



CBA INDEPENDENTS' DAY

October 15, 2011

BOOKSELLER IDEA KIT

“Celebrate Your Independents”

INDEPENDENTS MATTER

THINK INDEPENDENT • READ INDEPENDENT • BUY INDEPENDENT

www.cbabook.org/independents.html

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

- Suzanne Brooks,
Gulliver’s Quality Books
and Toys

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 and operated 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 15, 2011 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.



“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” posters include 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. 15) leads into Canada Small Business Week (Oct. 16 - 22), 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.



What marketing materials are available?

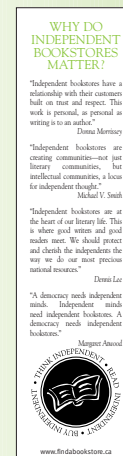
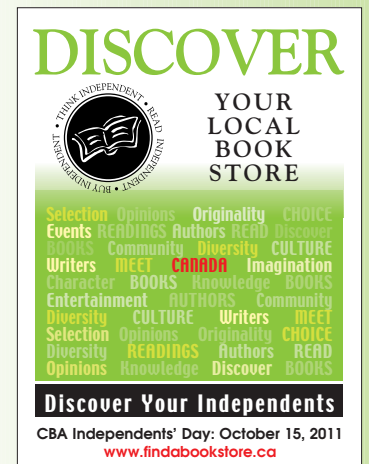
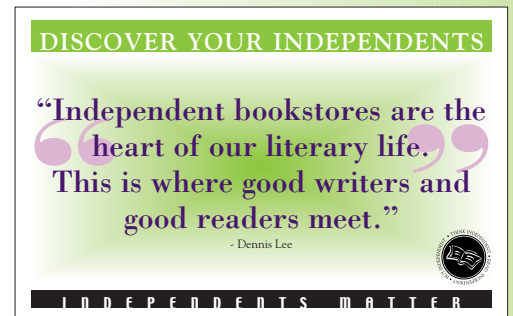
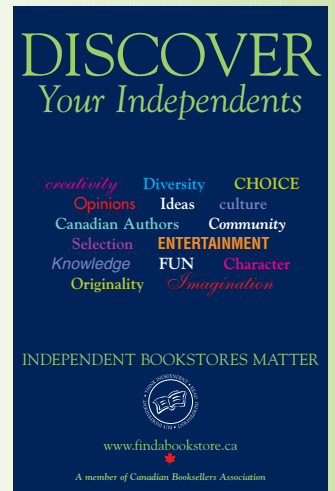
CBA has designed marketing materials for you to download and produce in whatever way suits your store's specific promotion needs. Linked below (and posted on CBA's website), you will find:

- **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 squinlan@cbabook.org and we will do our best to accommodate you.

"When you work with other people, the results are incredible."

- Lee Trentadue,
Galiano Island Books



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. (See *press release template on page 8.*)

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.

“Independent booksellers have a relationship with their customers built on trust and respect. This work is personal, as personal as writing is to an author.”

- Donna Morrissey



“Long before Canadian authors became known internationally, the independent booksellers were devoted to encouraging Canadian readers and Canadian writers, and committed to forging a bond between them.”

- Jane Urquhart

➤ **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.

- **Independent booksellers promote the value of the book.** Booksellers appreciate the considerable creative and collaborative effort—the talent and the time—that authors, illustrators, editors, designers and publishers contribute toward producing books that connect with readers. The ideas, stories and artfully constructed phrases that come to life in book form have lasting impact on those who read them. Technology makes an incredible number of digitized titles available to consumers, but booksellers have the knowledge, insight and passion to ensure each reader finds a book that they will enjoy and cherish. Our history, our culture, our humour, our politics are all captured and preserved in books—and booksellers are their keepers, curators and champions.
- **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. Every bookstore has stories like these—and people love to hear them.
- **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.

➤ **Key Messages to Government Representatives**

The role of independent bookstores

Regional literature and Canadian voices

Tell your elected official how important independent bookstores like you are to promoting regional literature and Canadian voices. Draw upon your own experience in your own store. Tell a story of a particular work that flew off the shelves because of keen local interest—something other stores couldn't possibly know about. Maybe it was a book by an author from the area, someone your clients recognize. Maybe it was a novel that takes place in your city, or a book that features the history of your area. Perhaps it was an experimental work by a first-time author that garnered lots of attention. These are the sorts of books that wouldn't get the attention from other retailers.

