

Supplier Relations: Let's work together to deliver a positive message

As we move into the busy fall and holiday selling period, booksellers and in fact all Canadian retailers, may be faced with the prospect of our dollar reaching parity again. We learned from the past that media are looking for a controversial story to sell papers; targeting books is an easy route to compare US and Canadian prices and point out any disparity which may exist.


In 2007, it was booksellers who bore the brunt of consumers' anger, and indeed many absorbed the losses to keep

the parallel importation guidelines to selling books at par and taking the loss to educating their customers about the issue and why books were priced higher in Canada.

During this time booksellers were pitted against their peers; publishers and booksellers were at odds; consumers crossed the border either online or by car. No one really won.

This time, should the dollar reach parity or beyond, we need to be prepared. We need to work together to share any

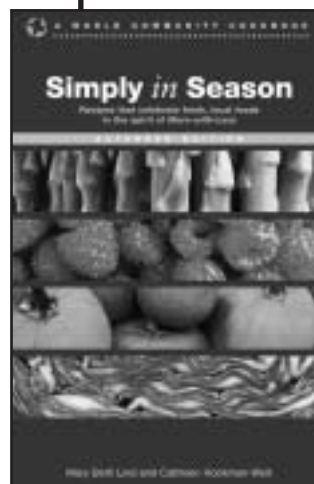
potential losses. We need to have a concise, clear message to deliver to the media and consumers as to why books are more expensive in Canada. The industry needs to speak with one voice to get our message across. Books are not overpriced. Books offer excellent value. Publishers and booksellers are held to certain government regulations that allows for some disparity, but in turn that difference in the price provides Canadian consumers with Canadian publishing houses, Canadian reps, Canadian authors, Canadian voices, Canadian booksellers. We need to show the positive aspect of the disparity. We all know it's more expensive to live in Canada, but look at the country and what it has to offer. Think about why your customers live here; what makes Canada special to them.

If you have ideas you would like to share with us, please don't hesitate to contact me, or post your comments on CBA's Discussion Forum in the section on Pricing 2009. 

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their customers. Publishers responded over time by reducing the disparity between US and Canadian list prices; however, Canadian parallel importation regulations allow for pricing at the US list plus the rate of exchange plus 10% (or 15% if the books are imported from a country other than the US.) so there will always be a difference in price.

Some publishers decided to print only the Canadian price on books, allowing booksellers and publishers to retain margins; others had the ability to overstick the Canadian price; some offered discounts on orders placed; and a few did nothing to support booksellers. Booksellers responded in various ways: from importing most of their books which were priced outside



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