

The Art of the Hand Sell

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Review Sources

There are a variety of print and online review sources available. It's good to have a mix of popular, professional and specialized sources. Here are a few that Jennifer reads regularly:

Amazon - get an outside opinion

ARCs – sources for these include asking or checking with a publisher, book wholesale distributor, Netgallery, LibraryThing, or listserv

Booklist - print and online subscription, librarian reviewed

Customers/patrons - ask for suggestions

Earlyword - website for librarians includes journal and newspaper reviews

Entertainment Weekly – online and print reviews plus a book blog

Fantastic fiction - free website from the UK for series info and new book updates

Ipage - subscription website from Ingrams includes journal and newspaper reviews

Kirkus - print and online subscription, highly opinionated

Library Journal - print and online

People Magazine - spotlights popular fiction, provides readalikes, and reviews some unusual choices

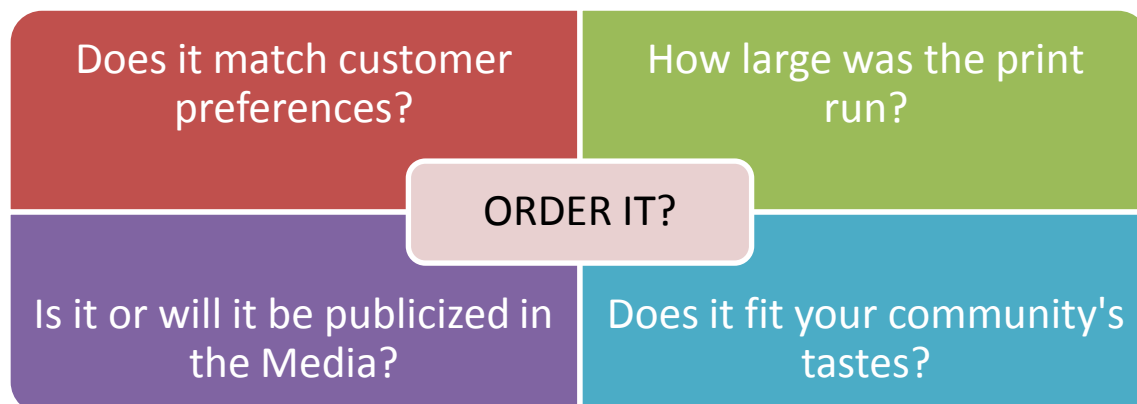
Salon - website that spotlights literary books and some unusual picks with in depth reviews and author interviews

Shelf Awareness - book trade information, media alerts, and reviews

What review sources do you find helpful?

Choosing the Books

A starred review(s) doesn't necessarily mean that the book will fly off the shelves. How do you choose?



Obstacles to Success

After thoughtfully reading reviews and choosing titles, sometimes a great book sits unread on the shelf anyway. Why? There are lots of possibilities, including the following:

- Maybe the cover doesn't visually describe the book accurately.
- The title or the author's name may intimidate the reader.
- The publisher may have provided information overload and the reader isn't willing to evaluate all the information just to see if he/she wants to read the book.
- The setting or characters may create a cultural divide.

How can you counteract these problems? What have you tried?

Promoting a Book

How can you increase circulation of a book that you want to champion?



What have you done to promote books that aren't circulating well?

The Hand Sell

Hand selling a book is not giving a formal book talk or providing generic descriptions. It's about making a personal connection with a customer/patron while discussing a book the person might want to read. Think about the most popular books right now, not the most popular authors, the books. Were they published this year? Probably not, because really popular books take time to build momentum as one person hand sells the book to another—friends, coworkers, family members, book store owners, and librarians.

Elements of a Successful Hand Sell



You need a hook or hopefully several hooks.

- Is there a movie connection?
- Is the author known for other work—scriptwriting, journalism, etc.?
- Has the book won awards or any recognition?
- What is appealing about the storyline?
- Identify other appeal factors.

Be honest.

If you haven't read the book, don't pretend you have. Don't exaggerate a book's popularity or otherwise misrepresent it.

Give the person an out, so he/she doesn't feel cornered.

- "If you don't like the book, you don't have to finish."
- "I understand it might not be your cup of tea."
- "I have a lot of books on my to-read list too, maybe you don't have time right now."

Ask for feedback.

Let the customer know that you'd like to hear what he/she thought about the book. Did he/she finish it? Do they have recommendations for what type of reader might enjoy the book?