



Marketing, Display & Storytelling Excellence

The Art and Science of Throwing a Really Great Party Every Day



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Course Description

You bring stories to your community: one of them is your bookstore itself. When we think about bookstores like a publisher thinks about a book, we get clearer about our big idea and the experience we hope to give our customers.

Linking marketing and display in scintillating storytelling, this course offers fresh perspectives drawn from the disciplines of design, writing, entertainment and anthropology. Wherever you are in your journey, you can use this course to help elevate and expand your thinking and practice in connecting with customers, and improve the things that matter most to you:

- Gain marketing insights that improve bookstore awareness and visibility.
- Gain display insights and skills that improve display effectiveness
- Connect marketing, display, curation and physical aspects of the bookstore in cohesive ways.
- Learn to use storytelling methods to craft store experience and spark curiosity for deep browsing.



Course Components

This course is a read/practice/reflect learning model. It contains 5 workshops, each with a chapter to be read and field work assignments to complete in your store before coming to a live class to discuss, share, and learn together.

Those workshops are:

- 1. Your Book Haven Space** (Crafting Experiences & Setting the Scene)
- 2. I'm Curious...** (Marketing & Display as Emotional Curiosity)
- 3. Knowing You, Knowing Me** (Using our Experience, Strength, Hope and Connections)
- 4. Better Together** (How Marketing, Display, Events and Curation Work Better in Alignment)
- 5. Unforgettable** (Methods of Storytelling in Display at Macro and Micro Levels)

Live classes are held on every other Wednesday: June 19, July 3, July 17, July 31, and August 14. Each is 90 minutes long.

Live classes begin at 12:30 pm ET / 11:30 am CT / 9:30 am PT

You'll receive course emails with links, recordings, and information, and will have access to Discord server for discussions, chat, and sharing

Instructor Information

Steve Wax is chief narratologist and board chair for Heydey publishing and draws from a long career in film and commercial production. As cofounder of Campfire Media, he and his colleague used viral marketing with the Blair Witch diary project long before that was an understood method of influence. For the past two years, he and Lisa Uhrik have been working on a project called Beyond Bookstores, aimed at empowering bookstores with fresh, innovative, timeless ideas.



Lisa Uhrik is cofounder of Plenty Bookshop and co-owner of Franklin Fixtures — organizations that share a dedication to elevating reading. An SPHR (senior professional in HR) and organizational development facilitator, her career has been about helping businesses thrive with innovative structures and systems. As a bookstore advocate, she has devoted the last decade to understanding sustainable models and best practices, leveraging her unique access through Franklin to a broad array of successful bookstores.

Introduction

Marketing & display excellence is a bit like preparing for a good dinner party. You need to know who you want to invite. And the guests need to know who you are and why you've invited them. You'll prepare the atmosphere with lighting, music and edit your home. You'll think about their arrival, the flow of the evening, their physical comfort and delightful discoveries. You'll set the table and prepare the dishes in an attractive way.

And when they arrive, you'll facilitate their interactions, introducing them to each other, considering who they'll sit near and you'll expect good and entertaining stories throughout the evening. And after the evening itself, you'll look for ways to continue the relationship, building on the good experience you've shared.

Like that analogy – marketing and retail psychology begins with the understanding of your guest list where you capture the essence of your guests in “persona” form. We craft a store experience, engage through curiosity, and think about the stories and experience we want them to have.

Through all our social media, newsletters and interactions beyond the physical store, we connect with those personas and keep the stories going – creating an integrated presence and extending the relationship. Social media is used as touchpoints, reminding our guests of the last great party and the next experience in the store that is to come for them.



A second analogy is to think of our marketing and in-store experiences **like a publisher thinks about a book**, where all the same dynamics occur. First, we have an idea for a bookstore (like having a concept for a book or a party). Then we determine who would be interested in this concept – who would like to read this book, attend this party.

We write and structure our book like we structure our stores – in a cohesive experience that flows. We think about the first lines of the book – which is the entrance to your store. And we think about the flow of the story through our stores – the subplots and characters we’ll introduce. Ideally, it feels like it was designed just for our persona – a perfect fit. We need editing – ruthless removal of things that detract from the main story that we’re telling. Our store should be “easy to read” like a good book and keep our guests turning pages until they’ve experienced every nook and discovery display.

And the end (the checkout/POS) should be something special – something memorable that satisfies and leaves them wanting more. And the marketing, like marketing for a good book, should focus on these customer guests and the story that our store is telling overall... even as we advertise book events and special experiences, we are weaving ONE story – the story of our bookstore.

