

BOOKsmarts

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Nebraska Book Company Increases Bookstore Productivity With New Wireless Solutions

Imagine large crowds of screaming fans anxious to celebrate the team's win by sporting a sweatshirt with the college logo, but they have to wait to stop at the bookstore.

Imagine hundreds of students in their dorm wishing they didn't have to worry about long lines during buyback.

You can leave these customers smiling while increasing profits for the bookstore. Nebraska Book Company provides a convenient solution for your store with innovative point-of-purchase and wireless technology.

Cash Register in a Bag is a portable cash register giving bookstores' staffs the ability to efficiently complete transactions in various locations. It comes in a custom-made bag with rollers that is easy to move from place to place.

The Cash Register in a Bag was launched at the 2003 CAMEX Show with favorable responses from attendees and customers.

"The development of our products is driven by our customers' needs and on-going changes in technology," says Walt Timmerman, manager of System Sales. "Meeting the needs of our customers is a top priority."



Why is this stand-alone wireless POS system unique?

Timmerman explains that the Cash Register in a Bag is a fully functioning point-of-sale system, including:

- Monitor with full function screen
- Scanner
- Printer
- Cash till
- UAG stripe readers

"When bookstore sales staff are in remote areas, it is sometimes impossible to plug in a system," says Timmerman. "The Cash Register in a Bag is a huge benefit because it is battery operated and can function from anywhere."

The system can also be used as a back office workstation for busy times when another register is needed to assist with sales.

The Power of the Palm™!

The SPT 1800 pen-notepad computer is another new wireless in system introduced by Nebraska Book Company at the 2003 CAMEX Show. The Palm™ combines integrated scanning, sophisticated wireless connectivity and powerful processing capabilities.

"The Palm offers bookstore managers another opportunity to provide excellent customer service," says Timmerman.

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Customers Connect With NBC at 2003 CAMEX Trade Show



THE NEBRASKA BOOK COMPANY (NBC) booths buzzed with activity during the 2003 CAMEX Trade Show. NBC took this opportunity to connect with potential and current customers face-to-face, demonstrating

the hottest trends in the college bookstore industry. The newest offering from NBC, the point-of-sales wireless system, was well received by attendees.

“We had a tremendous response from everyone we spoke with during CAMEX,” says President and Chief Executive Officer Mark Opegard.

A record year in attendance, coupled with word-of-mouth from attendees, filled the six NBC workstations that hosted product demonstrations throughout the show.

“Word-of-mouth is a key element of our success as an industry leader,” says Opegard. “We have such wonderful customers, and they are our best spokespeople.”

NBC exhibited its complete line of products and services at its newly renovated display booth. The company’s college textbooks divisions – Connect2One, CampusHub, NBC PRISM, College Store Design and Marketing Services – were also prominently featured in St. Louis.

Opegard says that NBC representatives maintain strong, long-lasting relationships with customers across the country, and they look forward to seeing them at this event. “CAMEX is another opportunity for representatives to meet with customers and thank them for their business personally,” says Opegard. He believes that the show provides representatives with the perfect venue to demonstrate products and services that will enable stores to maintain their competitiveness in the industry.

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For bookstore representatives who could not attend CAMEX, NBC representatives are available to demonstrate the new point-of-sale wireless systems, as well as other products that can make a difference in your collegiate marketplace. Call your NBC representative if you would like to learn more about products and services.



Technology Has Changed Nebraska Book Company, but Relationships Endure the Test of Time



JOHN BAUMEISTER

has spent more than 25 years working at Nebraska Book Company, Inc. (NBC), and in that time, the long-standing relationships he has built with customers and employees have become the highlight of his career. As

Assistant Treasurer at NBC, Baumeister manages all cash handling for the Nebraska Book Company buyers. But, his career at the company began when he was a junior in high school, stocking books and working in the shipping room.

“The students weren't much older than I was when I first started buying,” smiles Baumeister. “Now, they are much, much younger.”

His love for connecting with students and bookstore staff hasn't changed over the years. Although his primary position at NBC has evolved, he continues to hold on to his roots by traveling to the University of Vermont four times a year to buy books.

Then and Now

The age, fashion and textbooks aren't the only things to change over the years, technology has evolved as well.

Initially, book buyers went to college bookstores to buy back books, using only a buyers guide and a list provided by the bookstore. Buyers made all packing and shipping arrangements, and had to rely on their brains – not computers – to manage buybacks.

