

# BookSmarts


A quarterly newsletter from Nebraska Book Company >> www.nebook.com >> Fall 2005

## NBC Annual Sales Meeting Fires Up Reps for the Coming Year →→

**THIS SEPTEMBER, NEBRASKA BOOK COMPANY (NBC)** sales representatives and regional managers from all around the United States gathered in Lincoln, Neb., for their annual meeting. The event covered two full days and evenings designed to motivate and educate the company's sales force to meet the challenges of the coming year.

According to Jerry Hiller, Nebraska Book's National Sales Manager, the conference was "extremely productive." The meeting's theme, "It's Time," was conceived to pay tribute to the company's long and storied past while pointing the way to its future. This was illustrated by a historical timeline created for the event that featured photographs culled from throughout the company's history, ending with a blank space representing the future. Attendees were invited to consider what would fill that space and what they would do to contribute to the company's continuing success.

Although NBC's sales reps work as individuals, each with his or her own territory, they all are integral members of the NBC team. As Hiller puts it, "We simply couldn't do what we do without everyone's contribution."



To help reinforce this philosophy, the company invited ex-University of Nebraska football player Aaron Davis to speak at the meeting. Though he doesn't consider himself a motivational speaker, Davis spoke of the importance of teamwork and how that applies to NBC. As he put it, "No matter how talented, a quarterback can't make the big plays without a solid offensive line, and no member of that line is more important than the left tackle." He explained, "The left tackle protects the quarterback's blind side; if he fails to do his job, the quarterback can't do his." He concluded by noting that though the quarterback is the one that gets the glory and does all the interviews, it's the offensive line that deserves a great deal of the credit and that "everybody here is somebody's left tackle."



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- Jerry Hiller, NBC

In addition to Davis' inspirational speech, various educational breakout sessions were held to get attendees up to speed on the latest developments in NBC's Complementary Services division, including Connect2One, Specialty Books and others. These intensive educational sessions help to arm the sales

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## “The left tackle

protects the quarterback’s blind side; if he fails to do his job, the quarterback can’t do his... everybody here is somebody’s left tackle.”

- Aaron Davis, former University of Nebraska football player, demonstrating the importance of teamwork and how that applies to NBC.

force with the information they’ll need to make sure their customers have the right inventory, point-of-sale, e-commerce and marketing solutions. According to Hiller, “Even though we’re always focused on acquiring new business, we’re even more focused on taking care of our loyal customers. After all, without them, we wouldn’t exist.”

In addition to the informative daytime meetings, social events were held on the first and third evenings of the conference. The first night, an informal gathering was organized at the hotel, complete with libations and live musical entertainment. This allowed participants to interact with people they typically don’t see very often, reestablishing old friendships and forging new ones.

As the information gleaned during the intensive daytime sessions can be a lot to process, the second evening was cleared to allow attendees to “recharge their batteries.” The third and final evening was reserved for the annual awards banquet (see inset for awards).

In addition to the various honors bestowed on NBC personnel, the awards banquet provided an opportunity for the company to acknowledge the retirement of Bill Allen, Textbook Division senior vice president. Allen’s tribute concluded with a heartwarming video produced especially for the occasion.

The next day, the 30 sales reps and five regional managers returned to their respective territories, servicing customers from California to Maine and all parts in-between. According to Hiller, “Everyone left excited and invigorated.” He continues, “I think the meeting generated a lot of energy for the reps to take out into the field, which is where they are now.” Hiller

concludes, “This year, we really wanted to instill a sense of urgency and purpose – our industry is marked by rapid change, and we need to be able to respond quickly – and I think we definitely succeeded.”

## 2005 Awards



John Johnson

### *Business Growth Award*

John Johnson, Bill Van Voorhis

### *Purchases Growth Award*

Ken Gee



Bill Van Voorhis

### *Sales Growth Award*

Joe Gosset

### *Regional Manager of the Year Award*

Andrea Dupree



Ken Gee

### *The Janet Mounce Sales Rep of the Year Award*

Steve Morris



Joe Gosset



Andrea Dupree & Steve Morris

# Textbook Division Senior VP Bill Allen Retires

**WHEN BILL ALLEN GOT HIS FIRST JOB** in the textbook industry, Dwight Eisenhower was winding down his second presidential term and Elvis Presley had just been discharged from the Army. Almost 45 years to the day later, Allen is making the transition to retirement. He chuckles, “Retirement is a bittersweet thing. You look forward to being there, but look what you had to do to achieve it – you had to get old!”

Over his 31-year career with NBC, Allen rose from the position of book buyer to his final station as senior vice president of the Textbook Division. During that time, he’s seen many changes in the industry in general and at NBC in particular,

**“We built a really good team over the years, and it became bigger than any one individual.”**

including the advent of personal computers, cell phones and the Internet. One thing he hasn’t seen, however, is a great deal of employee turnover. In fact, many of his longtime NBC colleagues are still with the company. As to why NBC seems to retain such dedicated long-term employees, he says, “We built a really good team over the years, and it became bigger than any one individual.” He continues, “The people here really value and admire this company – its success transcends the desire for personal advancement.”

