



ICBA Networking Calls Recap

Store2Store and Buyer2Buyer

June 16-18 and June 23-24, 2020



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Store2Store Recap

General Operating Conditions

A number of schools reported earlier fall class start dates to close the session at the Thanksgiving break. Staggered dorm move-ins are planned. Still, uncertainty remains, even where the school has declared a return to campus for fall classes. Various contingency and budget scenarios are being made to address good-bad-worse case scenarios. “The plan was hard to create; it will be even harder to implement” – Ross Rosati, Minnesota

Some campuses will adopt a hybrid model of learning for fall. Large lecture hall courses will likely be virtual. Smaller classes will be staggered to allow for social distancing in the facilities and cleaning between classes. Building access through the summer months is highly restricted on most campuses, allowing only key card access in some cases.

Many stores have had staff reductions throughout the campus closings, including dismissal of student workers, furloughs, hiring freezes, early retirements, and reduced career staff hours. Staff are pitching in to do whatever it takes – from processing online orders, to taking photos for social media!

There isn't a wide-consensus on attendance rules for stadium events in the fall; more decisions to come based on state and local health requirements for the protection of the athletes as well as the fans.

Store-wide Marketing & Promotions

- A-frame sign holders around campus; initially for “yard sale” but converted to “We’re OPEN” – NDSU
- Challenge capturing email addresses for incoming students and even returning students
- Weekly email broadcasts featuring new items, face masks, raising awareness versus discounting – University of Illinois Champaign
- Sales events over weekends by category via emails and social media have done well; most orders include regularly priced merchandise as well – University of Northern Iowa
- Getting more strategic on promotional items; avoiding blanket discounting – NC State

Re-opening logistics

Most stores have reopened (or plan to within the first week of July), however most are greatly reducing operating hours.

- Store operating on partial staff in-store and partial staff working from home in order to have a back-up crew as a contingency to having to quarantine employees should someone contract COVID-19 – CSU Fullerton
- Many stores are considering a shift to counter service or mail order/digital delivery for course materials in the fall. This factor will result in further store traffic declines.
- Using Calendly app for scheduling pickups – Vermont

- Positioned a large banner at drive-up pickup location with store phone number to call on arrival – Stark State
- Store provides deliveries on campus within 1 hour – Evergreen State
- Current in-store course material purchases at about 25% (remainder online). Looking to encourage even more online orders – NC State
- Current in-store course material purchases at about 80% (remainder online). Looking to encourage significant switch to online ordering – CSU Fullerton
- Store has typically had a 3rd shift, working as late as 1 am to accommodate volume of orders at back-to-school rush – University of Illinois Champaign
- Reconfiguring systems and textbook floor to pick/pack/ship more quickly - Minnesota

Health & Safety Protocols

For many stores, Campus Facilities and Safety departments are taking the lead in designing/implementing a plan for the entire campus reopening. Some stores have had specific input related to retail operations, however, stores will ultimately follow the campus lead. Some stores are able to tap into campus for consistent signage on health & safety precautions. Safety officers and “ambassadors” are/will be strategically located around campus to encourage compliance.

- Hand sanitizer stations are installed throughout the store at entrances and service counters – Evergreen State
- Some stores are choosing not to take cash although working on details in coordination with food services for consistency across auxiliary areas
- Some availability issues getting plexiglass for service desk protection
 - Work with facilities
 - Contact PaulaHaerr@ICBAinc.com for some resources
 - DIY – large acrylic frames from hobby stores to hang from ceiling
- Eliminating high-touch products; cosmetics testers
- Stores questioning the “right” amount of time to quarantine returns
 - Looking to local and mainstream retailers before deciding if OK to accept return merchandise. For example, Target is taking back merchandise
- Looking into UV light disinfecting
- Create employee training videos for cleaning standards – Azusa Pacific
- Use baskets for occupancy control
- Many campuses will require face coverings on campus property and, in some cases, the campus is providing for free masks – at least one – for faculty, staff, and students.

Buyer2Buyer – General Comments

B2B Calls: New Hobbies and Skills!

