

Start Small

Join:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Street Association
- Business Association
- Development Association
- Goal is to meet/engage with active members of your community outside of bookstore world
- Membership often comes with marketing perks

Shop Small:

- Buy coffee from your local indie consistently-note their space- could you do an event? a shelf of books?
- Choose a restaurant you love that might also have event space and be a regular-maybe an author lunch series could be created?
- Shop from the local boutique or makers market and meet the artisans-unique candles with custom scents for your store?
- Shop from your other bookstores- if you're in their neighborhood, pop in, make yourself known- note the positive differences, show your openness to non-competitive collaboration
- Make sure staff is aware and connected with the community they work in

Research literacy non-profits/universities/colleges/assemblies

Make a list and attend their events or host a non-profit pop up

Non-profits and Universities will have access to resources and staff you don't

Offer author support for visiting authors or host a fundraiser

What is your goal?

Attendance, profits, community building? are these the goals of others or can they buy in to at least one? How will you measure success?

Realize that retail stores think differently- what benefits the hairstylist/real estate agent/hotel manager may not benefit you

Get Active:

- Host a casual gathering of local businesses- need to do at least 3-4 to get everyone there and to find out their needs/strengths
- Pitch a small recurring shop/community event (ex: 'First Thursdays') or a quarterly shop around the block
- If just bookstores, think about a book crawl with a punch card and a prize at the end- start simply
- Be up front about expenses and what one can realistically handle
- Delegate tasks- it will become clear who has enough staff or bandwidth for what
- Set boundaries: it may not be the best idea to grow too fast with too many partners
- Be professional: run numbers, have a post-event meeting, set up the planning for the next event

Keep focused on the community- what benefits everyone? With bookstore partners, belief in 'the rising tide lifts all boats' is key.

There are no promises of success- be ready mentally if your plan does not get traction. Mindset is everything.

