BOOKENDS

★ Est. 1984 ★ Community Bookstore in Ridgewood, NJ
★ Retailer ★
Author+Celebrity Events ★

BUYING AND MERCHANDISING OPERATIONS RESEARCH

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Business Overview

Founded in 1984, Bookends in Ridgewood, New Jersey, is a mid-sized, **community-oriented** bookstore selling everything from books to locally-themed merchandise and puzzles. Besides being a retailer, it sustains a unique value proposition by hosting author and celebrity events regularly, attracting visitors from across the NYC metropolitan area. The store serves a diverse and **loyal customer base**, including students, families, and retirees. Bookends is a treasured community institution and contributes to the local economy by drawing thousands of visitors to Ridgewood each year.

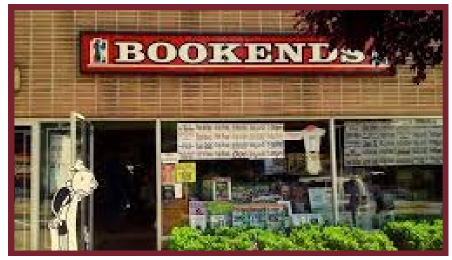


Figure 1.1: Bookends Exterior in Downtown Ridgewood (211 E Ridgewood Ave)

Core Objective

Our goal is to strengthen Bookends' long-term **sustainability, transparency, and community awareness** initiatives through a year-long Corporate Social Responsibility (**CSR**) plan. As a small business, Bookends faces stricter financial constraints regarding how much it can invest in CSR initiatives; therefore, our team aims to develop strategies that **co-create both social and financial benefits**. In other words, the proposed initiatives should generate meaningful social impact while also delivering a strong return on investment for Bookends.

Overview of Current CSR Initiatives

Philanthropic	Environmental	Ethical	Economic
-Collects book donations for local causes. -Donates up to 15-20% of proceeds.	-Recyclable bags provided for customers at checkout. -Cardboard shipping materials recycled.	-Employees receive fair hours and wages. -Avoids deceptive greenwashing.	-Attracts **25,000-30,000** patrons to downtown Ridgewood annually, stimulating the local economy.

Walter & Pat Boyer
Current Co-Owners of Bookends

Mission Statement

"To support the greater Ridgewood Community by bringing authors to our store, town, and schools to encourage readers of all ages."

Research Methods

Our team utilized a carefully curated research process to draw **accurate, relevant, and actionable insights** for Bookends. We carried out a structured research approach that incorporated both primary and secondary methods and utilized a diverse range of sources.

Identify the Purpose → Set a Goal → Locate Sources → Collect Data → Analyze Data

Primary Reseach

November 12 - December 12, 2025

Interviews:
- Bookends' Owner, Walter Boyer
- Current & Former Bookends Employees
- Current Barnes & Noble Employee

- Community Survey
- Focus Group
- Secret Shopper Analysis
- Competitor Observation

Secondary Research

August 10 - August 22, 2025

- BOOKENDS — Company Research
- Industry Research
- BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS — Competitor Case Study
- Reviews

Key Findings

1) Over **70% of students** choose to buy a used book over a newly published one; the sustainable second-hand book market has **grown by 5.5%** in just the past year and is expected to continue to grow.

2) Third-party reviews reveal disappointed event attendees who were not given transparent communication prior to attending their event.

3) **52.1%** of the local community values Sustainability and **66.4%** value Mental Health. An additional **44%** are interested in Diversity & Inclusion initiatives.

4) A former Bookends employee told our team that she wishes her job might have been more engaging; Barnes & Noble appears to offer higher wages and benefits for their employees.

Conclusions

1) The second-hand book market is not only **sustainable**, but is also growing in popularity and should be considered by Bookends as part of a CSR campaign.

2) Bookends should consider how to enhance **transparency** and communication, especially among key stakeholders.

3) Community members are interested in **supporting local causes**, and competitors have demonstrated that addressing social causes can be beneficial.

4) While employees are given fair hours and compensation, **employee engagement and benefits** at Bookends could be improved.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Small, welcoming store, **cherished** by community.
- Visited by highly regarded authors & celebrities.
- Strong **charitable giving** initiatives.
- Employees are happy, fairly compensated, ethically treated, and have fair working hours.

Weaknesses

- **Outdated website** and communication channels; many customers noted a lack of transparency involving last-minute event communications.
  Employee engagement could be improved.

Opportunities

- The **secondhand book market** is projected to grow over $45 billion in the next ten years, and locals have shown interest in the industry.
- Growing interest among locals in issues related to the environment, mental health, and diversity.

Threats

- **Barnes & Noble** is a nearby large and well-funded competitor.
- Consumer trends shifting towards **online shopping**; however, Bookends does not currently offer an online retail site.

Proposed Strategic Plan

Guided by these conclusions, our team developed the **Turn the P.A.G.E. Campaign**, a year-long proposal to implement CSR initiatives into Bookends while continuing to drive positive financial outcomes.

turn the P.A.G.E.

P — **Pre-Owned Book Marketplace**
Initiate Bookends' involvement in the second-hand book market by allowing customers to resell their books on a newly developed Bookends app. After submitting the ISBN and uploading an image of the book, AI can help determine the resale cost. The new app will allow Bookends to sell their own merchandise online too.

A — **App-Based Transparency & Communications**
Utilize the newly developed app to provide event notifications to attendees and updates for key stakeholders. Enable push-notifications for last-minute event updates and initiate an "inbox" section of the app where stakeholders can learn information about Bookends happenings.

G — **Giving & Awareness Initiatives**
Initiate in-store campaigns celebrating various "awareness months" during a six-month timeframe. Each month, Bookends will offer a uniquely curated book display and round-up donation options at checkout.

E — **Employee Engagement**
Increase employee engagement by extending employee benefits and offering volunteer options for Bookends employees. Alter tasks of employees to increase overall engagement and initiate an employee bonus reward system.