“The technology of computers and scanners didn't exist,” says Baumeister. “We were mentally and physically exhausted by the end of each day.”

But technology has evolved over the last 10-12 years, and computers are now commonly found in most bookstores nationwide and are used to buy textbooks.

“Technology is the best thing that ever happened to us,” says Baumeister. “Students really seem to appreciate the use of computers as well.”

In fact, the use of technology offers bookstores, as well as NBC representatives, a higher level of credibility among college students, according to Baumeister. “They tend to trust the technology as being more accurate as they feel at ease with computers.”

Popularity of Buyback Grows

The technology isn't the only thing that's changed over time. Buyback has become more popular with students and bookstores. In one week's time at the University of Vermont (UVM), an average of 6,000

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students participate in buyback out of around 9,000 students total. Buys have also grown over the years.

“When I first started at UVM we purchased about 200 cartons full of books at each buy. Now, we purchase more than 650,” says Baumeister. “Most students are very happy with us and keep coming back each semester because we provide continuity and honesty, which builds trust with the students.”

College bookstore staffs have come to trust and believe in buyback with NBC. The University of Vermont's bookstore management recently presented Baumeister an award for his dedication and loyalty to the programs. Since John has had such a long-standing relationship with the store and its staff, he is considered an informal employee of the bookstore.

“I was very honored. But honestly, I am not the exception. There are many Nebraska Book Company representatives who work just as tirelessly on a regular basis to service their customers as I do,” he smiles.

Nebraska Book Company Provides Bookstores with Marketing Expertise for Their Buyback

CASH FOR YOUR BOOKS is prominently printed on a yellow poster in bright red. Students can't miss the bold poster tacked to a bulletin board or in a bookstore window. Gaining the attention of students during the buyback period is a priority for bookstore managers and Nebraska Book Company (NBC). As Assistant to the Director of Marketing and Layout and Design Coordinator for NBC buyback materials, Renae Reed works with bookstore management nationwide to drive students to their bookstores by providing strong advertising programs. Take an inside look at how Nebraska Book Company strives to offer tailored marketing materials in order to promote buyback.

A free service for participating bookstores, customized buyback advertising materials are prepared by NBC for bookstore managers as a value-added service. The most popular marketing pieces include:

- Posters
- Table tents
- Post cards
- Buyback mailers
- Student information brochures
- Flyers
- Yard signs



The busiest time of year for Reed is spring and fall. During this period, over 1 million post cards alone are printed and distributed to college students. All materials are ordered by store management about two months in advance in order to provide enough time for customized design and printing of each promotional item. Orders are shipped an average of four weeks in advance of buyback, which enables bookstore staff time to plan distribution or placement of the materials on campus.

“We get orders from over 400 bookstores during a six-week period each spring and fall,” says Reed. “Orders are just going up and up, as managers are becoming aware of these advertising opportunities. They see this as an added value for their stores.”

During off-peak periods in summer and winter, Reed plans state and regional displays and other marketing materials for Nebraska Book Company sales representatives. Additionally, advertising sample booklets are created to provide bookstore management ideas on creative ways to market their buyback to students.

For more information on marketing materials available for buyback – or other marketing needs – contact your Nebraska Book Company sales representative.

➤ ➤ **Renae Reed, layout and design coordinator for buyback materials at NBC, offers tips on how to catch the attention of students with promotional materials:**

- Keep all advertising materials clean – no clutter. You have 10 seconds to catch a student's attention.
- Use bright colors on advertising materials – yellow, red and black work best.
- Place the posters and table tents where students spend a great deal of time or where they walk past on a daily basis.
- Use more than one promotional piece to bring awareness of the buyback period.
- Make students aware of the value of buyback.
- Student newspapers carry your buyback message to a great number of students.
- Give-aways, drawings and contests draw students to your store during buyback.

Enrollment Trends Illustrate a Diverse Post-Secondary Population

AS A BOOKSTORE MANAGER, you can expect to see growing diversity in the student population, which means a varied customer base for you. Trends indicate that traditional four-year colleges are far from traditional in the composition of their student bodies. In fact, according to the DOE National Center for Education Statistics, the American college student population is overwhelmingly non-conventional: 75 percent of all college students in America are not high school graduates under the age of 23 who enter college directly after graduation.¹

In terms of the general college population, enrollment in degree-granting institutions is more than 17 million, up from 14.8 million in 1999.² While factors such as the state of the economy, financial aid opportunities and general population numbers influence who pursues a post-secondary education, it is possible to gain insight into the growing college student population by looking at national enrollment numbers according to race, ethnicity, age and gender.