Congratulations to Katie Lomas at Grand Valley for completing her MBA, to Kimber Damour at Iowa State on her new house, and Herman Erickson at BYU Idaho on his new grandson! Kim Anvinson from NDSU commented that there’s little extra time with so much energy/effort going into creating new initiatives. Kudos for those who have taken on home schooling. Other popular activities:

- Outdoors: biking, reading, hiking, walking, gardening, landscaping
- Arts & Crafts: making candles, crochet
- Home improvement: cleaning basement, painting the house, remodeling 182 year old house, remodeling laundry room, decluttering à la Marie Kondo
- General: photography, cooking, puzzles (less than 1,000 pieces), playing video games, a new puppy, sorting pictures for a digital album, , went to a drive-in movie, Netflix binge watching, *mourning* baseball, gone fishing!

Buyer2Buyer Recap – Supplies

WHAT'S SELLING AND TO WHOM?

- Challenging time for supplies where stores are closed for walk-in traffic. Hoping for pent-up demand to surface in fall.
- Expecting carded stock sales to grow over open stock to avoid contamination – Central Washington
 - Environmental packaging concerns may be on hold during pandemic
- Using disinfectant spray on open stock product like pens – Carroll College, Central Washington
- Creating “home schooling” kits for faculty/staff with children learning from home – Central Washington
- Kits / bundles: ease for ordering by students, however, a couple of buyers cited assembling kits from store stock can be challenging
 - Planning bundles for July; likes idea of white boards in bundles - Carroll College
 - Using special deal and slow-selling backpacks for supply bundles – Carroll College
 - Note-taking Bundle: 3 spirals, 2 packs index cards, 2 highlighters, 1 EXPO marker, 1 marker, 1 pack pencils - Central Washington
 - Note-taking Bundle for fall: include an upgraded version with possibly a G2, cinch bag, 5 Star notebooks – Central Washington
 - BTS Bundles: Margin adjust on bundles to reflect 25% savings for customer – See UCLA Flyer last page

eCommerce STRATEGY

- Messaging: “We’re here for Back-to-School EVERYDAY” – Central Washington
- With Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) campuses closed through December, Kim Wolf is working to get all supplies online and ready for curbside pickup (hopefully)
 - Accepting pre-orders on product if they can get proof graphic for logo product.
 - Photographing items – often student employees, staging product for student workers to come in to do the photography
 - Store staff taking photos for the web; doing whatever it takes to get products online – BYU Idaho
 - Gathering images for increased web items. Tip: reach out to reps or contact PaulaHaerr@ICBAinc.com for specific company contacts for artwork.
- Some buyers surprised at success of grad sales; while sales are down from last year, robust frame sales in many cases, including frame sales to departments celebrating student success
- Successfully selling higher-end or fashion supplies on website, such as Leuchtturm and decomposition books – HACC
 - Selling Decomposition books and Leuchtturm at 25-30% off online promo – BYU Idaho
 - Adding bloom and Erin Condren – Iowa State
 - Write-in-rain and Moleskin - Vermont
- Color pencil sets selling well along with local inspired coloring books – Carroll College (Montana)
- Whereas some stores primarily focused on logo supplies for website, they are now pushing to get most / all supplies posted online
- Stores varied significantly in how shipping costs handled
 - Recovering free-to-student shipping fees through CARES Act
 - \$5 flat fee orders over \$75 – BYU Idaho
 - Charges for shipping – Central Washington

PRODUCT PIPELINE

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Challenge getting wipes and hand sanitizer for resale
- Buyers conservative on buying masks; initial reports indicate high sell-through on custom masks.
- Some stores supplying masks for campus use (faculty/staff, “free” to students)
- Campuses considering “welcome back” kit with masks, gloves, hand sanitizer
- Vendors are being very supportive, adjusting to smaller orders, lower minimums and even drop shipping in some cases – Vermont, BYU Idaho, Kansas
- Buyers being very conservative on bringing in product for fall; working on moving through existing inventory.
- Buyers are split on taking orders now versus delaying another month on typical July 1 deliveries

