



CBA INDEPENDENTS MATTER

THINK INDEPENDENT * READ INDEPENDENT * BUY INDEPENDENT

What is *Independents Matter*?

Independents Matter is a national grassroots campaign with a community focus created by Canadian Booksellers Association to encourage booksellers to celebrate their independence and promote the benefits of shopping locally at independently-owned stores. *Independents Matter* is part of a momentum-gaining movement in support of the idea that shopping locally offers the best value, the best retail experience and the best support for vibrant, vital and prosperous communities. CBA wants to help members spread this message through *Independents Matter*.

What is Independents' Day?

On October 17, 2009 independent booksellers all across the country will celebrate CBA Independents' Day—a day designed to promote the importance of locally owned businesses to lively communities, which serves as the focal point of CBA's *Independents Matter* campaign.

Why should I participate?

Environmental, financial and cultural factors are combining to create a growing will among consumers to reclaim their communities. Now is the time to cultivate this desire by promoting how your store contributes to the economic health and unique identity of your community, as well as what consumers have to gain from shopping there. By taking part in *Independents Matter* you join with hundreds of other like-minded stores to identify yourself as a convenient, creative, one-of-a-kind, welcoming place to shop. Neighbourhood Independent bookstores offer more than books; they offer an enriching cultural experience that allows consumers to feel good about driving shorter distances, keeping jobs and money within their own communities and discovering and supporting local authors and business owners.

When you take part in *Independents Matter* by circulating or posting marketing materials, presenting an event or promotion, or raising awareness of this message among media and the public, your efforts combine with those of your fellow booksellers, amplifying the campaign's voice on a national scale, all the while highlighting your store's importance to its own community.

How can I get involved?

CBA is offering marketing materials for download to any member who wishes to promote the *Independents Matter* message (see list below), but how your store participates in the campaign is entirely up to you. Celebrate *your* Independence in a way that plays to your shop's strengths. On Independents' Day or on any day throughout the year, you might choose to celebrate in the following ways:

➤ *Author Events*

When planning author events under the *Independents Matter* theme, consider inviting those who have a special or longstanding relationship with your store; those who have written on complementary subjects—shopping local, sustainability, community or environmental activism, for example; and those who exemplify what your store does best. For instance, if yours is a store that does well with regional titles and authors, why not host a Local Authors Open House in which area authors drop in throughout the day to read from their work, chat with customers or simply enjoy the party? An event like this demonstrates that your community is artistic and interesting and friendly—and that your store is at the heart of it.

**“It’s a
celebration,
and there’s
no wrong
way to do
it.”**

- Suzanne Brooks,
Gulliver's
Quality Books &
Toys

“Take a risk and find out what works.”

- Susan Chamberlain,
The Book Keeper

➤ *Store Displays*

We hope you will display the *Independents Matter* poster of your choice prominently throughout the year. You might make use of the downloadable artwork to create a display that incorporates books that highlight your strengths as an Independent bookseller. For example, you might create an *Independents Matter* display of some of your favourite titles to hand-sell by way of promoting one of the greatest assets of your store: your knowledgeable, well-read staff. Other *Independents Matter* displays might focus on locally or independently published authors with whom your store has a history of support, or a round-up of books that promote “independent thinkers.” CBA’s “Discover Your Independents” poster includes all kinds of attributes that characterize a good Independent bookstore: Choice, Canada, Culture, Character, among others—any of these could act as a theme for an *Independents Matter* display.

➤ *Testimonial Forms*

Ask your customers, along with visiting authors, artists, media, government officials and community leaders, to submit a “Why I believe Independent bookstores matter” testimonial form and then fax, mail or email it back to CBA so we can feature these responses (along with the names of the people and stores who submitted them) on our website and in other *Independents Matter* marketing materials.

➤ *Contests and Promotions*

Create an *Independents Matter*-themed contest or promotion in your store, using the *Independents Matter* bag (perhaps filled with community-oriented or locally authored books) as a prize. Why not hold a draw from customers who’ve submitted “Why Independents Matter” testimonial forms?