These are the integrated ways that we are thinking about marketing and hospitality in this excellence workshop: from concept to experience to brand development. **And it is all about relationship.**



Course Schedule

When You Register

When you register, you'll receive the first assigned chapter to read, and the first Field Work assignment to complete in your store.

Workshop 1: Your Book Haven Space

Crafting Experiences & Setting the Scene

Reading & Fieldwork deadline: 06/19

Live Discussion: 06/19, 12:30 ET / 11:30 am CT / 9:30 am PT

Workshop 2: I'm Curious...

Marketing & Display as Emotional Curiosity

Reading & Fieldwork deadline: 07/03

Live Discussion: 07/03, 12:30 ET / 11:30 am CT / 9:30 am PT

Workshop 3: Knowing You, Knowing Me

Using our Experience, Strength, Hope and Connections

Reading & Fieldwork deadline: 07/17

Live Discussion: 07/17, 12:30 ET / 11:30 am CT / 9:30 am PT

Workshop 4: Better Together

How Marketing, Display, Events and Curation Work Better in Alignment

Reading & Fieldwork deadline: 07/31

Live Discussion: 07/31, 12:30 ET / 11:30 am CT / 9:30 am PT

Workshop 5: Unforgettable

Methods of Storytelling in Display at Macro and Micro Levels

Reading & Fieldwork deadline: 08/14

Live Discussion: 08/14, 12:30 ET / 11:30 am CT / 9:30 am PT

Course Content



Workshop 1: Your Book Haven Space

Live Class: Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Field Work (*should take no more than 1 hour*):

- Purpose statement: Define store purpose and desired community experiences in writing.
 - Bestseller List: Analyze top selling products.
 - Persona Identification: using top sellers, other information
 - Environment assessment: how the music, lighting, scents and physical space creates impression
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Crafting Experiences & Setting the Scene

Introduction to Retail Psychology (aka how to be a great party host)

- Understanding customer psychology
- Centralizing the customer experience in retail
- You don't invite 20 strangers to dinner..."Casting" Well

Crafting the Experience

- Purpose-driven experience design
- Environmental assessment – setting the space (music, lighting, scents to enhance browsing)
- Type of music matters – energy, message, mood
- Pools of light – Pattern Language
- What we smell, tells...

Engagement through Curiosity

- Designing discovery paths within the store

Who's going to be in the room together? (aka Understanding Your

Audience:

Persona Development)

- Audience identification and persona creation (what do we know about our guests?)
- Analyzing top-selling products for persona analysis
- Empathy exercises for customer types



Workshop 2: I'm Curious...

Live Class: Wednesday, July 3, 2024

Field Work (*should take no more than 2.5 hours*):

- Create and picture one engaging display
 - Measure effectiveness of display (conversions, touch, interaction)
 - Create low tech heat map of 15 customers
 - Show before/after picture of edited space
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Marketing & Display as Emotional Curiosity

Emotionally Resonant Customer Journey

- Retail and museum design insights for customer journey mapping

Discovery Layouts

- Techniques for a tactile shopping experience
- Edited design (kill the clutter)

Interactive Engagement

- Facilitating Interaction

Mapping your store, doable tactics

- Low tech heat map (staff tracking)
- Putting the books back half way
- Walking through the whole store

Workshop 3: Knowing You, Knowing Me

Live Class: Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Field Work (*should take no more than 1.5 hours*):

- Name your story for development in display and newsletter/social integration
- Reflect your story in your window display and photo
- Develop story in newsletter/social media and in store events and provide illustrations



Using our Experience, Strength, Hope and Connections

Curiosity in Retail

- The power of curiosity and strategic questioning in marketing

Seductive Storytelling in Retail

- Examples of displays that narrate compelling stories
- Product display as a means of connecting with customers

Story Synergy (marketing connections)

- Aligning newsletters and social media with in-store storytelling
- Storytelling techniques that make customers brand ambassadors
- Connecting story plans, purchasing, displays, and partnerships

Staff Training in Story Communication

- Equipping staff to convey the store's narrative and values

Workshop 4: Better Together

Live Class: Wednesday, July 31, 2024

Field Work (*should take no more than 1.5 hours*):

- Improve the performance of one (or more) fixtures in your store integrating face up, waist high positioning and narrative archetypes to develop your display.
- Provide pictures and explanations of what you tried and what resulted.

