lists are romance novels.

**Meet in the middle.** Trade sample reads—offer to read one of the boss's favorite books if he/she will read one of your favorite romance novels.

**Make the industry accessible.** Take your boss to a local RWA chapter meeting, or to a local romance writers conference.

**Be the romance expert.** Offer to give an in-store overview of the romance genre to the employees at the next staff meeting. Introduce the subgenres of paranormal, inspirational, romantic suspense, romantic comedy, multi-cultural, and young adult. Be armed with numbers, a copy of a romance fan magazine, and bring along the most prolific romance reader you know!

**Enlist help.** If other employees are romance fans, recruit their help in winning over your boss. Or contact a local romance author and ask for his/her assistance.

**Be organized.** Map out a conservative, measurable plan to increase romance sales: increasing shelf space, starting a romance readers group, sponsoring a romance author signing, launching a volume-buying romance card, et cetera. Start slowly, and as your ideas produce results, your boss will probably become more flexible.

**Be diligent.** Fostering a romance clientele can take time. Romance readers who might have visited your store and been disappointed at the selection will have to be wooed away from other stores that are already giving them what they want.

**Share the credit.** Once romance sales start to pick up, share the credit with your boss—you'll be rewarded for making him/her look good. ~**SBond**

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