Draw a parallel between the Canadian literary industry and the Canadian film industry. One side, the literary side, has a viable network of points of distribution – bookstores. This has led to a thriving Canadian literary community, with many Canadian authors, such as Margaret Atwood or Alice Munro, enjoying a high rate of success both domestically and abroad. The Canadian film industry has no such network – and does not enjoy the same success. It's important to keep this network alive and thriving.

Foreign ownership

You're going to have to highlight how important it is that the Canadian bookselling industry be protected from foreign ownership and possible monopolies. With foreign-owned Amazon having set up shop in Canada, it's important to share your views on the impact of the decision.

Cultural industries are protected by the government under the *Investment Canada Act* so that they can enjoy success without worrying about staying afloat or competition from outside our borders, but the consolidation in all industry sectors; e-commerce; the structuring of business along new operational, managerial and financial lines; and international trade obligations, amongst others, have made it difficult to maintain the spirit of the *Act*. Virtual businesses on the Internet can overcome the



physical, bricks and mortar assumptions behind operating a business in Canada or management contracts can provide a way for foreign businesses to expand into Canadian cultural markets without getting caught in ownership provisions. As a result, foreign companies, such as Amazon.com, have been able to contravene the intent of the Act. Government needs to be reminded of what the Act was designed to protect as it pertains to the book industry—all the choices, particularly Canadian ones, Canadian readers have access via a robust network of Canadian owned and operated bookstores.

Competition/Efficiencies

Impress upon your visiting official the importance of keeping the bookselling market fair. This includes making it even and open, free from monopoly.

In a nutshell, the Competition Act is designed to maintain and encourage competition in Canada so that:

- the economy stays healthy;
- Canada can participate in the world market;
- all sizes of enterprises can participate in the economy; and
- consumers have access to competitive prices and product choices.

The concept of efficiencies means that if a proposed activity can be shown to be more efficient and therefore more advantageous to consumers, that activity should be allowed. In other words, the efficiency gains would have to be greater than, and offset, the anti-competitive effects. The government is always making decisions on whether or not to allow an activity based on efficiency.

The Book Rate

There used to be a book rate in Canada subsidized by Canadian Heritage. The idea was to allow booksellers to distribute books to customers and handle returns at reduced rates, making books cheaper and more accessible, thereby helping to drive up literacy rates. Now there are no breaks for booksellers. CBA is working with government officials to reopen discussions about getting the Book Rate reinstated.

NOTE

If you have already broached these topics with your MP, consider asking for an update, or even for his or her opinion on where to go next. There is no harm in bringing an issue back up – there is harm in letting an issue be forgotten!

Thanks to our Independents Matter Committee

Discover Your Independents <http://findabookstore.ca/>





PRESS RELEASE

[Location] celebrates Independents' Day! *Independent booksellers celebrate their unique role*

Bookshops across the country are hosting promotional events today in celebration of **Independents' Day**, a major marketing drive championing the cultural and economic contributions made by long-established and new-generation independent booksellers operating in many Canadian communities.

Customer-focused, commercially-savvy and digitally-aware, independent booksellers are carving an invaluable niche for themselves in their local communities, despite trying economic times and increased competition.

[Name of bookstore] is one among hundreds of independent bookstores to open its doors today to politicians, decision-makers, city officials and customers alike.

[Bookseller Name], owner of the [Store Name] had this to say:

"Bookstores like mine are the cornerstone of the communities they serve. We cater to the cultural needs of [Community Name], featuring local works done right here at home. We're taking this day to highlight the economic, social and cultural contributions bookstores across the country make to Canada."

Now in its fifth year, **Independents' Day** provides a platform for bookstores across Canada to raise awareness of the issues that affect their businesses including:

- The importance of independent bookstores in promoting regional/local literature, works that might not be noticed by a chain store that buys for the entire country at once.
- The contribution independently owned businesses make to their local economy; money spent at one's local bookstore helps sustain the local economy and create local jobs. Also, Independents support local causes (i.e. teams, schools, charities and arts organizations).
- The role independent bookstores play in creating a community that favors the arts and promotes economic success by encouraging innovators to stay there.
- The potential for major parts of Canada's bookselling industry – a chief disseminator of Canadian culture – to fall to foreign ownership.
- Keeping the playing field level and making sure the federal government, in particular, is not favouring one company over any others.

[Details on bookstore, if desired.]

Independents' Day is an initiative of Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA) – a national trade association that represents close to 1,000 bookstores, including trade, campus, specialty chain, used and rare booksellers, in urban and rural communities.

For more information, please contact:

Name

Title

Bookstore

Address

Phone number

Email address