Proposed Timeline

2027	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
P	App Coding Development & Beta Testing Stages											
				App Rollout								
A (same as P)	App Coding Development & Beta Testing Stages											
				App Rollout								
G	Build Schedule	"Awareness Month" Book Displays and Round-Up Donations										
								Staff Reflection				
E				Initiate Staff Meetings						Employee Bonus Rollout		
							Employee Volunteering					

→ ***App Check-Ups***: *Ensure the app is working properly and make coding improvements as needed.*

Key Performance Indicators

Above 60% — **App Adoption Rate**
Measured by App Store feedback

Above 40% — **Donation Round-Up Participation Rate**
Measured via transaction history

4.5 to 5.0 — **Third-Party Rating**
Measured via ratings on Google Maps, TripAdvisor, and Yelp

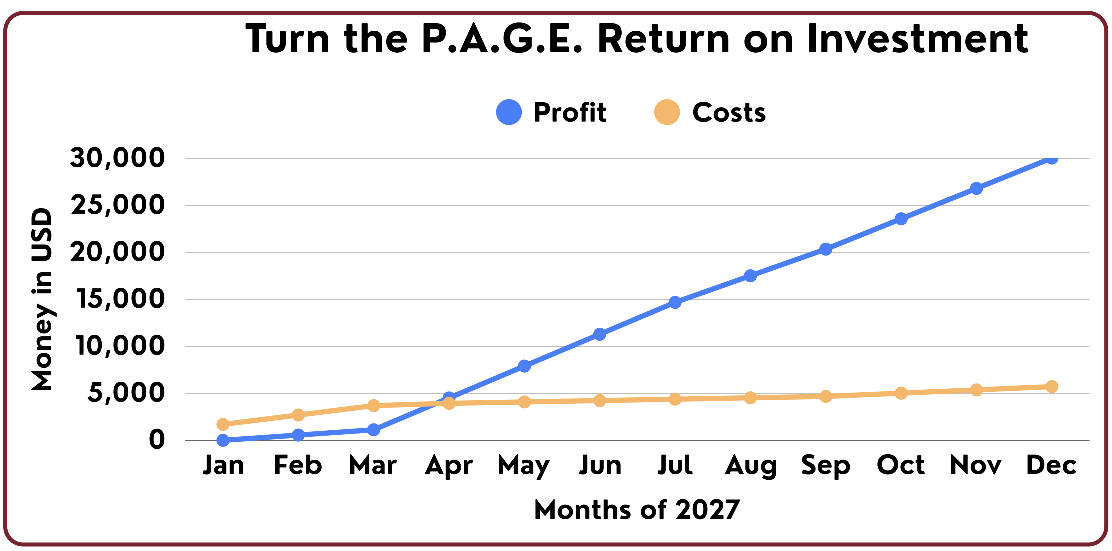
Over 150 — **Monthly Second-Hand Book Transactions**
Measured via the app

Above 90% — **Employee Retention Rate**
Measured via employee status records

Above 85% — **Satisfaction Rates**
Measured via our Customer & Employee Satisfaction Index

Budget

ACTIVITY:	ASSOCIATED COSTS:	% OF TOTAL COST:	SUBTOTAL:
Pre-Owned Book Marketplace & App-Based Transparency (shared costs)	Development and coding of the app; transaction fees for online payment services; app publication on Apple's App Store.	77.3%	$4,422
Giving & Awareness Initiatives	New shelving for "awareness month" displays	12.2%	$695
Employee Engagement	$50 reward gift card given to a chosen employee weekly.	10.5%	$600
		TOTAL COSTS:	**$5,717**



Projected ROI

Projected Profit: $30,060

$$\frac{\$30,060 - \$5,717}{\$5,717} \times 100$$

= 425.80% ROI

Breakeven:
April 2027

Amount Donated:
$2,620

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Description of the business or organization

History

Founded in 1984 by Dana and Walter Gilligan, Bookends has earned a reputation as one of the best-known independent bookstores in Northern New Jersey and serves as a landmark in the heart of Ridgewood's historic downtown. In December 2002, the bookstore transitioned ownership when Pat and Walter Boyer acquired the business. As co-owners, the Boyers expanded in-store programming, strengthening the national reputation of Bookends. Under their leadership, Bookends has hosted over 1,000 author events in 15 years. In 2010, the store relocated across the street from its original storefront and is currently located in Bergen County at 211 East Ridgewood Avenue in Ridgewood, New Jersey.

Overview

Bookends offers a wide variety of books appealing to all ages, including children's stories, young adult novels, cookbooks, nonfiction titles, and other genres. In addition to books, Bookends sells products such as puzzles, stationery, community-themed apparel, and children's games. Its **primary competitor is the Barnes & Noble location in Paramus, NJ**, less than a 10-minute drive (2.5 miles) away. Due to its weaker digital footprint, Bookends faced challenges during the pandemic.

100
Annual Events

40,000
Books Sold Annually

50+
Daily Transactions

2,000
Annual Book Donations

$10,000+
Fundraised Annually

Beyond selling merchandise, the event-driven business hosts over 100 authors, celebrities, and literary events each year. This has built Bookends a reputation for having unique access to notable authors and celebrities. The store has approximately 6,000 sq ft across two levels: the top level serves as an event and meet-and-greet space, while the ground level is the primary retail bookstore. Bookends is a common stop for authors on tour due to its proximity to Manhattan, often following larger media appearances in the city. Guests have included Alec Baldwin, Nia Sioux, Bobby Flay, Millie Bobby Brown, Jojo Siwa, Anna Kendrick, and others. Events range from small gatherings of about 20 guests to large signings **bringing up to 2,000 visitors** (**Figure 2.1**). Bookends attracts high volumes of customers from across the tri-state area (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania). For example, **Hillary Clinton once signed over 1,300 books in an hour and a half**, plus another 400 afterward. Bookends records and reports event-based sales to outlets such as The New York Times and Publishers Weekly to promote the store and advertise future events, reinforcing its value as a tour stop for authors. Bookends has an annual revenue of about **$1 million**.