In 2000, the majority of undergraduate students was women, and nearly one-third was composed of minority

students. In the minority segment, 25 percent was either Black or Hispanic and one-in-20 was Asian.³

Perhaps the most surprising trend in college enrollment is the decreasing number of male students. Females are attending college in greater numbers than males. The proportion of men ages 18 to 24 enrolled in college in 2000 was 32.6 percent, while the percentage of women in the same age group was 38.4 percent. This trend encompasses all ethnic and cultural groups, except one: Asians (including Pacific Islanders). More males than females of this segment participate in higher education.⁴

What do these numbers mean for bookstores? More time and effort must be dedicated to addressing the needs of a largely female population, as well as the growing non-White market segment. While the demographics, psychographics and ethnographics of the student population are changing, bookstores must tap into the opportunities presented by niche markets if they are to thrive and prosper in an increasingly diverse student population.

More women than men are attending college today, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders.



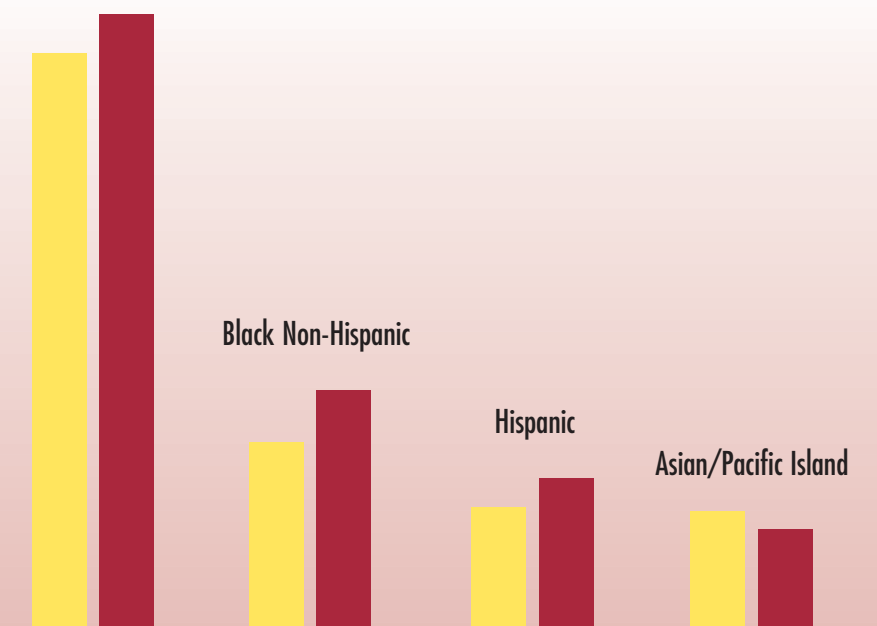
White Non-Hispanic

Male Female

Black Non-Hispanic

Hispanic

Asian/Pacific Island



1. www.universitybusiness.com/page.cfm?id=26
 2. www.universitybusiness.com/page.cfm?id=58

3. www.universitybusiness.com/page.cfm?id=26
 4. Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY, Number 109—July 2001

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What can the Palm do for your bookstore?

- **Item look-up** – scan items to retrieve prices, on-hand quantity, description and all inventory information.
- **Purchases** – scan items for purchase right on the sales floor.
- **Inventory** – spot check inventory or do a complete physical inventory for the fiscal year-end.
- **Receiving** – make operations easier while increasing productivity.

Timmerman says that the Palm continues to evolve, and NBC plans to offer customers the following new features in the upcoming year.

- **Course look-up** – students can look up courses and book titles for any term.
- **Point-of-Sale** – decrease the long check-out lines by suspending a transaction on this wireless system. Customers can retrieve it at any register without the need to re-scan.
- **Financial aid look-up** – students with financial assistance can access their balances with this device.
- **Buyback** – reduce the long lines by scanning in books that can be retrieved at any register without the need to re-scan.

“New technology offers new capabilities for bookstore staff, which results in increasing the store’s bottom line,” states Timmerman.

The Cash Register in a Bag, as well as the Palm, are fully supported by Nebraska Book Company’s customer service.

If you are interested in finding out more about these new technologies, contact System Sales at 1-800-869-0366, ext. 7727.



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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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