

Bookstore Tourism Event Model



Bookstore Tourism is the latest tool to make your bookstore a community center. Customers will come to expect great things from a store that coordinates out-of-town trips. Cultural tourism is a growing trend that bookstores can use to their advantage.

Many stores have trips on their regular calendars, most notably, Politics & Prose in Washington DC. They make yearly day trips to Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater in Mill Run, PA. They have also visited the Brandywine River Valley in Pennsylvania, and Delaware where they visited the Wyeth Museum, Longwood Gardens, and Winterthur; the Hudson River Valley where the group visited the Franklin Roosevelt Museum at Hyde Park, Storm King Sculpture Garden, and the Rockefeller Estate in Tarrytown. They also make a yearly trip to Mexico to visit archeological sites and craftsman. The Strand in New York City has begun day and weekend trips that visit, among other places, Emily Dickenson's home in Amherst; the Eric Carle Museum; the Pioneer Valley museums; Boston; Vermont and also the Brandywine River Museum.

Goal:

Along with cementing relationships with customers and getting new customers, bookstore tourism should speak to the importance of local independent bookstores and their value to the community. Tours can and should include a visit to bookstore(s) near the destination.

Variations:

- 1) Trip destination, whether day or overnight, is to a tourist site and an independent bookstore.
- 2) Day trips for a cultural event (theatre, opera, book festival).
- 3) Stop(s) on trip could include visits with authors, illustrators studios; local or visiting authors can be hosts on the bus.
- 4) Look for a locale, like New York City's Greenwich Village, or Washington DC's Georgetown and Dupont Circles, as a destination. The trip combines visits to many independent bookstores as well as shopping.
- 5) Work with local cultural, educational, and social (like senior citizens) groups to create tours to suit their needs.
- 6) Plan a scenic drive that includes multiple stops at bookstores with events at each one.
- 7) Some hotels have special themed weekends in the off-season, like murder mysteries, that you can join.
- 8) Create tours *from* other cities *to* your store, making your store the destination, combined with stops at local tourist attractions.
- 9) Theme the trips, such as beach bookstores to beat the heat, or grandparents/grandkids trips that include kid-oriented activities.

10) Restaurants in your community or farther into the region can be a destination. Use celebrity chef and their cookbooks as the theme, with their restaurants as the destination.

Enhancements:

- 1) Tours can include reading suggestions before the trip with meetings to discuss not only the trip, but the reading selections.
- 2) Any location in the US and abroad can be a destination.
- 3) Include antiquarian or museum stores on your tour.
- 4) Putting your store as a destination for a day trip from another city will generate quite a bit of sales revenue. Offer an appearance by an author, or some other fun event.
- 5) People on the bus will talk books, or the conversation can be steered at some point to books. Pass out order sheets; contact your store and have the orders bagged and ready at the bus's return.
- 6) Host a Quiz Bowl on the bus.
- 7) Create a goodie bag for travelers with advance readers copies and promotional materials from publishers, local merchants, and other vendors.

Tips:

- 1) Contact a local bus company for pricing schedule and time tables for any ideas you have. They are a good source for interesting sites.
- 2) For longer trips, often the host (bookstore staff) will have free travel if a certain number of guests book the trip.

Pricing:

Ticket prices should cover the transportation, meals, lodging and admission fees wherever applicable, which are sold through the bookstore.

A service fee of some amount can be added to the ticket to cover expenses related to staff time in organizing and supervising the trip.

If using an outside agent (through the bus company or other sources) be sure to determine their service fees up-front.

Sources:

<http://www.bookstoretourism.com/>

<http://www.biblioexpeditions.com/>