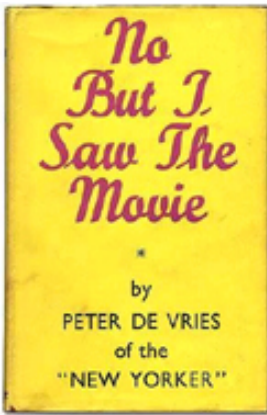


Fame, Fortune & The Independent Bookseller

Spotting Opportunity



EL Ateneo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
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Published by
Victor
Gollancz.
Source:
Abebooks.co

If owning a bookstore is a long held dream, and you believe that book selling is a simple activity that offers perks, such as leisure time to sit and read great books...read on, "Why are independent booksellers not implementing a publishing arm, curating or offering services to customers who want to publish their ideas?"

This was a question asked by John Ingram, Chairman & CEO, Ingram Content Group at the 2014 Book Expo America: Panel Discussion, "The Future of Bricks and Mortar Retailers."

And he further stated: "If I were running an independent bookstore, I would have a publishing arm..." He acknowledged that some indies were doing so but that it's still a great untapped path.

Ingram's observation is rooted in historical precedent.

The early origins of booksellers contain takeaway lessons in today's world.

Colonial New England booksellers originally published material they sold in

their shops. In 17th century America, with printing presses owned

by a few, and with limited working capital, books were viewed as costly and risky.

So production of low-cost newspapers, pamphlets and almanacs were the focus. As was importing books from England and reprinting books, and retailing stationery products. Traveling book peddlers performed a valuable function and were considered important enough to warrant exclusion from an anti-hawking law in Mass, according to Encyclopedia Britannica.

But Industrialization changed and shaped the role of book selling then as it continues to do now. And it is survival of those who can evaluate the marketplace efficiently.

Reality Check

Whether the dream is to open a bookselling business like the cozy warmth of a rural bookstore or the grandeur of El Ateneo in Buenos Aires, the love of books is not enough to succeed as a seller or publisher as industry members, such as Bookhouse owner Susan Novotny, have pointed out in the past. And CEO John Ingram has a degree in business administration and English from Princeton, so what he would do...and successfully isn't what many small indies might be equipped to do...with or without similar education.

Many of the issues facing booksellers today have been around for more than 100 years, note industry historians.

Selected Book Sellers Who Publish

Today, those who both sell and publish successfully are in specialized niches within the book trade. For instance, Oak Knoll Books in Delaware specializes in rare and out of print literature about the bookselling industry. Mysterious Press in New York with its catalog of mystery, suspense, crime espionage titles, written by the best authors in the genre, and produced using top artists skilled in book cover design.

Booksellers using innovation, foresight, business acumen and strong community ties and relationships will carve out market share by rethinking the traditional model of a bookstore. For instance, Bus Boy's and Poets, Little-Bookstore-Big-Stone-Gap are examples of community focus with a restaurant in the equation. Barter Books in the United Kingdom, is a used bookstore with an array of offerings. Note Barter Books does not publish, but they offer a unique twist in the marketplace.

And there is Singularity & Co. *Think of the owners of this shop as rescue time travelers.* A collaborative concern, they track down classic or little known out of print science fiction titles and reprint in digital formats. But it's a simple idea that isn't so simple. Ever try to track down the rights to previously published material? It can be a challenging lengthy endeavor, according to the Independent Book Publishers Association.

Set aside the assumption that bookselling is a simple business. Nothing could be further from the truth.

An aspiring entrepreneur with a burning desire to open a bookstore would do well to get a skilled mentor for starters, and using the principles of repurposing, and creative financing would arguably give the beginner a fighting chance.

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Summary: Great article series for potential entrepreneurs considering entry into the author-publishing industry: Tracking down permission to reprint old books may sometimes be difficult; when authors want to reacquire their books and republish their own books, and how some authors transition into the publishing industry.

Note: IBPA Independent is available by subscription from IBPA

or through two California libraries, [three according to World Cat, but that information is not accurate].

Dee Adams is the author of
Finding Your Niche: Discover...
<http://wp.me/P3Kr4S-U>