➤ *Talk to your business neighbours*

Let your area independent business owners know about your participation in the campaign and invite them to be a part of your celebration. You might even partner with them on an *Independents Matter* promotion or event. Keep in mind, Independents’ Day (Oct. 17) leads into Canada Small Business Week (Oct. 19-25), providing you with ample opportunity to work together with other local businesses to get the message out.

➤ *Contact your elected officials*

Get in touch with your MP, MPP or MLA, councillor, mayor and/or other elected representative to talk about the contributions you make as a local business in their riding, and as a bookseller promoting literacy and cultural activity in the community. Find out who your MP is by visiting www.parl.gc.ca and then entering your postal code. You might even encourage your local representative to officially ‘declare’ Independents’ Day.

➤ *Day-to-Day Reinforcement*

Offer your customers the *Independents Matter* bookmarks and promote the reusable bags whenever they shop at your store to reinforce on a day-to-day basis the importance of Independents and shopping locally.

For more ideas from fellow booksellers, read “Getting Vocal on Shopping Local” (Canadianbookseller, Vol. 3 – 2009)

What marketing materials are available?

CBA has designed marketing materials for you to download and produce in whatever way suits your store’s specific promotion needs. Linked below (and posted on CBA’s website), you will find: **Posters:** Posters are available in a variety of colourful designs and sizes.

Welcome sign: The *Independents Matter* welcome sign features our logo along with author/activist Bill McKibben’s “Top Ten Reasons to Shop Local.” It’s a friendly reinforcement of the shop local message that makes your customers feel even better about spending time and money in your store. The poster has been designed so that you can customize it by entering your own store hours, much like you would fill in an electronic form online, and print off the completed document. Click your mouse just to the right of the days of the week to insert your store hours.

Bookmarks: Choose from various print-ready designs; customize the back to your store.

Logos: The *Think Independent * Read Independent * Buy Independent* logos can be downloaded and printed on whatever will serve your promotion best.

Facebook: Visit “Independents Matter” on Facebook, become a fan, and find out what your fellow booksellers are up to.

Reusable bags (for sale): Green reusable bags with the *Independents Matter* logo can be sold or given away to customers who spend a certain amount of money in your store. They offer your independent-minded clientele a way to promote their love of their local bookstore and their environmental responsibility.

If you would like any of the designs in a different format, contact CBA at esinkins@cbabook.org and we will do our best to accommodate you.

How do I promote my involvement?

Following are some tips for drawing attention to your store’s involvement in *Independents Matter* and gaining greater exposure for the campaign.

- *When promoting your plans to the media, don’t forget to promote them to us.*

CBA will post all of our members’ *Independents Matter* promotions and event plans on a dedicated page on our website. We—and, hopefully, you—will be directing media to this page so they can see the truly national scope of this campaign. Media, suppliers and the public will be looking to this single source to find out what *Independents Matter* activities are taking place in their communities throughout the year. Remember, too, to take photos of your events and initiatives and send them to us, so we can feature them on our website and in our newsletter.

- *Alert the media*

With its emphasis on the importance of vital communities and local pride, the *Independents Matter / Independents’ Day* story is one that should be attractive to your regional media. When sharing your promotion plans with the media, remember to include in your press release both your event details (time, date, participants, etc) as well as your own position on why *Independents Matter*. This ‘position statement’ may even be printed word-for-word in the local paper.

Note that a **media advisory** is meant to alert the media about an event that is about to take place. It is written in point form, seeks to identify the 5 W’s related to your event, is half to one quarter of a page in length, and is sent out to your media targets 1-2 days before your event day.

A **press release**, on the other hand, is meant to give the media more details about an event that already took place. It should be no longer than a page in length, be written in past tense, and sent out to the media on the day of the event.

- *Make yourself available*

If you send out a media advisory or press release, expect reporters to get back to you. They won’t chase you down once you’ve invited them to contact you, so be prepared to make yourself available for anything from a quick interview over the phone to an on-air discussion.

