

10 WAYS TO TAP INTO BOOKSTORE TOURISM

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www.bookstoretourism.com

How can you turn your bookshop into a travel destination and become part of the Bookstore Tourism trend?

Here are 10 fairly easy ways to bring busloads of book addicts through your front door, and onto your bottom line:

1. **Partner with other bookstores:** Get together with the other booksellers in town and discuss how to market yourselves as a package deal for tourists. Think about forming a loosely-organized coalition around Bookstore Tourism and give yourselves a boost. Start thinking of your community as a "Bookstore Town"!
2. **Partner with the local business community:** If you're not already a member, join your local chamber of commerce or other business association. Get involved with the nearest economic development agency and stress the importance of independent bookstores in your community. Ask how you can build relationships so everyone succeeds.
3. **Partner with the local tourist industry:** If your city already has a tourist trade -- or is trying to get one started -- become an active player and tap into the possibilities. Talk to your nearest tourism bureau or visitors center. Find out how nearby tourist destinations succeed at what they do, and work with them toward common goals and benefits.
4. **Partner with other cultural and historic attractions:** According to a landmark 2004 study by the Travel Industry Association of America (www.tia.org) and *Smithsonian* magazine, 56 percent of the U.S. population are "cultural travelers" who spend millions each year on lodging, food, entertainment and shopping while visiting cultural and historic attractions. Does your town attract these folks? Does it have any literary connections such as a famous author's home, or the setting of a well-known book? Bookstores can capitalize on this booming industry by making themselves a "must visit" on a cultural traveler's local itinerary.
5. **Partner with travel agents:** Your local travel agents are a wealth of knowledge and experience. Because they offer one-stop shopping, they can help to create the package deals that will bring



bookstore tourists to your town. They can also help to pitch your campaign to travel professionals in other cities, and can even handle the bookings!

6. **Partner with the bus and motorcoach industry:** Motorcoach companies are the lifeblood of tourism in the U.S. They provide one of the safest, friendliest, most convenient ways to get around, and they specialize in serving niche travelers. Involve your local tour operators in planning your "bookstore adventures," and work with carriers in other nearby cities to bring in booklovers from out of town.
7. **Market your bookstore(s) to groups and organizations:** Decide how to reach the primary audience for Bookstore Tourism -- booklovers (of course!), schools, colleges, libraries, reading groups, "One Book" programs, book festivals, literacy groups, etc. Also, don't rule out less obvious choices like senior citizen groups, non-profit agencies, civic and fraternal organizations -- all of which have readers for members and often sponsor bus trips. It may take some phone calls, a couple of meetings, a targeted mailing, some brochures or even a little advertising, but it'll be worth the effort when these folks start showing up on your doorstep!
8. **Consider some creative marketing efforts:** One of the greatest benefits of Bookstore Tourism is that there are countless variations on how to do it! Why not plan a "Bookstore Exchange Trip" a couple of times a year between your town and another? Maybe you could even start a "Bookstore Sister City" program with another popular Bookstore Town. Or how about encouraging your best customers -- and the best customers of other shops -- to start "Bookstore Adventure Clubs" with their friends and make monthly or even bi-weekly bookstore road trips? Use your imagination and explore the possibilities!
9. **Reach out to the business traveler:** Think about all the book addicts who come to your town on business, but have no idea where the bookstores are when they have a little time for browsing. Sure, they can look you up in the phone book, but you'll be so much easier to find if you get yourself listed in a hotel's business directory or leave some brochures in the lobby. As with your other local partnerships, strike a deal with those who cater to business travelers and recommend each other often.
10. **Focus on the things that have always mattered most to your customers:** Whether it's your diverse selection, your awesome customer service, your fantastic events or your one-of-a-kind café, you already know what keeps your regulars coming back, and the same things apply with out-of-towners. You can't always define what makes a bookshop great, but your Bookstore Tourists will know it when they see it -- so keep at it!