Figure 2.1: Customers gather outside Bookends in anticipation of a signing.

Values

Since Bookends has not publicly published a formal vision statement, our team utilized targeted research methods to develop a proposed implied mission and vision statement for the bookstore.

Implied Mission

"To support the greater Ridgewood Community by offering a diverse and well-curated selection of books and attracting authors to our community to encourage readers of all ages."

Implied Vision

"To remain a leading independent, community-centered bookstore by fostering meaningful connections between authors and readers."

B. Description of the target market

Statistical Demographic Analysis of Customers and Employees

60% of customers are female

50% of customers are <19 years old

35% of customers are Ridgewood residents

80% of employees are female

50% of employees are between 14-19

100% of employees are Ridgewood residents

Data extracted from interview with Bookends' owner Walter Boyer

58.6% of students in Ridgewood, NJ, shop at Bookends

Data extracted from a survey conducted by our team

Bergen County, NJ Market Analysis

978,641	42.1 yrs	$124,224	$25,567	67.2%
County Population	Median Age	Median Household Income	Total Retail Sales Per Capita	Labor Force Participation Rate

*Approximately 50% of Bookends' target market consists of **in-store shoppers** who visit the store to purchase physical goods. The remaining 50% is comprised of **event attendees** who visit Bookends for its hosted events. There are noticeable differences in the market segmentation of each group.*

In-Store Shoppers

Demographics

- Young customer concentration (**25% teenagers; 25% parents shopping with children**)
- Broad book selection appealing to diverse demographics
- Students with part-time employment; adults with household incomes ranging $100,000–$300,000

Psychographics/Behavioral

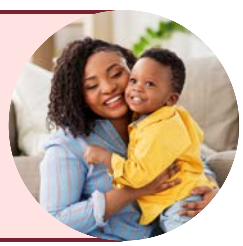
- Value education, cultural enrichment, and community involvement
- Strong support for **local and independent businesses**, including Bookends
- **High brand loyalty** and willingness to pay premium prices to support local retailers
- Comfortable spending discretionary income on books and active in book clubs and community initiatives

Geographics

- Primarily Ridgewood residents
- Market area extends **across Bergen County**
- Notable neighboring towns include Glen Rock, Waldwick, Ho-Ho-Kus, and Midland Park, NJ

Customer Profile: Ashley

Ashley, 32, is a **stay-at-home mom** in Ridgewood, NJ. She values the education of her 2-year-old son and often takes him to Bookends for books. Her household income is $180,000 and she is willing to pay higher prices to support small businesses.



Event Attendees

Demographics

- Wide event age range (approximately **5–90 years old**)
- Demographically diverse attendees, **reflecting the diversity of guest authors and genres**
- Financially stable event customer base

Psychographics/Behavioral

- Interest in celebrities, authors, entertainment, and new experiences
- Attend celebrity meet-and-greets, often for **"Instagrammable"** social media content
- Active social media users who follow current trends
- Event visitors often spend the day in Ridgewood exploring downtown
- **Not typical Bookends regulars**; likely return only for future large events of interest
- Event visitors often buy other store merchandise

Geographics

- Celebrity events attract customers from New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania (tri-state)
- **Many travel hours** by car or plane to meet their favorite celebrities

Customer Profile: Charlotte

Charlotte, 22, is a recent college graduate currently interning in upstate New York, a 45 minute drive from Bookends. She enjoys going out and meeting others; her **consumer behavior typically aligns with social media trends.**

Employees: An Overlooked Market Segment

*It is crucial that employees are not overlooked when analyzing the various market segments of Bookends. As **key stakeholders in the bookstore's operations**, employees will be a primary focus in our evaluation of Bookends' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining a diverse employment base of booksellers, ensuring ethical treatment of employees, and providing fair and competitive wages. For this reason, understanding the demographics and psychographics of employees is also an important consideration in this analysis.*

C. Overview of the business or organization's current business strategy relating to corporate social responsibility initiatives

Carroll's CSR Pyramid

Our team first evaluated Carroll's CSR Pyramid and its relevance to Bookends' business model, which will serve as a guiding framework throughout this section.

Developed by Archie B. Carroll in 1991, Carroll's CSR Pyramid outlines the four key components of Corporate Social Responsibility: Philanthropic, Ethical, Legal, and Economic Responsibility. Each of these tiers is guided by three foundational CSR principles: **Sustainability, Transparency, and Accountability**. Collectively, these operational priorities are often summarized by the widely recognized framework of **"People, Planet, and Profit".**

Using Carroll's CSR Pyramid as a baseline, the following conclusions are derived from an interview with Bookends' owner, Walter Boyer, an interview with Bookends employee Riana Saraogi, and a range of secondary research sources.

Philanthropic Responsibility

Bookends currently is partnered with Project Sunshine & Snowflake, a camp serving individuals with special needs. Through a curated list of recommended titles, customers can purchase books for donation, after which Bookends contributes **15% of the proceeds** to the organization. The bookstore regularly implements similar initiatives with organizations such as the Paterson School District, an under-resourced nearby community, offering discounts of **up to 20% on purchases** made for book donations. Bookends has also hosted author events dedicated exclusively to fundraising, where all ticket revenue is directed to the beneficiary organization.

Environmental Responsibility

As books are shipped in cartons to Bookends, owner Walter Boyer makes regular trips to the Ridgewood Recycling Center to ensure cardboard materials are recycled. The store also uses recyclable bags at checkout to **promote responsible consumption**. Unsold books are returned to publishers rather than discarded, minimizing operational waste.

