

**Sue Grimshaw, National Romance Buyer for Borders Group, Inc**

**Interviewed by Dianna Love Snell**

Dianna - What tip would you offer new authors when they stop at a store to stock sign (and/or in advance of stopping by)?

Sue - When romance authors are planning road trips to sign stock, contact the Borders or Waldenbooks store first and let them know you'll be in the neighborhood. Advise them of the nature of your visit, that it is not formal, and that you just want to say hi and sign a few of your books. This gives the store time to check their stock to see if there are books for you to sign, as well as to suggest the best time for you to meet. Please make sure you bring your preferred pen to the store. Do not be frustrated if the store does not have enough copies for signature...it could mean that they are selling your books!

Dianna - Are bookmarks a good use of author dollars?

Sue - It depends on the bookstore. Check with your local bookstore to see if there is a policy on bookmarks.

Dianna - What should an author do in advance of a book signing?

Sue - A good rule of thumb is to not schedule individual romance author signings until you've reached a mid-list sales level to where you have a customer base that will attend. Until then, Borders or Waldenbooks stock signings are key to your sales growth. It is important that you promote your book as much as you can in the community and with local media. If you have a list of friends and family that you know will want to attend your event, please reach out to them with event information and make sure not to give them too many free copies ahead of time. Signings where the author is with a national publisher (i.e. Random House and its imprints, Harper Collins and its imprints, etc.) are set up through our corporate office where a national event specialist makes sure that everything is taken care of. If the signing is to take place at a Borders store, the district marketing manager for that area will need to be contacted. Events should be scheduled at least 30-days in advance.

Dianna - How many authors are too little or too many at a book signing (for example - does it depend on store size)?

Sue - Multiple romance author signings can be quite successful as each author involved reaps from the attention brought in by the other authors. The number of authors involved during one of these "showcases" depends on the size and set-up of the store. If all authors involved are with a national publisher, the showcase would be scheduled at the home office. If the authors are with local publishers and would like to schedule a showcase at Borders stores, they should contact the store to get the name of the district marketing manager for that area. The district marketing manager will determine if the showcase is the right fit for the store.

Dianna - What does a reader look for first when shopping for a book - cover art, back cover blurb, first page, etc?

Sue - I am not sure if there has been any analysis on this, however I have heard from the Romance experts I work with in the field and they say for romance books, the front cover is what they see first, then the back cover and the first page. So, keep those covers hot!

Dianna - What is a shelf-talker and who sends those to the bookstore?

Sue - Shelf - Talkers or sometimes referred to as Book - Talkers, are on average 5 X 7" heavy stock items that promote an authors book featuring a picture of the cover, including the on sale date, title, author, etc. Typically we place them on the shelf near the author's back list prior the on sale of their new release. This can be a great advertising tool that can help improve your sales significantly. For Borders and Waldenbooks stores these promotional tools are created nationally. Your publicist/publisher should work with the appropriate person at our home office for these.

© breakintofiction.com  
2007

All rights reserved First Published in GRW Galley in

[www.breakintofiction.com](http://www.breakintofiction.com)