When Allen considers his myriad achievements, one in particular stands out. “I guess I’m most proud of our Partnership Program, which I helped launch in 1996,” Allen says.” He explains, “It really epitomizes a different way to approach the marketplace – one that truly benefits our customers.” He continues, “And that’s not just business jargon; as it’s a non-binding relationship – they

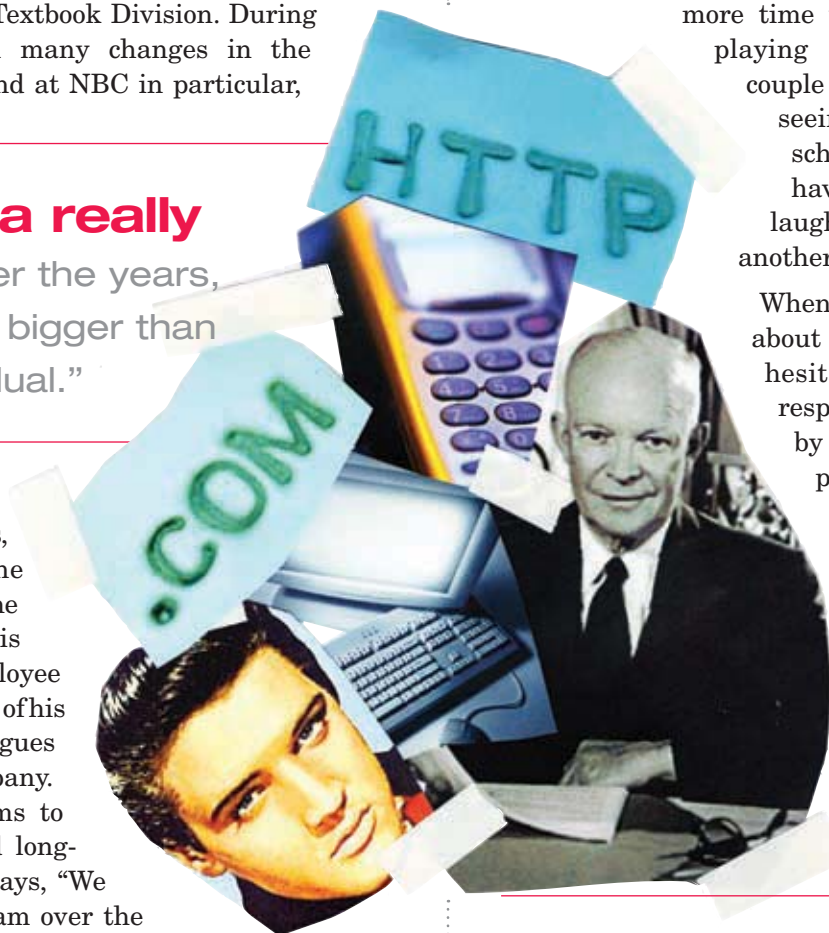
can walk away at any time – we really have to make sure that our customer-partners are completely satisfied. And, so far, it’s been a tremendous success.”

Now that he’s no longer at NBC, Allen plans on spending

more time with his wife of 21 years playing golf and traveling. The couple is also in the process of seeing their daughter off to school. “My wife thought she’d have an empty nest,” Allen laughs, “Now it’s been filled by another adult!”

When asked what he’ll miss most about working at NBC, without hesitation, Allen gives the response most often mentioned by retiring NBC staff: “The people.” His colleagues will miss him, too, as was abundantly evident at his sendoff at this year’s annual sales meeting.

Bill Allen retired on June 30, 2005. He was succeeded by Mike Kelly.



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# NBCtextbooks.com Offers 24-Hour Ordering and More



**NEBRASKA BOOK COMPANY (NBC)** has always offered a variety of methods by which managers can place orders: telephone, fax and EasyLink, to name a few. To make ordering even easier, two years ago, the company created NBCtextbooks.com, a Web-based order fulfillment portal that can be used securely at any time of the day or night and from anywhere Internet access is available.

The site has already found great favor with bookstore managers across the country – especially during hectic book rush. The site's 24-hour ordering capability allows managers to place orders at their convenience, rather than during regular business hours. This means managers can even check inventory and place orders when they go home at night or in the morning before they arrive at the store.

Though the site's primary purpose is order fulfillment, NBCtextbooks.com offers NBC customers much more. For example, the site also serves as a promotional resource for bookstore managers, providing downloadable marketing materials to help stores promote their buyback efforts,

including camera-ready ads, eye-catching posters and informative brochures, all produced by NBC's Marketing Services division.

But it's the ability to browse inventory and order product on one's own schedule that has most bookstore managers excited. There is virtually no lag in order fulfillment. When an order is placed online, it's just as if it had been created in the company's order-entry department. In addition, NBC makes an effort to ship orders the same day they're placed, depending on the time of day at which the order was made.

Security and system availability concerns have been assiduously addressed by NBC. The company thoroughly tested the site at length before its launch and has experienced very good uptime. And, since no credit card information is used in placing orders, security is very high. In fact, to prevent materials from being inadvertently ordered and shipped to the wrong store, each customer must enter a secure password before placing an order.

Managers can, of course, still order books from NBC's telephone sales representatives. Many people, after all, still prefer to transact business in a person-to-person manner. However, after business hours, when telephone ordering is no longer possible, managers can still make sure they have the product they need to get their student-customers ready for class. It's easy – all they have to do is log on to NBCtextbooks.com.

## We Want Your Business–Not Your Customers

- We believe the student is your customer.
- We believe the bookstore is our customer.
- We believe in integrity in business dealings.
- We believe college bookstores should be independent.
- We believe in providing solutions to keep your business independent.



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