Ethical & Legal Responsibility

Bookends purchases products from publishers that use ethically sourced paper. The management team treats staff responsibly; employees report a positive work-life balance and strong mental health benefits. Staff are paid fair, moderately competitive wages of approximately **$15–17/hr**. Analysis of released public statements and marketing materials confirmed that Bookends avoids unethical CSR practices such as **"greenwashing,"** or misleading sustainability claims.

Economic Responsibility

Besides its own economic success, Bookends contributes positively to the Ridgewood economy, with events and fundraisers bringing substantial business to the downtown district. Each year, Bookends attracts around **25,000 to 30,000 patrons** to Ridgewood. These visitors generate additional economic activity for local businesses, including cafés, diners, and parking services. Bookends also contributes through local tax payments to the Village of Ridgewood, with approximately **65% of these taxes** supporting the Ridgewood Public School District.

Conclusion & Future Expectations

*While Bookends strives to minimize environmental impact and operate in a socially responsible manner, it is often difficult for small businesses to implement such initiatives due to the financial constraints commonly associated with these investments. Therefore, our team aims to **co-create economic and social value**, meaning future CSR initiatives will benefit both society and Bookends financially. Our team anticipates the second-hand book market will become a highly valuable segment within the bookstore industry, as it is projected to grow significantly in the coming years while also benefiting the environment. If Bookends is able to enter this market, we foresee strong potential for future success.*

III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

A. Description and rationale of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study

Research Goals

- Insight
- Accuracy
- Relevance
- Actionability

*Our research team conducted comprehensive primary and secondary research with **four objectives** in mind. The first objective was to gain meaningful **insights** into current CSR initiatives at Bookends and identify potential areas for expansion. We additionally prioritized **accuracy** in our research, ensuring that all information was credible and evidence-based. Our firm conducted research using information that was directly aligned with CSR to meet our objective of **relevance**. Lastly, we ensured **actionability**, meaning we generated results that can be translated into a practical and implementable CSR strategy for Bookends.*

Primary Research Methods

Interviews	
Walter Boyer, Bookends Owner	(1 hr)
Riana Saraogi, Bookends Employee	(30 mins)
Katie Dickson, Barnes & Noble Employee	(30 mins)
Field Research	
Community Survey	N/A
Focus Group	(45 mins)
Secret Shopper Analysis	(30 mins)
Competitor Observation	(2 hrs)

Secondary Research Methods

BOOKENDS
Company Research

Industry Research

BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS
Competitor Case Study

Reviews

Primary Research

Research Method	Description	Rationale
Owner Interview (November 12, 2025)	Conducted an interview with Walter Boyer, the owner of Bookends. Introductory questions were structured to gather insights into the **core business model** of Bookends, and the subsequent questions focused on Bookends' current CSR initiatives and future outlook on CSR.	Gather foundational insights regarding current CSR initiatives, Bookends' future sustainability plans, and core operational practices; determine the **level of financial investment**, if any, that Bookends would be willing to allocate toward CSR initiatives.
Employee Interviews (November 16-17, 2025)	Interviewed Riana Saraogi, a longstanding Bookends employee, and Josie Suozzo, a former Bookends employee. Questions addressed **quantitative** aspects of work (e.g., hours and salary) and **qualitative** aspects of employment (e.g., ethical treatment, attitude toward work, and perceptions of CSR)	Assess Bookends' **ethical responsibility** in terms of employee engagement and equitable treatment to determine whether improvements are necessary; evaluate the extent to which employees would be motivated to participate in CSR initiatives.
Competitor Interview (November 21, 2025)	Interviewed Katie Dickson, a current employee at Barnes & Noble Paramus. **Questions were identical** to those used in the interview with Bookends employee Riana Saraogi.	Compare employee engagement and ethical treatment of employees at Bookends with that of its largest competitor. Questions were identically structured to the prior interview to **minimize bias,** ensuring accurate feedback.
Community Survey (November 15-22, 2025)	A stratified random sampling method was used to survey **140 members of Bergen County**, including 82 Bookends customers. Question formats varied, including multiple-choice, slider, and open-ended responses.	Identify broad trends in shopping habits, reading behaviors, preferences, and shifts in consumer needs within the industry; collect **numerical data and statistics** to support conclusions.
Focus Group (November 25, 2025)	Met with a focus group of **five community members**, each representing a different demographic, who had attended a distinct Bookends in-person event. The discussion was open and informal to encourage honest feedback.	Obtain honest, specific insights and understand the experiences customers have had at Bookends' in-person events; identify opportunities for Bookends to enhance CSR initiatives **related to their events**.
Secret Shopper (December 6, 2025)	Evaluated the Bookends **customer experience** from the perspective of a potential customer and completed a purchase.	Evaluate the **first-hand experience** of a Bookends shopper, highlighting successes and identifying areas for improvement.
Competitor Observation (December 12, 2025)	Visited Barnes & Noble in Paramus to analyze customer behavior, **observing how shoppers navigated the store** and browsed books, with a focus on the sections dedicated to socially responsible genres.	Evaluate the effectiveness of Barnes & Noble's **socially responsible book selection** and assess whether implementing a similar initiative would be valuable for Bookends.

Secondary Research

Research Method	Description	Rationale
Company Research (August 10, 2025)	Analyzed Bookends' website and social media marketing initiatives to evaluate how the company reaches its target market and whether current CSR initiatives are **being effectively publicized.**	Identify the current **consumer perception of Bookends** regarding CSR; confirm that Bookends does not engage in greenwashing.
Industry Research (August 14, 2025)	Research how CSR has been utilized within the bookstore industry, with a focus on the **second-hand book market** and consumer buying trends, such as online shopping.	Identify areas of CSR that have been successful in this industry and could enable Bookends to **co-create economic and social impact**.

