Building A Social Media Event to Drive Sales That Gets Results: Fountain Bookstore Strategy Guide

- Read this entire document through. Email Kelly Justice with any questions: info@fountainbookstore.com

- 6 months out: Pick ONE project: a book, an author, an event to promote and a date. Pick something you and involved staff find inspiring! Don’t force a seemingly “good” financial prospect.
  - ____________________ (project)
  - ____________________ (deadline for purchase)
  - Get a three ring binder with a pocket
  - Place this worksheet in the notebook pocket
  - Give the notebook an easily identifiable name on its spine
  - Give it a permanent home until the project is done

- 6 months out: Determine if you are going to use an e-commerce platform, Shopify-like alternative, or both. 
  - Skip next two sections if you will be using the Shopify-type option.

- 6 months out: Do a website review if you are planning on selling online. No one likes using an ugly, sketchy-looking, out-of-date, clunky-experience site. DIY with the help of ABA or a web developer familiar with book data. If you can afford it, I also used Matchbook Marketing: http://welovebooksellers.com.
  - Have several people try to buy stuff on your site using different browsers and platforms.
  - Have several people try to buy stuff using mobile app on tablets and different phones.
  - Gather data, figure out where problems are. Get them fixed now. Ask for help if you need.
  - Enable Paypal if you have not already
  - Create an “escrow” account (or Paypal) to set money aside to pay for inventory/shipping

- 5.5 months out: Determine how you will communicate with your staff and start practicing on it.
  - Pick a platform. Use it forever. We like Slack. Commit to yours: ____________________

- 5.5 months out: Plan your attack!
  - Meet with any partners in the project in person or virtually to plan social media strategy
    - Determine your main platform (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
    - Set dates on a calendar for announcements from all parties
    - Put that plan in the notebook
  - Use your chosen method of internal staff communication (above) to share all this information and put someone in charge of making sure it gets done.

- 5 months out: Add a pop-up to your site to get email addresses. (Highly Recommended!!! These steps are for people who use Constant Contact or MailChimp. We use MailChimp)
  - Ask ABA or your web developer to put that code thingy in your homepage so this will work
  - Sign up for MailMunch (or equivalent) to complete the process
  - Call ABA or your tech advisor or a 12 year old repeatedly when you can’t figure this out
  - Don’t forget that the mobile has to be set up differently and do that

- 4 months out: Research your shipping options (if applicable)
  - Determine the properties of what you are going to ship (usually available on iPage)
    - if at all possible, obtain the actual item to be shipped
    - ____________________ height/width/length
    - ____________________ weight
    - ____________________ fragile? special packaging?
    - ____________________ mail service? (we use stamps.com)
Determine your costs of shipping (at the time of the promotion, not current...look for any planned price increases or ask about them), packaging materials, and labor per package. Create a spreadsheet or just write down all the intel gathered on this. Add to binder.

Train yourself and your involved staff

3 months out: Start pushing
- Using your calendar, have your team start beating the drums!!!
- A calendar is great, but be flexible. Interact!!! Someone retweets you? You love them! Send them hearts! Any mention of your promotion deserves a thank you. Continue til promo date and beyond

2 months out: Practical matters
- Over-schedule staff based on initial response, or enlist and train volunteers
- Inform your shipping services (if applicable) that they need to be ready; find a key person
- Order your supplies
- Continue to promote with your partners
- Double-check your shipping costs
- Plan when you are going to purchase inventory

1 month out: Final stages
- Design push marketing flier/bookmark
- Have push marketing printed
- Create “thank you” email
- Make final arrangements with all parties
- Order books asap! Use money in escrow account, make sure you have enough left for shipping

2 weeks out: Last blast
- Last blasts go out from your partner parties and your bookstore
- Emphasize the cut-off date for ordering books/tickets

1 week out to Day Zero: Start filling orders/final touches on event
- Fill all orders/have event
- Be sure to send tracking for shipments/ instructions for event
- Take lots of pictures and share on social media, tagging partners

Day Zero to As Long As It Takes: Follow Through With Purpose
- Report your sales the following week
- Use your communications platform to talk between follow-up team
- Use a number system to identify transactions
- Celebrate!!! Preferably on social media with lots and lots of pictures
- Take care of customer service issues immediately, within the channel they are received.
- Monitor all social media channels, thank/favorite *every* person who tags you in a post.
- Save screenshots for inspiration
- Send a thank you to all your partners in the project

1 week after
- Do a post-game analysis as quickly as possible to identify weaknesses. Document them.

General Guidelines:
- Thank staff and volunteers often
- Use physical and digital pictures to inspire staff and volunteers
- Watch for burn out, including in oneself
- Take advantage of “teachable moments,” in the areas of customer service especially
- Celebrate victories and analyze why they worked
- Get over defeats quickly, but not until after you have analyzed why they failed, no matter how painful
- Always have another project on the horizon