- *Sell Independents’ Day as a newsworthy story to the media*

This means answering two questions about your own story:

- So what?
- Why now?

They want a story that’s *relevant* and *timely*. Making it relevant means considering the audience of the media outlet you’re dealing with (and tailoring your pitch accordingly) and then focusing on both the local angle and the people (authors, consumers, area business owners) directly involved and affected (rather than speaking in theoretical terms). Making it timely means tying *Independents Matter* into what’s going on right now in your community or on prevailing national trends.

“When you
work with
other
people, the
results are
incredible”

- Lee Trentadue,
Galiano Island
Books

➤ *Story Angles*

The *Independents Matter* message is supported by a number of angles. Just think about the many reasons why Independent Bookstores matter today more than ever and why your bookstore is important to your community.

Growth of the Shop Local movement. Saving money, saving fuel and saving time are all reasons consumers are turning to their local shops and businesses. Bookstores are both a part of this movement and a resource for information on this trend.

Keeping the money in the community. People are increasingly interested in supporting local businesses, because doing so keeps money, tax revenue and jobs in their own communities. Local stores also tend to sponsor activities and causes within their own communities.

Independent bookstores enliven the area. Bookstores are not only a literary resource, they add cultural and entertainment value to an area. They bring authors and speakers to town. They are a hub of ideas and creativity that makes a neighbourhood more interesting and attractive to live in and to visit.

Independent bookstores are cultivating readers and a life-long love of books. Independent booksellers develop a relationship with young readers, in particular, that lasts a lifetime—creating a passion for reading that those children will one day pass on to their own children, returning with them to the same bookstore their parents introduced them to.

Independent bookstores support local authors and illustrators. Independent booksellers carry a selection of titles that caters to the interests of the community, which means they offer a great many books from local authors/artists—books that tell the community's stories. Without independent bookstores, these regional works could all but disappear.

➤ *Remember: Keep it simple*

If you can't summarize your message in a minute, it is either too complicated or lacks focus. Imagine you're explaining the issue to a good friend, and use the same tone and language when you're talking to the media. On that note, be sure to know your issues to such a degree that you feel comfortable discussing them publicly.

➤ *Talk in sound bites*

You may do a 20-minute interview, but the reporter will only take a fraction of what you say for publication or for quote on the air. Develop key message statements that make an impact, and use them when talking to media.

➤ *Supporting / Reference Material*

CBA has compiled a list of studies indicating the economic, creative and educational importance of cultural and independent businesses for those looking for back-up for the *Independents Matter* message here: <http://www.cbabook.org/research.html>.

➤ *Key Messages to Non-Media*

When promoting the message to your colleagues and customers, here are some ideas to consider about why *Independents Matter* ...

To readers: Local independent booksellers know the tastes and interest of their customers. We carry what you want to read.

To authors: Independent booksellers discover new writers and recommend them—with passion—to Canadians

To publishers: By a huge margin, independent booksellers carry more Canadian-published and regional titles than any other stores.

To communities: For Canadian towns and cities, independent booksellers mean local jobs, local investment and local culture.

To Canada: Nowhere is our rich and diverse culture better represented than on the shelves of independent booksellers.

CBA's Independents Matter Committee

Thanks to our CBA Independents Matter Committee for all the hard work they put into this campaign:

[Christopher Smith](#), Collected Works Bookstore & Coffeebar (Chair)

[Suzanne Brooks](#), Gulliver's Books & Toys

[Susan Chamberlain](#), The Book Keeper

[Nancy Frater](#), BookLore Stores Inc.

[Pat Joas](#), University of New Brunswick Bookstore - Saint John

[Eleanor LeFave](#), Mabel's Fables

[Mark Lefebvre](#), Titles Bookstore - McMaster University

[Christopher O'Brien](#), The Miller's Tale

[Ellen Pickle](#), Tidewater Books

[Lee Trentadue](#), Galiano Island Books

Discover Your Independents

<http://findabookstore.ca/>