Research Method	Description	Rationale
Competitor Case Study (August 18, 2025)	Analyzed Barnes & Noble's **corporate webpage** to identify how the company has implemented CSR initiatives such as sponsorships and charitable donations.	Identify the current ways in which Barnes & Noble, a local competitor, has implemented CSR, and how it these initiatives are **advertised to customers**.
Reviews (August 22, 2025)	Identified and analyzed both low- and high-scoring third-party reviews of Bookends from sources such as **Google Maps, TripAdvisor, and Yelp**.	Obtain a **wide range of customer experiences** to identify positive interactions and develop solutions to address negative experiences.

Our research team employed a diverse range of research to obtain accurate data and draw effective conclusions from analysis. Our secondary research provided insights into the financial implications of CSR, additional benefits of such initiatives, and potential risks involved with such prospective strategies. Our primary research captured input from key stakeholders, including managers, employees, customers, and the surrounding community.

B. Process used to conduct the selected research methods

Identify the Purpose → Set a Goal → Locate Sources → Collect Data → Analyze Data

Interviews

Walter Boyer, *Owner of Bookends*

1. Contacted Mr. Boyer via email to schedule a meeting time; prepared questions in advance.
2. Met with Mr. Boyer in his office at Bookends; asked a series of 10–20 questions, taking detailed notes on his responses.
3. Met with our team following the meeting to debrief and draw conclusions from his responses.

Sample Questions

- Does Bookends **currently have** any business practices related to Corporate Social Responsibility?
- Would Bookends **be willing to** financially invest in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives?

Riana Saraogi, *Current Bookends Employee* & Josie Suozzo, *Former Bookends Employee*

1. Contacted two current and two former Bookends employees to determine their availability to meet with our team.
2. Met with Saraogi and Suozzo on different dates in a public setting **(Figure 3.1)**.
3. Asked each individual a series of 5-10 questions and later compared their responses.

Sample Questions

- What are/were your working hours and wages, and do/did you find them acceptable?
- Do/did you feel you are/were ethically treated within the workplace?

Figure 3.1: Interview with Riana Saraogi

Katie Dickson, *Current Barnes & Noble Employee*

1. Contacted Katie Dickson to determine her availability to meet with our team.
2. Met with Dickson in a public setting on November 21, asking the same questions as in prior interviews.
3. Compared her responses with those of Bookends' employees, Saraogi and Suozzo.

Field Research

Community Survey

1. Designed a survey with 12 questions, beginning with basic questions and ending with an open-ended response.
2. Selected a stratified random sampling method and distributed the survey to 300 community members, randomly selected based on age and residence.
3. Received 140 responses (**47% response rate**) and analyzed the data using spreadsheet software.

Focus Group

1. Contacted five individuals who have each been to a different Bookends in-person event.
2. Led a casual conversation of about 10 questions, recording responses and encouraging participation of all.
3. Met with our team following the focus group to draw conclusions from the conversation.

Secret Shopper

1. Visited Bookends on a Saturday, when the store typically experiences the highest customer traffic.
2. Made a purchase of one book, reflecting the typical customer transaction.
3. Noted the shopping experience, checkout process, and CSR initiatives encountered by customers.

Competitor Observation

1. Visited Barnes & Noble on a Saturday, when the store typically experiences the highest customer traffic.
2. Observed CSR initiatives within Barnes & Noble, such as sections dedicated to social causes.
3. Recorded the number of books offered in these sections and how frequently they were visited.

Secondary Research

Company Research

Thoroughly analyzed each subsection of Bookends' website and scrolled through each individual post from Bookends' Instagram and Facebook accounts.

Industry Research

Read and took notes on three articles related to the second-hand book market as it pertains to both consumer demands and CSR as a whole.

BBC
WORDSRATED
Cognitive Market Research

Case Study

Read the Barnes & Noble corporate page, "Sponsorships and Charitable Donations" and their Investor Relations page, "Commitment to Responsible Business"

BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS

Reviews

Analyzed the **20 most recent reviews** for Bookends on Google Maps, Yelp, and TripAdvisor, taking detailed note of challenges faced by customers.

Google Maps
Tripadvisor
yelp

5-Week Research Time Table

Method	Pre-Research	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Interviews		●	●	●		
Survey			●	●		
Focus Group					●	
In-Store Observations					●	●
Secondary Research	●	●	●			

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

A. Findings of the Research Study

1) Interviews

1.1 Walter Boyer, Owner of Bookends

Mr. Boyer, serving as the owner of Bookends since 2002, delineated various managerial processes within Bookends sales and events, noting the implications of CSR on each process. He noted that Bookends is an **event-driven business**, meaning that **over 50% of Bookends' profits** are derived from event ticket sales. The more events that Bookends does, the bigger their business becomes, and the more downtown Ridgewood benefits. Bookends is threatened by the trend towards online shopping (Amazon) and big corporate business competitors such as Barnes & Noble. However, Boyer notes that Bookends has maintained business despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic due to its event offerings; the pandemic served as a reminder of the importance of meeting people and interacting with the community.

1.2 Riana Saraogi, Current Bookends Employee & Ridgewood Resident

As a Bookends employee, Riana Saraogi attends Ridgewood High School and has been working at Bookends for nearly two years. Her shifts are typically **1.5 hours during the week** and range from **six to seven hours on weekends**. In terms of ethical responsibility, Saraogi believes that employees receive fair compensation and adequate benefits, such as a **20% discount** on store purchases. She noted a "positive work environment," a "strong relationship with coworkers," and that she does not frequently experience work burnout often associated with overscheduling. Overall, she believes that Bookends would benefit from CSR initiatives and feels that increased employee engagement should be a key priority.

