



# BookSaleList.com

*Good Friends. Fun events. Lots of Books!*

## **Book Sales and Fund-raising Guide**

Book sales are an excellent way to raise funds for your organization. Libraries, Friends of the Libraries, and even Animal Shelters can benefit from the revenue that book sales generate!

We've put this guide together from personal observations and various resources on the Internet. Feel free to contact us with your thoughts or advice on how you make your book sale run smoothly. We will happily add your insight to this guide. Also, let us know if there are additional resources that we can reference.

### **Organization**

Organization is key to holding an enjoyable and efficient book sale. As you begin to plan, make it clear what the sale is for and who the proceeds benefit. Usually this is as simple a statement as, "All proceeds benefit the Public Library."

Where will the sale be held? Is there sufficient room to hold all the tables and books? Consider various table layouts since there should be enough room between the tables for people, carrying books or a box of books, to browse.

Be sure that all the books are facing the same way to help visitors browse more quickly.

Are there corners or areas where people can store books? Many people will make several passes at a table, and carrying all the books they want to buy is difficult or impossible. If there are holding areas, or areas where people can stack their books while they shop, this lends to a more enjoyable experience.

Make labels for each table. They do not need to be fancy, an 8x10 paper held in a stand, with the table's category printed in large font (Religion, Philosophy, Fiction, Mystery, Romance, etc). Prices should also be clearly indicated on the labels.

Print up name tags for volunteers to use so that visitors know who to turn to for a question, help, or clarification. Office supply stores have name tag labels as well as name tag holders that can be gathered at the end of the sale and reused at the next event. One Friends group even had red aprons for the volunteers to wear, not only keeping them from getting dusty or dirty while hauling books, but helping customers identify the volunteers.

### **Donations**

Have a clear policy regarding donations. The policy should specify when and where people may donate materials and whether you accept such things as:

- Reader Digest condensed books
- Encyclopedias
- Magazines
- Textbooks of a certain age
- Computer books
- Books with missing covers (in the case of paperbacks, this may indicate it was stolen)
- Promotional / Infomercial videos

Also make it clear what you would be happy to accept!

If donations are accepted at the library, consider having a set day or time that you accept books. This will help reduce the work of library staff.

It should be made clear whether a donation is tax deductible and possibly have a donation receipt or acknowledgement letter available for those who request one.

## **Sorting and Volunteers**

### **Sorting**

It might be useful to have a procedure that volunteers can follow. If you sort the books as they are donated, it will save you a lot of time and effort at the time of the sale.

Save all the good boxes, not only for storage, but they can help you estimate how many books you have available. Mark the side of the box with the number and category of books it contains. It might also be useful to number the boxes themselves to determine how many tables might be needed for that category. A template on an 8x10 sheet of paper will help make sure that everything is recorded properly.

The categories should be diverse enough so that customers can find what they want. However, some categories can easily be grouped together. For example, Philosophy and Religion are excellent categories that can be grouped together.

While sorting, watch out for collectible, first edition, or rare books. If you're not sure whether an old book is expensive, simply check Ebay! Ebay can be a useful tool in determining the price of something.

### **Volunteers**

Managing volunteers is a rather large topic but [www.NationalService.org](http://www.NationalService.org) and [www.NPGoodPractice.org](http://www.NPGoodPractice.org) both have numerous resources available.

### **Pricing**

Try to be consistent with prices and where the prices are marked in the books. If the prices are marked inside the front cover, try to use a fine pencil so that buyers can erase it once they get it home. You could also get creative and use colored stickers to indicate prices (Yellow = \$1, Green = \$2, etc).

Be sure to clarify if there is a difference in price between paperbacks and trade paperbacks.

www.Ebay.com, www.BookFinder.com, www.booksprice.com, www.abebooks.com, and www.Fetchbook.info, are very useful in determining the price of a book.

You might consider having a bag / box sale for the last day to help offload the remaining books.

## **Preview Sales and Advertising**

### **Preview Sales**

Reward members and recruit new members to your organization by holding a “member's only” preview sale!

### **Advertising**

Some newspapers, “thrifty” magazines, radio stations, and other publications may offer non-profits free advertising.

Be sure to have a flyer or a poster available at the library. Local bookstores may also allow you to drop off some flyers. If your library has a newsletter or a blog, that would be a perfect outlet to advertise.

