



ICBA Networking Calls Recap June 2022

Store2Store Recap

The Store2Store calls kicked off with sharing the first word or phrase that comes to mind when thinking of Fall 2022. “Finally!” COVID variants, hopeful, super excited, roll with the tide, growth, excite-tabulous, can’t wait, more in person learning, “get your track shoes on,” busy, managing change, increased enrollment, Yikes! new normal, overbought, seeing people, anticipation but hesitation, and chasing orders were some of the things shared.

The group discussed how their stores/institutions handle bad debt. Most stores carry their own bad debt, not the institution. Several of the stores have seen an increase in their bad debt related to inclusive access processes. The store is often at the bottom of the list when getting paid.

Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) is a challenge for all of the stores on the call with stores over \$10M in sales. As state entities, many are not allowed to participate in any NIL activities with the athletes, however off-campus competition and Fanatics can. A couple of the stores on the call are finding workarounds by partnering with local print shop, who pay the athletes, and the bookstore sells the product.

Supply chain issues are still real, with additional freight charges adding to the frustration. “Find it, buy it, get it” was the motto for most stores. Clothing is becoming easier to get, while glassware and ceramics is still challenging. Stores are reviewing their shipping charges on online orders but have not yet raised those charges.

Staffing continues to be a challenge. The college store is often the steppingstone for employees to leave for other jobs on campus without extended or weekend hours. Succession planning is hard as people are leaving despite pay raises, looking for more work/life balance. It is hard to compete with local businesses in pay. Stores continue to look for opportunities to create internships with departments on campus.

Inclusive Access is helping to recover some of the lost course materials revenue and to keep the sales in the store. The increase in IA has led to less physical books and stores are looking for ways to use the added sales floor space.

Smartest Thing:

- Find ways to say yes to the pain points on campus.
- One participant reminded us to move on if you lose a battle and to always be prepared with the elevator pitch when you run into your administrators!
- It helps if your CFO was once a student employee! He gets it!
- Attend Faculty Senate meetings.
- Utilize display cases in student union. Students design the case with their top picks in the store.
- Tap into Grad students for staffing.
- Have a “Back to School Extravaganza!”. Acrobats, elephants, tattoo artist and more. Utilized The Source program to sell \$10 sweatshirts.
- Rather than just have displays, etc. during Pride month, have events around the 2nd week of classes as it is a popular time to “come out”.
- Incentivize students to work through graduation by paying for their gap and gown.

The POS Systems call started with a quick round of asking them to share what is their current POS and how long have they been using it.

- Clear conclusion: there is no single perfect system for all college stores
 - Needs and strategic direction dictates the type of system that is best for any given store
 - All have pros and cons
- General expressions of dissatisfaction (from mild to severe), regardless of which system Members are using
 - Systems used by call participants
 - PrismRBS; MBS; NetSuite; Booklog
 - Common themes:
 - System Providers not providing enough support, both during implementation and after implementation
 - Access to reporting seems to be a consistent problem
 - Access to critical financial data is often a challenge
 - Implementation and training are always more complex and takes more time than anticipated
 - Need for more advanced ecommerce and more advanced email marketing capabilities
- Many of the challenges mentioned on the call have been at least partially solved by other ICBA Members in various ways (some with the help of their system provider, some have been creative “do it yourself” solutions)
 - There seems to be some inconsistency in terms of what is communicated and how certain features work (regardless of system)
- Poll Results:
 - 31% do not plan to switch systems in the near future
 - 31% just switched systems in the last 18 months
 - 23% plan switch in next 5 – 24 months
 - 8% in the process of switching
 - 8% plan to switch in the next 2-3 years
- PRISM
 - The sale of PRISM (“Mosaic”) to Harris is a concern since there’s still a lot of information yet to come from Harris about the long-term plans
 - Delays in Mosaic meeting its promise have been frustrating
 - Some of the info they have been sending has not been reliable
 - Some have had challenges running sales events, others have been able to make it work
- Having your system tied to a book wholesaler has pros and cons
- Newer NetSuite users feel that ultimately, it will be a powerful tool, but the learning curve is bigger than anticipated and requires substantial technical expertise
 - NetSuite for Course Materials is not as strong as some other college store systems
 - Lots of advanced capabilities that will be considered over time
- Booklog
 - Challenges with their system supporting Inclusive Access programs
- MBS
 - MBS allows serialized bar coding
 - MBS has been responsive to support calls (24 hours or less)
- Very important to think about future system needs (2024 and beyond) as well as current needs
 - What will the General Merchandise to Course Materials ratio of sale become?
 - The migration/trend toward Inclusive Access and Equitable Access CM programs means that system needs are changing
 - eCommerce capabilities?
- ICBA will check with NetSuite and MBS regarding compatibility with SensePass (ICBA’s partner who offers e-wallet services)

DEI Recap

ICBA will continue to amplify and share what our Member Stores are doing to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on their campuses and as a retail best practice. The DEI Networking calls are a time to share ideas, get inspired, and discuss opportunities and goals. Overall, great ideas and honest conversation was had throughout the call whether attendees came to listen or share!

We began the DEI Networking call with our lightning round, asking all attendees, “Do you have access to DEI resources on your campus?”

- Many institutions have resources available to support campus store efforts
 - Safe zone training meeting offered
 - DEI office handles training
 - Entire team participates in DEI trainings
 - Courses are available for DEI online and in person
 - Participation online in training courses is a regular part of job duties
- There are also a variety of DEI initiatives, good campus support that offers professional development and training, holds a “One Campus” book reading each year, brings authors to campus
- Opportunity to work closely with accessibility office for students with disabilities

Discussion About Internal Initiatives:

- Had proposed to Director of Auxiliary services to bring in more mannequins to accurately reflect the campus population, able to get more diverse mannequins <https://store.greneider.com>
- Juneteenth promos receiving pushback/criticism about capitalizing on holiday, asking if they should step back or continue? Many other holidays advertise sales, they sell diverse stoles for graduation with portions of proceeds going to support groups on campus and they are well received
- Have had organizational changes, rewriting job descriptions, and included a clause for DEI now part of job description and specific DEI interview questions added to interview process, now have what they call DEI Champions
- Uses DEI backgrounds for Zoom, displayed a few for group, created by institution
- In recent marketing, added staff members to model, had a group of different ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities – learned from Andy Crestodina’s presentations at the ICBA Conference
- Offer pride merch year-round and have expanded their trade book assortment to include more Black/Latinx authors and characters
- Created more social media posts in English and Spanish since 68% of their student population is Hispanic, used subtitles/closed captioning with videos for people with disabilities, look for feedback on promotions and engage with specific departments to brainstorm together, seeks buy-in from key stakeholders, tries to promote and feature vendors who have DEI initiatives
- Ordered from Freedom Wear and will get their first order this month, more unique designs, less traditional, <https://freedomwearco.com>, was able to get 3x and 4x sizes
- Started using campus makeup data for assistance in ordering correct number of stoles for each group, always good to engage with campus communities – for instance, Men of Color group are offering ideas for bookstore
- Land’s End plus size availability is impressive, they also do special order commission program
 - There is no upcharge on larger sizes even if vendor does
- Did a pop-up shop with a local vendor – Arctic Gear – and sold CWA knitwear on reunion weekend with good success, also local vintage shop did pop up and sold well, alums brought in old school gear and shop bought them back
- Partnering with grad events and nursing school ceremonies