1.3 Josie Suozzo, Former Bookends Employee & Ridgewood Resident

Josie Suozzo was employed at Bookends during her underclassman years of high school and left for a higher-paying position, as she found the work at Bookends to be somewhat unengaging. Suozzo typically worked **5–15 hours per week** and earned approximately $14 per hour, or minimum wage. She believes her hours were fair, as she was able to choose her shifts, and for the role, minimum wage was acceptable. When asked if she would have changed anything about her role, she stated she would have wanted **"more to do than just check people out or help people find books."**

1.4 Katie Dickson, Barnes & Noble Employee & Ridgewood Resident

As a Barnes & Noble bookseller who is not currently a student, Katie Dickson works **15–20 hours per week**. From this experience, she has observed the store's philanthropic initiatives and environmental practices. For example, Barnes & Noble donates children's books to local organizations, such as Arc Rockland, a residential facility and preschool for students in need of occupational therapy and counseling. She noted that Barnes & Noble locations also host author meet-and-greet events, though these are less community-centered. While Dickson acknowledges that employee benefits, such as **50% off purchases**, are appealing, she states that as a large franchise, peak periods can result in sales increasing by nearly **seven times**; consequently, customers are often overwhelmed, and employees may be overworked.

Interviews Summary:

- In-person events such as author visits and meet-and-greets are critical to Bookends' business model.
- Employees at Bookends feel they are ethically treated and sufficiently compensated.
- Increased employee engagement could be a priority for Bookends.
- Barnes & Noble offers better employee benefits but a potentially increased workload.

2) Additional Field Research

2.1 Survey Responses

After surveying 140 community members, we identified the core values of Bookends' target demographic. In response to the prompt, "Which of the following elements do you value most?" participants were instructed to select all applicable options. The top six selected responses were recorded **(Figure 4.1)**. In addition, we found that, depending on the cause, 89.2% of participants would be willing to pay a slightly higher price for a book at a local bookstore if a portion of the proceeds supported community initiatives **(Figure 4.2)**. When asked about book-shopping trends, several participants noted a growing interest in the second-hand book market **(Figure 4.3).** Additionally, responses resembled a preference towards online book shopping as opposed to in-store shopping.

"Which of the following do you value most?"

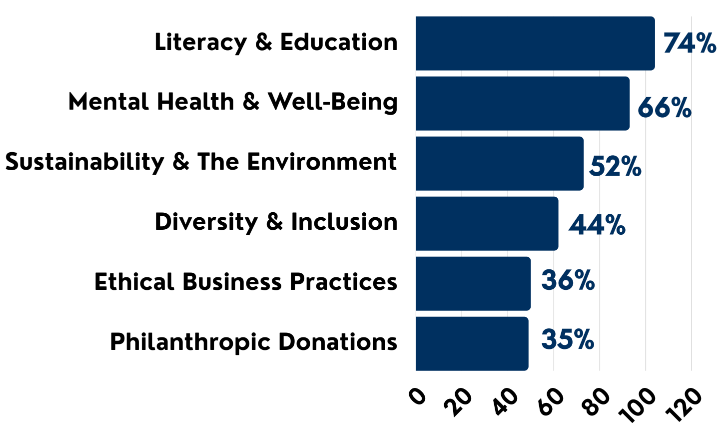


Figure 4.1: Survey Response

"Would you be willing to pay a slightly higher price if part of the proceeds went to community initiatives?"

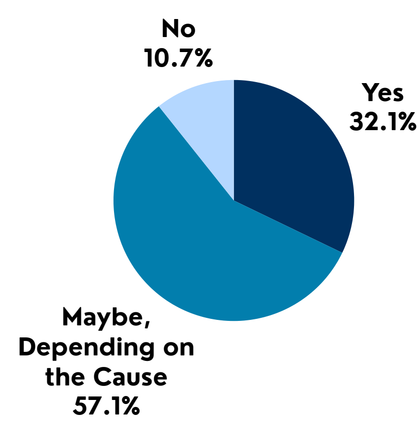


Figure 4.2: Survey Response

> Side note, **second-hand bookstores are really cool** and I try going there whenever I see them.

> Typically I buy my books off of **thrift sites for cheaper prices**, but if I go to an in person store (whether its Barnes & Noble or bookends) I like to have a book I want already in mind.

Figure 4.3: Survey Response

2.2 Focus Group

Experiences of each participant varied based on the time they went, how crowded the event space was, and the specific author they went to see. However, each demographic brought up a lack of organization as a pain point and wished that they might have received more details and instruction going into the event.

2.3 Secret Shopper

Upon entrance to the store, we were presented with a welcoming environment. Bookends offered a **wide selection** of product offerings. As a small business, the organized layout of the store was not overwhelming, and products were easy to find. The checkout process was quick and smooth.

Organized Layout | **Enthusiastic Employees** | **Recyclable Bags**

2.4 Competitor Observation

After entering the Barnes & Noble location, it took our team **approximately three minutes** to locate the first selection of books related to prevalent social causes. This section, broadly labeled the "Social Sciences" section, included books in categories such as Women's Studies, African American Studies, Hispanic Studies, Native American Studies, and LGBTQ+ studies. During a follow-up visit in March 2026, our team observed a display in the children's section titled "Women's History Month" (**Figure 4.4)**. Featured books included autobiographies of prominent figures such as Jane Goodall, Helen Keller, Amelia Earhart, and Simone Biles. After analyzing customer behavior in these sections, our team noted that shoppers spent **between 30 seconds and five minutes** browsing, indicating strong interest in these areas.

Figure 4.4: Women's History Month Display

3) Secondary Research

3.1 Company Research

After analyzing Bookends' digital presence, our team noted that the website is slightly outdated and somewhat unorganized. Bookends has a strong follower base, with over **11,000 Instagram followers**, frequent posts, and engagement ranging from **20–250 likes per post**. While marketing outreach appears effective, the website primarily allows customers to purchase signed books or register for events, lacking broader communication features.

Figure 4.5: Bookends' Website

3.2 Industry Research

According to Cognitive Market Research, the global market for used books currently stands at $24.03 billion and has **grown 5.5%** in just a year. Professionals estimate that this market will grow to over **$45 billion in the next ten years**. This trend is driven by increased sustainability efforts, cost-efficient shopping habits, and niche collecting.

