



MACS Times

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The Newsletter of the Middle Atlantic College Stores, Inc. serving Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia since 1970.

YOUR STUDENTS WANT OPTIONS

by Stephen Hocheiser
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Does this sound familiar? Students find their textbooks in your store during rush and, instead of buying them, they whip out their cell phones and take a picture of the book cover, the bar code, or the ISBN.

This is a symptom of a major development that is impacting all of us who are involved in course materials. Your students are looking for options.

It is no longer sufficient to simply offer the print textbook on the shelf. Even with the choice of new and used, the student is looking for more.

How do you offer more? Here are some suggestions:

- Check for eBook versions of your major adoptions. Some can be sold as a physical product on the shelf in the store. Some can be sold online in conjunction with the publisher and some can be integrated through your P.O.S. system with access activated through your registers.

- Look into offering electronic chapters of your largest adopted titles. Talk to your publisher reps and system providers about what is available.
- Participate in rental programs by either administering a program yourself or partnering with a vendor.

Some have voiced concern that offering these types of options will cannibalize stores' print textbook sales. However, students are looking for options now and they are finding them elsewhere. Why not provide them with these additional choices and share in the revenue?

College stores around the country are experimenting with new types of format options and new types of business models that are designed to satisfy their student customers and keep the store in the game.

While no one knows for sure what is the perfect mix of student options to offer, one thing is certain: business as usual is not an option for the store.

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NOT TOO EARLY TO PROMOTE SPRING BUYBACK

It is time to start thinking about promoting your spring semester buy backs. Start putting up your signs now, put your buy back dates on your receipts along side your return policies, and pass out post cards. This may be the only time you see some of your customers during the semester. The more your students hear about buy back the more books you should see come to the counter. You should also continue to promote your buy back throughout the semester. How about sending an e-mail reminder? Many stores have found it beneficial to send their retail list via students e-mail and those buys have seen substantial growth.

PROMOTE--PROMOTE--PROMOTE

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