IN-STORE ASSORTMENT STRATEGIES (FLOOR CHANGES)

- Adjusting margin to 25-30% on items considered essential – Central Washington
- With customers out of store, it’s a good time to change up sales floor
 - Some sales floor shifts: color pens formerly in art area now with all writing instruments, graph papers with notebooks – UW Madison

SPECIALTY CLASSES – ART, HEALTH/SCI, LABS, ETC

- Looking into mailing tubes to sell “rolled” art papers; 5-10 sheet minimum – Grand Valley State
- Working with art faculty on “right sizing” art supply kits to make the kits shippable – Central Washington
- Oversize items for art supply kits are available for pick-up in store only; items clearly identified on syllabus and website – BYU Idaho
- Planning chemistry bundle: lab notebook, goggles, lab coat, etc. – Carroll College

Buyer2Buyer Recap – Tech

WHAT’S SELLING AND TO WHOM?

- High percentage of sales are to institution or faculty/staff working from home
- Steady stream of sales for webcams, headset; resorting to creative sourcing using bulk purchasing through eBay, Best Buy – NDSU
- Tech/phone accessories added to “express shop” mini-convenience store – UC Santa Cruz
- Bulk purchase Anchor USB-C 5-in-on sourced through Amazon Business – UC Santa Cruz
- “Cornell Starter Kit” includes sleeve, disinfecting wipes (Invisible Shield from D&H), decal, coupon for future hoodie purchase – Cornell
- Free phone wallets with bundles purchased using Apple marketing funds – UC Santa Cruz
- Restructuring Mac or iPad deal to get a variety of free airpods – UC Santa Cruz
- Dell bundle includes \$100 rebate, sleeve, dongle, mouse – UC Santa Cruz
- Florida International’s service department has remained open and has picked up business from closed Apple stores.
- Connection through a student employee’s father’s accounting firm who has been referring clients to the campus store as a trusted source; 200 pcs sold to local banks & businesses – Florida International
- Looking into Lenovo drop-ship program – Iowa State

eCommerce Strategy

- Working with orientation groups to get presence in virtual activities
- User banner ads on website to promote Apple deals

PRODUCT PIPELINE

- Smaller, more frequent order placement to keep inventory levels low since fall is unpredictable
- Tech Data has been a good in-stock source on the Apple program – Vermont
- HP introducing Campus Advantage Program through D&H - NDSU

IN-STORE ASSORTMENT STRATEGIES (FLOOR CHANGES)

- Working with department heads for possible rental of oculus headsets for fall; approximately 280 students – Arizona
- Frequent sanitization of demo stations after every customer contact

Buyer2Buyer Recap – Apparel / Gifts

WHAT'S SELLING AND TO WHOM?

- Basics!!!
- Comfy apparel, basic crews, bottoms (surprising as the category has been slow), tees, hoods – SDSU
- Champion crewneck in spring colors (coral, blush, sage, light blue, grey) – Central Washington
- Lots of t-shirts – Union & Iowa
- Tie Dye – Iowa State
- Periodic table coffee mugs – Iowa State
- Grad: frames and regalia - Miami
- \$10 off hoods for virtual orientations – Iowa State
- Freshman Essentials Kit – hood, water bottle, lanyard – Iowa State
- \$9.99 t-shirts for orientation; selling about 12/day – West Chester University
- Made up tech “bundles in a backpack” to help move inventory – Columbus State
- Deal of the day to move out slow sellers – NDSU
- Focus on slow sellers - Oregon
- Create “catalogs” of product groupings with 20% off such as Mother’s Day, Father’s Day – 320 orders on Dad product and sold out of 3 items – Alabama
- Special buy on backpacks and messenger bags; cost \$5, regular \$24.95, sale \$14.95 – Central Washington
- Custom Monopoly – US Naval Academy
- Sales to vacationers heading to the beach – Alabama
- Puzzles & Games – Iowa
- Created “boutique” for non-logo gifts – Weber State
- Lawn signs were a hit with grads (created by inhouse print shop) – Azusa Pacific
- Drinkware and fashion socks – Columbus State
- “Yard Sale” outdoor event – NDSU
- Wednesday Flash Sale – Oregon
- Buy 2 get 1 Free
- 25% Pride Bundles – Columbus State
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Logo masks selling great both stand-alone orders or added on to web orders – SDSU
 - On 3rd reorder – Iowa State
 - Using Wincraft and ZooZatz for logo masks – Iowa State
 - Initially declined by licensing but now OK – Miami
 - Sublimated design with removable filter from Jardine – Union
 - Logo masks selling well, Free disposable mask with purchase – Weber State
 - Part of proceeds from mask sales goes to COVID-19 research
 - Pomchee fashion masks (non-logo) – Columbus State
 - Gaiter Style from L2 Brands – Clark University

