Beat: Local

The book is on the table

Book industry challenges and sollutions

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USPA NEWS - With the advancement of technology, new channels of communication and entertainment are flooding open to consumers. Even with the digitization of books, the print market has declined over the years. Physical books are slowly disappearing from shelves, however, this one bookstore called OMNIVORE, located in Noe Valley, is striving in the market, even amongst the challenges.

"The book is on the table..." You may have heard this expression, and it best describes OMNIVORE. All the books sold in-house are specifically related to cooking, drinking, and food. This niche caught my attention not only because books are disappearing, but because their content is focused and specialized, and it's a segment that has seen phenomenal growth as well.

Not more than 1/4 from Omnivore, is the Noe Valley Public Library, where I met Kianna Noval, an avid reader, who was passing by. I asked her about hard-bound books and stores that still offer them, and she told me while she likes paper books, she is really into audiobook platforms.

She thinks that there is still a market for paper books but with today's busy lifestyle, audiobooks are more popular and practical, so she started to make the transition. "I still think is good to have that physical copy, and I recently got into a book club, is good to be able to turn the pages."

A quick Google search can lead to thousands of recipes, and a quick turn to YouTube can show even a kitchen amateur how to taste, create, and pair everything from everyday staples to gourmet foods. Plus, there are TV shows about cooking, network channels dedicated to food, and so much more.

Jerahmeel, a Brazilian in love with all art involving food, thinks that Americans don't give much value to books like Brazilians do. When asked what his favorite food is to cook, he says he loves to cook "Moqueca", a very famous seafood dish from the State of Bahia, in Brazil. When asked if he goes online or to a book when he needs to look for a recipe, he said "books for sure."

Professor Glen Broom and David Dozier, from San Diego State University in their book "Using Research on Public Relations" states that the process of" research is controlled, objective, systematic gathering of information for the purpose of describe and understanding".

Like many people here in the Bay Area, before going somewhere to eat, or before buying a dinner or dessert wine, we usually go online to see reviews. This process gives us a sense of what to expect; a chance to better understand the owner's perspective, native dishes, the restaurants, or winery's clientele, etc. A search will give you specific numbers, OMNIVORE had great public reviews. On Google My Business they scored 4.9 out of 5, and on Yelp, 4.7 out of 5.

OMNIVORE sells everything from current periodicals dedicated to the food industry and its latest trends to vintage and collectible books. They also offer their customers access to a Cookbook Club Membership that includes four new signed books per year shipped on March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15.

Owner, Celia Sack, says "When a customer signs for a membership, they usually choose their cookbooks thoughtfully with a specific preference for a type of book, like baking and desserts, or maybe something that includes more vegetables than meat (or vice-versa), or food history & literature, they just let us know."

For the history buff, they also sell vintage menus from the 19th and 20th centuries. Adding to this unique methodology, OMNIVORE also has events, like the Author Event, where readers can get to have their book signed by its author in-house. In addition, they

promote offsite events related to the culinary industry, with this dedicated to their annual sale during the weekend of September 16 & 17.

Celia was quick to point out that the sale, "Will help us clear out space for the onslaught of fall releases and reward our loyal customers for being so supportive of Omnivore." "Every single book in the shop will be 20% off, and our three big tables will be loaded with 50% off books! So put together your Christmas list early, check it twice, and head on over. And don't forget to bring bags!"

Marco Zanelli, a long-time resident of Noe Valley, self-identifies as, "one of the store's biggest fans" and says he does everything he can to keep stores like OMNIVORE open and successful members of the community. "As a writer and communicator, myself, I feel that is part of my mission, to keep the art of reading and sharing books alive." He says that the store is also a great resource for what he describes as smart gifts. "I have surrounded myself with intellectual people in my life, but here I know I will always find something to impress, surprise, and sometimes even outsmart them."

OMNIVORE is located at 3885 Cesar Chavez St, San Francisco, Noe Valley.

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