

# A Day in the Life of BBS

Books begin their journey to Boulder Book Store with Arsen Kashkashian, our Head Buyer, and Liesl Freudenstein, our Children's Buyer, when they meet with their publisher sales reps.

**Clip:** Arsen: I'm Arsen Kashkashian, head buyer here at the Boulder Book Store, and being the buyer is an amazing job to have here in a store like this and in a community like Boulder. You know the main thing I'm trying to do is match what we carry in the store with what the community is interested in, what the community wants. So I'm trying to buy books heavy in science for us, heavy in spirituality, heavy in local interest, and of course we have a good literary community, so I'm able to buy lots of fiction. And I think that's one of the things I've always tried to do is think what works in this community. I live five blocks from the store, I'm constantly in town, my daughter goes to school just ten blocks from the store. So I'm just trying to get a feel for what is unique about this community. And there are a lot of unique things.

As far as a buyer, I use all the tools at my disposal. We do a lot of our buys on Edelweiss. I'm able to do cross sections between publishers to see, say, what are all the political books coming out in the next couple months. Obviously during the last year and a half that's been a big issue. And Boulder as a liberal town that's very important for. But as a whole I'm trying to expose the community to as many different ideas as I can, I'm trying to not just tailor it just to them but also to anything that - you know, we have tourists coming in - that might strike somebody as being interesting and unique here. And I think if you go down to our recommended shelves you'll see a lot of titles that hopefully you don't just see anywhere else or everywhere else. And so that's really what we're trying to do here at the bookstore is create a unique mix that's tailored for our community.

During the rep meetings, Arsen and Liesl consult with the buyers and the marketing team on books to feature in the newsletter and on the recommended shelves.

**Clip:** Stephanie (off camera): We have that on the rec shelf

Arsen: Alright, I know, I put it back on the rec shelf

They'll add tags in Edelweiss and then email those titles on to the reps and to Stephanie, the Marketing & Promotions manager.

At this point, Stephanie puts these titles onto a spreadsheet so she can organize all of the promotions.

After the rep meeting, the rep submits our orders and we upload the Edelweiss order into iMerchant, our inventory system.

When the books arrive, we get them in our Basement, where our Shipping and Receiving department is.

They receive the books into iMerchant, putting stickers on the back of every book that say what section they should be shelved in (and put security strips in books to help prevent theft).

The shipping and receiving team then put the books onto one of five shelves, each indicating a different area of the store. Then the booksellers grab a basket, load up on books, and take the books to the floor to be shelved

When the books we've marked for promotions come in, Stephanie and Julia, the Marketing & Promotions Assistant, get everything ready

Finally, when the books are out, we can sell them to the customers.

**Clip:** Genevieve: Would you like any help or recommendations?

We handsell both in conversation with customers and with our many shelf-talkers

And of course the last step in a book's life here at BBS is when it finds its way into a happy customer's hands!

## **Tour of BBS**

Boulder Book Store is Boulder's largest independent bookstore with 20,000 sq. feet, more than 100,000 titles, and three floors.

We have five main areas of our store. The main floor has our newly-released books, our Bestsellers, our recommended cases, and our newly acquired used books. We have used books throughout the store, but the main floor is where we keep our newest and best used selection. This is also where we display our best Remainders.

The Children's room features everything for kids, from picture books to nonfiction to middle grade and activities. We keep books on parenting here (as well as a ton of cool literary-themed stuff for kids)! The children's room is also where our Used Buying Office is located

The Basement has nonfiction sections like science, travel, cooking, crafts, history, biographies, and sports

The Upper North Room has sections like spirituality, Buddhism, health, shamanism, sexuality, writing, and psychology

Finally, we have the Ballroom – so called because when this room was first built in the late 1880's it was actually a ballroom! Here is where we keep fiction of all kinds, including teen fiction, poetry, mystery, sci-fi and fantasy. This is also the space where we host our author events

## The Bookseller Life

When booksellers arrive for work, they begin by clocking in, putting their stuff away in a locker, and then checking the Daily News – our internal messaging board for staff updates and news. This is what we use to disseminate important information to our fairly big staff – we have about 50 people working here.

Once they're all set, they put on their apron and head to the floor! Booksellers tend to be either in a particular area of the store to shelve and help customers, or on a register.

During breaks, the booksellers typically head back to the break room, where they might make a snack using food provided in the kitchen, take a moment to relax in the massage chair, or use the opportunity to get a new book from Arsen's shelves of wonder!

**Clip:** Arsen: Alright, so this is Arsen's Shelves of Wonder, where each week I try to put out about 50 readers copies for the staff, and I find that maybe we can get some interest in the staff if I highlight some, so I write kind of goofy highlights of the books for the week. So anyway, this is the Shelves of Wonder, here in the kitchen, and look at all the people so excitedly - Julia, why don't you show all the people who are waiting for the reader's copies!

Our managers mostly work on the floor, but they also spend part of their day fulfilling on-line orders, creating the schedule, and handling any issues that come up.

Ally, our Offsite and School Sales Manager, is always busy! On any given day she could be out visiting a school, running an offsite sale at a community event, or helping us run book sales when we have big offsite events.

Buster takes care of all of our IT needs, fixing computers and solving issues with iMerchant. He's also been known to bake brownies for the booksellers!

The lovely ladies who run our Business Office are usually glued to their desks, making sure our money is handled well and all our bills get paid on time.

Our sidelines department buys and displays most of our cool non-book items, such as magnets, cards, journals, tee shirts, and chocolate! We pride ourselves on our excellent array of chocolate – we have everything from high-end designer chocolate bars all the way to delicious caramels that are only 66 cents. A customer favorite is Chocolove, which is based right here in Boulder!

And finally, all the way up at the very top of the store are the buying and marketing offices – we call this area The Mezzanine. Arsen & Liesl handle the frontlist buys as well as some backlist sections. Liesl oversees the children's room and the teen section (and does some amazing displays in the kid's room!).

Arsen is also our General Manager for the store, so besides buying he spends his days overseeing the managers and making sure the Used Book Office is staffed.

Nick buys much of the store backlist, sends our orders, and buys Magazines.

Stephanie and Julia make up the Marketing team. Julia spends her time putting together the store newsletter, creating the marketing material for the events, and making awesome displays all around the store.

Stephanie spends her time organizing the marketing, arranging for co-op, and setting up the events – including filling out the Edelweiss event grids

Even though we all work hard, we do still find time to let loose!

Arsen even finds time to write original poetry!

**Clip:** Arsen: So I've been inspired by our numerous poetry bestsellers over the past couple years, and I have started writing some of my own poetry. So I wrote some poems in honor of things we do around the store. So I did a poem in honor of discrepancies, which I shared with the staff.

Discrepancy

My heart, your soul

My soul, your heart

Two hearts, one soul

Same Difference

Thank you!

Ain't no life like the Bookstore Life!