- Sold out of first order; waiting to see if required in campus buildings – Columbus State
- Bandanas selling well all of a sudden! – Union

eCommerce STRATEGY

- Running 20% off and free shipping for seasonal events such as Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Memorial Day, etc. – Alabama
- Staff learning to fill-in for social media and website posts since student workers gone; posting daily to Facebook and Instagram with clever mannequin poses – Carroll College
- Emails twice a week to their mailing list with a price point ad – Central Washington
- Partnered with alumni office to be included in broadcasts twice a month which has doubled or tripled online sales – Carroll College
- Types of promotions: 25% off polos, % off name drop mugs, not always a discount(!), local products
- Facebook Live Fridays: Father’s Day fashion show, new USCAPE items, Furry Friend Friday (pets with their owners fashion show). Average 80-100 orders per day, 200 Monday before Father’s Day. Recommend lightly scripted to keep on track and 6-7 minutes at most – Iowa State
- Facebook Live on Tuesday’s – NDSU
- Facebook live and Instagram on Wednesday – Central Washington
- Photography – student employees, staging images

PRODUCT PIPELINE

- Youth orders cancelled by Colosseum – Iowa State
- 47 Brand notably non-responsive to questions about delivery; buyers cancelling
- Many vendors are being pro-active about scheduling deliveries or continuing hold on “pack-and-hold” orders
- Local restaurant offered space at no charge for buyers to meet with reps - Alabama

IN-STORE ASSORTMENT STRATEGIES (FLOOR CHANGES)

- Closed dressing rooms – UW Madison
- Removed mirrors to discourage trying on clothes – Clark University
- Sanitizing hangers after customer purchase before returning hangers to use – Iowa State
- Steaming apparel try-ons and returns, quarantining for 24 hours before returning to floor – SDSU & Iowa State
- Holding off on gift categories since impulse walk-in traffic doubtful. Only “non-logo” gift item is hydroflask which is allowing a special exception for promotional discounts online – West Chester University
- Removed some fixtures to help with social distancing – Alabama
- Narrow and deep philosophy – Iowa State

HOLIDAY 2020 OUTLOOK

- Cutting way back on non-logo gifts - Oregon

Buyer2Buyer Recap – Course Materials

Spring Buyback / Rental Returns

- Many stores went with online wholesale buybacks only due to concerns for physical books changing to virtual materials
- Buyback online with Valore; small retail buy \$2,500 where normally \$40K – CSU Long Beach
- Rental returns required email after email after email!
- Drive-thru rental returns; 82% back – CSU Long Beach
- 65% rental returns; normally 90-92% – NC State

- 50% rental returns; students not allowed on campus – Vermont
- 15% fewer rental returns - Cedarville
- Offered free FedEx return labels but less than 50% returned – Grinnell
- Phone-a-thon for rental returns; only slightly less than normal - Whatcom

Fall Adoptions: Successes/Challenges

- Some instructors still waiting assignments; expect lots of changes
- 60% of adoptions in; uncertainty with hiring freeze; working with academic admin assistants on faculty communication – Iowa
- 78% of adoptions in but worried about changing as digital access becomes necessary – CSU Long Beach
- 70% in but shifts in programs creating challenges – Whatcom
- Slow acceptance of inclusive Access with some faculty
- Zero adoption due to scheduling changes (accelerated and split semester) – Grinnell
- 40% increase in IA over summer semester; flexible and lot opt-out – Tennessee
- No IA yet due to registrar concerns over perception of tuition increase - Vermont