"over 70% of students choose to buy a second-hand book over a newly-printed one."

3.3 Competitor Case Study

Barnes & Noble advertises that it has obtained Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification in countless of its stores. They also have worked with manufacturers to obtain "low-impact store features" such as eco-friendly merchandising fixtures. Lastly, they are a part of the Fair Labor Association (FLA), meaning they are, "committed to fair labor standards and human rights."

3.4 Third-Party Reviews

Bookends currently holds a rating of **4.2/5 stars** on Google Reviews and **3.8/5 stars** on TripAdvisor. Common complaints were associated with a **lack of transparency** and communication surrounding events, while others cited rude employees and **poor customer service**.

> **"Very upset with the overall communications and logistics for such a regular signing event."**
>
> **-Anonymous, *Trip Advisor***

> **"...the owner wanted to see her bracelet for entrance. Obviously she did not have one since we had never been told the day prior that we ever needed one."**
>
> **-Anonymous, *TripAdvisor***

B. Conclusions based on the findings

After thorough analysis of both primary and secondary research, our team synthesized the collected information and data to identify four key conclusions that will be critical for a CSR plan.

1

The second-hand book market is not only sustainable, but also is growing in popularity and should be considered by Bookends as part of a CSR campaign.

Sustainability is a critical component of Corporate Social Responsibility and is defined as a company's ability to use no more of a resource than can be regenerated. Although Bookends cannot "regenerate" books, the second-hand book market provides a way for books to be reused and redistributed to new customers. This market is continously growing in popularity, and our teams survey indicated members of Bergen County have cited interested in purchasing second-hand books. Additional market reseach backs up our team's claim that this industry has a huge growth projection within the coming years, raising a huge opportunity for Bookends.

2

Bookends should consider addressing issues such as transparency and communication, especially among key stakeholders.

Transparency is an additional component of CSR that is key to the success of a business. As a small business, several customers who have attended in-store events have noted that Bookends' communication regarding event details could be improved. For example, many customers reported that event details were sometimes changed at the last minute without their awareness. Bookends also has a limited online presence beyond social media and could further enhance transparency towards key stakeholders by actively sharing more information about its operations online.

3

Community members are interested in supporting local causes, and competitors have demonstrated that addressing and promoting social causes can be successful.

Community members are driven to make purchases based on the values they support; when asked about values, over half of respondents cited Literacy & Education, Mental Health & Well-Being, and Sustainability & the Environment. An additional 44% of the community values Diversity & Inclusion, suggesting that Bookends could **incorporate these values** into its storefront operations. For example, Barnes & Noble, a local competitor, targets similar values by highlighting prevalent causes (such as its display for Women's History Month), which has demonstrated strong participation and interest in-store.

4

While employee's are given fair hours and compensation, employee engagement at Bookends could be enhanced.

Although Bookends employees reported receiving acceptable wages and shift hours, employee responsibility extends far beyond these quantitative measures. Josie Suozzo, our interviewed former Bookends employee, noted that she desired greater engagement and participation in her role, and customer reviews indicated that employees could be more involved. These findings suggest that employee satisfaction and participation could be improved through **increased employee engagement**. Additionally, while Bookends offers its employees a 20% discount, Barnes & Noble, a local competitor, provides a more substantial 50% discount.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Small, welcoming store, **cherished** by community.
- Visited by highly regarded authors & celebrities.
- Strong **charitable giving** initiatives.
- Employees are happy, fairly compensated, ethically treated, and have fair working hours.

Weaknesses

- **Outdated website** and communication channels; many customers noted a lack of transparency involving last-minute event communications.
  Employee engagement could be improved.

Opportunities

- The **secondhand book market** is projected to grow over $45 billion in the next ten years, and locals have shown interest in the industry.
- Growing interest among locals in issues related to the environment, mental health, and diversity.

Threats

- **Barnes & Noble** is a nearby large and well-funded competitor.
- Consumer trends shifting towards **online shopping**; however, Bookends does not currently offer an online retail site.

A. Objectives and rationale of the proposed strategic plan

*The **Turn the P.A.G.E.** Campaign is a four-step strategic plan designed to effectively and efficiently integrate CSR strategies into Bookends' business practices. Maintaining clear objectives is critical to this plan, as it ensures that Bookends implements strategies that are both feasible and beneficial. Our goal is that, following the implementation of these proposed strategies, Bookends is prepared to **Turn the P.A.G.E.** and take the necessary steps to co-create economic and social value within its business model.*

turn the P.A.G.E.
BOOKENDS

P **Pre-Owned Book Marketplace:** *Initiate Bookends' involvement in the second-hand book industry by allowing customers to resell their books on a newly developed Bookends app.*

Rationale: Entering the second-hand book market is key to promoting sustainability, as it encourages the reuse of materials while attracting a new customer base to Bookends. We recommend that Bookends develop an app through which these second-hand books can be sold, while also using the platform to offer Bookends' own books online—an option not currently available to customers. Therefore, the app will also support Bookends in increasing outreach in a market where online shopping continues to prevail.

Short-Term Benefits: Increased profits generated by Bookends through increased revenues on pre-owned books sold via the new app.
Long-Term Benefits: Expansion of the target market due to the unique value proposition of entering a niche second-hand book market; further expansion through the introduction of online retail services.

A **App-Based Transparency & Communications:** *Utilize the newly developed app to provide event notifications to attendees and overall updates for key stakeholders, improving transparency.*

Rationale: If Bookends is more transparent when communicating with event attendees, guests will be better informed going into events, increasing overall satisfaction. Improving transparency will allow Bookends to strengthen their ethical responsibility and brand image. According to Forbes, "strong transparency makes **94% of consumers** more likely to remain loyal to a brand".