How Marketing, Display, Events and Curation Work Better in Alignment

Rethinking Display and Order

- Exploring innovative visual merchandising techniques

Maximizing Display Potential

- Assessing and utilizing current display strengths

It is ALL Display

- Shelves are for storage, fixtures for display: rethinking your fixtures – the bones of your store



- Non-conventional product showcasing

Tabletop Display Insights

- We shop looking down (emotional connection posture)
- Learning from James Daunt's display strategy (passion-driven collections, face up)
- Waist high will fly: learning from museum, other retail (the difference between 30" and 34"-36" high)
- Wall tables and other face up forms

Advanced Storytelling Techniques

- Using narrative archetypes in visual merchandising
- A stranger comes to town
- A person goes on a journey

Workshop 5: Unforgettable

Live Class: Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Field Work (*should take no more than 2 hours*):

- Prepare a staff training workshop around customer engagement (synthesizing parts 1-4)

Methods of Storytelling in Display at Macro and Micro Levels

Planning your stories and connecting all the pieces

- Developing a story board for the year and using it to connect newsletters, social media, displays and purchase decisions

Creating space for customer interaction

- How they add their stories
- How they help develop the stories you start

Cultivating team creativity

- Enhancing customer communication and sales skills
- Untethering from the desk; being great hosts



Workshop References

[Jobs to Be Done](#), HBR “Know Your Customers”

Why We Buy, Paco Underhill

Unreasonable Hospitality, Will Guidara

The Morning Huddle, David Avrin

Storybrand, Donald Miller

[How great leaders inspire action](#), Simon Sinek (a TED Talk)

Your Brain on Art, Magsamen & Ross

A Pattern Language, Christopher Alexander

7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey

The Great Good Place, Ray Oldenburg

[Theory of Change](#)

Professional Booksellers School, Inc.’s Code of Conduct

The Professional Booksellers School, Inc. (PBS) values the dignity of everyone with whom we interact. Our safety and anti-harassment policies are critical to ensuring that this core value guides how we speak and how we act. All participants in PBS courses and events are required to adhere to PBS's code of conduct, as described below. This includes booksellers, PBS staff, instructors, speakers/presenters, guests, donors, volunteers, and all affiliated students.

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Behaviors that violate this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive verbal comments related to any protected category above
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Unwelcome propositions, attention, words, or conduct of a sexual nature
- Unwelcome virtual contact inside or outside of PBS settings
- Inappropriate or obscene jokes, remarks, or gestures
- Intimidation, stalking, or trolling
- Disrespect towards difference of opinion
- Sustained disruption of speakers, conversations, classes, or events
- Unauthorized screenshots, photography, or audio or video recording

PBS expects all participants in its programs to follow established rules throughout official classes, office hours, virtual platforms, and related social gatherings.

PBS takes any violation of this policy seriously. Accordingly, participants who violate this policy may, in the judgment and discretion of PBS, be asked to stop; may be expelled from a PBS class or event, without refund if applicable; may be prevented from attending future PBS classes or events; may be banned from virtual platforms; and may have future PBS participation privileges revoked.

If you are being harassed, observe someone else being harassed, or have concerns about potential violations of this policy, please notify PBS staff immediately. PBS will take all appropriate action in response to protect anyone affected by violations of this policy.

Privacy Statement

For Stores

PBS asks for both public (address, etc) and private (square footage, POS, sales levels) information from stores who are enrolled. We ask for this information to help us understand and support students. The only public-facing information in our website directory is the store's name, address, contact information, and regional trade association. PBS uses both private and public information to analyze the effectiveness of our courses and our school, but reports only aggregate data. All other store information is protected and available only to PBS staff.



For Individuals

PBS asks for both public (bookstore, job title) and private (home address, demographic, years of experience) information from individuals who are members. The only public-facing information is the student's name, bookstore, job title, and earned certifications. PBS uses both private and public information to analyze the effectiveness of our courses and our school, but reports only aggregate data. All other information is protected and available only to PBS staff. The exception to this is for students who are receiving financial support or reimbursement from their regional association, with whom their enrollment, attendance, and certification status will be shared.

For Homework

We recognize that homework can contain personal or sensitive information. Student homework assignments are uploaded into a location available only to the individual student, PBS staff, and instructors, with the exception of projects delivered live in class. These projects are announced well in advance and student presentations are never recorded. All student homework for PBS is owned by the student, not PBS or the student's employer, and is confidential and protected. All shared, spoken, shown, submitted, and typed information is protected and confidential and not to be discussed, saved, or shared outside of applicable PBS classes, platforms, or events without express permission.