Course Material Delivery of printed materials:

- Several stores looking to do counter service for fall
- Concerns that online order expectations don't take shipping time into account
- May be able to use a ballroom for pick-ups if it's not being used for classes – NC State
- Not planning free shipping for course materials unless they can recover funds elsewhere; up to 2,000 online orders per day! – CSU Long Beach
- Plan on delivering to dorms in the fall or using tailgate trailer for pick-ups (backs up to store backroom) – NDSU
- Flat Fee of \$3.99 to encourage shipping for all textbook orders – Evergreen State

Publisher/Wholesale/Digital Partners

- New Programs
- Publisher discussions and partnership strategies

Buyer2Buyer Recap – POS Systems

Current Systems Assessment

- Looking for a repository of system RFP documents
- Several stores on the call are Sequoia which will cease support next year – Colorado Mesa, NC State, Iowa
- Looking for improved online shopping and checkout experience – MBS users
- Looking for mobile ready
- Graphical user interface – Sequoia user
- Difficulty attaching supplies to course materials – NetSuite user

Financial Management

- Need improved back-office reporting not available on Lightspeed – Kings
- Better dashboards – PRISM User
- Daily access to true cost of goods reporting
- Managing rental aspects
- Easy access to variety of reports rather than manual report building

Integrations

- Some integration issues – MBS & NBC users
- Ease of integration to other systems like Verba|VitalSource or RedShelf
- Accounts payable integration for student charges

Marketing Tools

- Looking for automated abandoned shopping cart recovery
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) capabilities
 - Some privacy concerns
- More expansive, dynamic promotion coding

Marketer2Marketer Recap

Stores varied in access to mailing lists. Few stores are able to comment on COVID-19 or anti-racism directly; all sensitive issue communications must come from the campus or auxiliary department. Amplify the university's statements in your "about" section of website or FB profile.

COVID-19 Communications

- Taking advantage of uniform campus signage and decals for communicating safety measures
- Communicating mandated mask requirements tricky with non-compliant customers
 - Campus safety ambassadors help
- Anticipate that BOPIS (buy online pickup in store) will be the new normal so working on enhancing signage, process, and communications – Iowa State

General

- Overhauled website navigation which had a huge positive effect on online orders – UC Davis
- Facebook Live Fridays as a fun employee morale booster; some TikTok video – Iowa State
- Multi-channel approach using Hootsuite, Mailchimp, and iBeacons (during campus events) – Brown
- With student staff gone, career staff having to learn techniques, especially need for video editing skills – UW Madison
- Video doubles or triples engagement – Iowa State
- iPhones and Canva are life savers!
- Photography studio set up in store when there weren't any customers to expedite getting product online – UC Davis
- Photography studio and website fulfillment set up in remote warehouse location - Texas
- Remind customers that the store exists to serve students in academic needs, tech, support the school's mission – Iowa State
- Increasing posts to 3-4 per day, especially with orientation going virtual – Iowa State
- Participating in "Parent Page" Facebook group; director is a parent of a student but received permission anyway; able to see and address parents' concerns – Iowa State

Messaging

- Focus on "We miss you" versus discounts; not giving away margin – NC State
- Mannequins in place of real models, posed about the store & campus – SUNY Potsdam, Carroll College, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- Informing customers about Equitable Access coming this fall – UC Davis
- Keeping people entertained! BINGO card, Instagram stories, Texas crossword puzzles, drawing challenges – Texas
- Advice for incoming students – Texas
- Trying to get more people of color in advertising – Iowa State

- Go for fun! Introducing animal cracker KitKat as opposed to constant barrage of selling messages – SUNY Potsdam
- Promoted some clearance sale products but had a lot of add-on sales of regularly priced merchandise – NC State
- Emphasizing student access to course materials to encourage adoptions - Texas

Email Marketing

- Tripled click-thru rates and doubled online orders – Brown
- Extremely summer “Picnic” event resulted in overwhelming quantity of orders – UC Davis

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