Involve the community! Consider holding your book sale during community events (State fair, 4th of July, etc).

If you hold several sales per year, consider printing some book markers that have your book sale dates printed on them. Book markers are handy for those buying books, and they're a great word-of-mouth tool.

Apartment buildings, churches, and retirement communities may have a community events bulletin board where you can advertise. Also, don't forget the local coffee shops!

As always, be sure to add or update your listing on [BookSaleList.com](http://BookSaleList.com)!

## **The Sale!**

After you've trained your volunteers, determine how you want your sale to run. Is there enough room for people to “stash” books while they shop? Some visitors may have a set spending limit and will stash the books they want. Once they finish browsing, they may need to tally how much the books will cost and return the books that put them over the limit.

Unattended piles of books may be a hassle so you should have a clear policy regarding this practice. Perhaps allow stashing as long as it's clear that a) they are not discarded / unattended books and b) any books that are not purchased are returned to the table where they belong. Most visitors will not abuse your stashing policy, but putting books aside is very handy for your customers.

If you do not have the volunteers to help load, at least have a couple of hand trucks or “dollies” that visitors can borrow in order to get their boxes of books out to their cars. If you have the room in front of your building, perhaps set up a loading area. Your local police department might be willing to help.

Dealers are often willing to travel long distances to visit book sales. Consider whether they are welcome to purchase whole tables of books. Instead of completely forbidding dealers, perhaps allow the dealers to “clean up” during the last day of your sale.

Scanners and other electronic pricing devices can also be a hassle. Many people will scan hundreds of books looking for those books that they can resell. Sometimes, depending on how fast the person works, scanners can be a real hassle for other attendees. Therefore, please indicate whether you have a policy regarding these tools. Instead of forbidding scanners altogether, you might consider allowing them on the last day.

You might also want to set up a bake sale, coffee bar, or an area for refreshments. The concession stand can be near the door separate from the book area so visitors can grab something on their way out. If you do allow food and drink in the book area, you should probably only sell bottles that have caps and food that isn't messy or greasy (nuts, Chex Mix, granola, etc). If you do not want to allow food or drinks near the books, a concession area with a few tables where people can relax for a few minutes might provide a surprising boost to your fund raising effort. You might even be able to outsource your concession to a local coffee shop!

One concession item that might be missed and should be considered for sale is Benadryl or other non-drowsy allergy medicines since books can sometimes be very dusty, especially if they've been in storage!

## **After the Sale**

Have a party! Recognize your volunteers and perhaps order some pizza. Ask them to identify any problems or issues that could be addressed in the next sale.

There are many ways to discard of your remaining stock. Albuquerque Friends have a “Semi-Annual Clearance Sale,” where everything you can fit in a paper bag is \$3.

[www.Ebay.com](http://www.Ebay.com) and [www.Half.com](http://www.Half.com) have a bustling community of book buyers. Amazon is another excellent resource, and they will even let you set up a store inside their website. [LibraryBookSales.org](http://LibraryBookSales.org) is a useful website to sell collectible and quality books.

Ebay Tip: sell books in “lots.” Trying to sell individual books can be a time consuming and laborious process. But if you group a bunch of books together and list it as a “lot” (use that key word in your title), you will have better luck with your auction. You can group books together by author, genre, or category. Lots can range in size from a few books up to a box of books. Some people may buy the lot because they want a single book.

Your title should include the word “lot.” Some examples include:

- Bible Commentaries Lot of 10 books
- Mark Twain Lot of 6 books
- Children's Chapter Books Lot of 20
- Philosophy lot of 3 books

You might consider setting up a bookshelf or bookstore in the library where people may purchase items.

There are other ways to recycle books. Correctional facilities, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, Goodwill, Salvation Army, private schools, and churches might be willing to accept donations for their library.

## **Conclusion and References**

### **Conclusion**

We hope this article has been helpful.

If there is anything that this guide missed or that you feel should be addressed, contact us! We want this to be a useful resource.

### **References**

[The Mid-Hudson Library System](#) is a great resource of information

<http://www.booksalelist.com/articles/Book-Sales-and-Fund-raising-Guide>  
© BookSaleList LLC. All rights reserved.