Short-Term Benefits: Increased customer satisfaction, resulting in higher ratings and word-of-mouth marketing.
Long-Term Benefits: Increased brand loyalty and repeat attendance, increasing overall profits earned at Bookends.

G **Giving & Awareness Initiatives:** *Initiate in-store campaigns celebrating various awareness months, offering curated book displays and round-up donation options at checkout.*

Rationale: Besides improving Bookends' philanthropic responsibility, raising community awareness towards relevant causes and celebrating diversity will allow Bookends to stand out as a community-oriented business. It will also offer first-time customers a positive moment of truth as "**85% of consumers** have a more positive image of a company that supports charity."

Short-Term Benefits: Positive moment of truth for first-time customers to encourage repeat shoppers.
Long-Term Benefits: Increased brand image and external community benefits associated with diversity/inclusion.

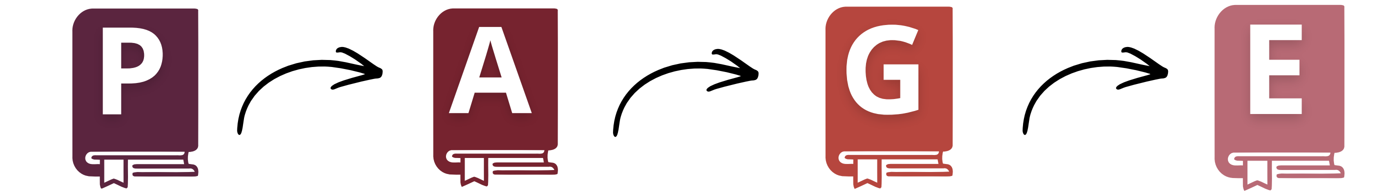
E **Employee Engagement:** *Increase employee engagement by extending employee benefits and offering volunteer options for Bookends employees.*

Rationale: If employees are more engaged in their work and associate their jobs with positive benefits, they are more likely to act positively towards customers and enhance the customer experience. Additionally, studies from Forbes have demonstrated that, "**93% of employees** who volunteer through their company are happy with their employer."

Short-Term Benefits: Increased customer experience due to happy and engaged employees.
Long-Term Benefits: Lower employee turnover rates and decreased costs associated with rehiring employees.

B. Proposed activities and timelines

*The **Turn the P.A.G.E.** Campaign is designed to help Bookends co-create social and economic value, meaning that we will help Bookends implement CSR initiatives that will have both external benefits in terms of community impact and internal benefits that will aid Bookends financially.*



Pre-Owned Book Marketplace → **App-Based Transparency** → **Giving & Awareness Initiatives** → **Employee Engagement**

P — Pre-Owned Book Marketplace

1. ***Develop an app*** *for Bookends with appropriate coding so that it is downloadable on the App Store and supports real transactions.*
2. *Initiate a section of the app where customers can* ***resell their pre-owned books*** *in the second-hand book market.*
3. *Initiate a section of the app where Bookends can* ***sell its own merchandise online****.*

1 App Development

As the first step in the Turn the P.A.G.E. Campaign, our team recommends that Bookends codes an app using software such as Expo and Claude that will be accessible to customers of Bookends via the App Store. To begin, Bookends should utilize Visual Studio Code **(Figure 5.1)** to develop the basic coding behind Bookends' new app. Our team plans to use AI to streamline the process. Our team developed a prototype of this app using AI, which can be found in further steps.

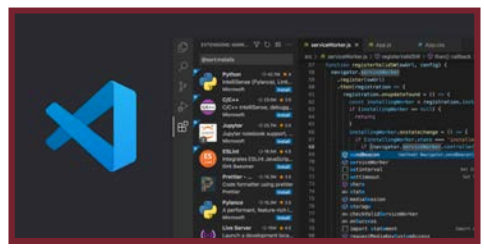


Figure 5.1: Visual Studio Code

In order to integrate real transaction services into the app, our team chose Stripe (**Figure 5.2)**, a financial services platform that will allow Bookends to accept online payments from customers. Our team chose Stripe due to its easy integration methods, ability to prevent fraud, and developer-friendly documentation.

stripe

Figure 5.2: Stripe Logo

2 Second-Hand Book Section

Once the app is launched, Bookends will begin its CSR plan by allowing users to sell their used books through the platform, thus promoting sustainability within the industry. After entering the book's ISBN and submitting an image, the app's AI integration will identify the book and assess its condition, determining an appropriate resale price **(Figure 5.3)**. Books in near-new condition will be listed at approximately **70% of their original retail price**, while slightly used books may be listed at around **50%**. Our team recommends that **Bookends retain 30% of the margin** for providing the exchange platform, allowing the **seller to receive the remaining 70%**. For example, if a user sells a book in new condition originally priced at $30, it would be listed at $21; Bookends would retain $6.30, and the seller would receive $14.70. After a purchase is made, the seller must drop off the book at Bookends for in-store pickup by the buyer, thus avoiding shipping costs.

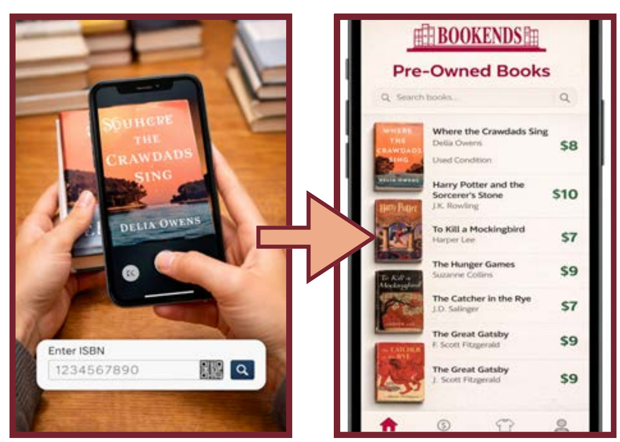


Figure 5.3: Pre-Owned Books Section of the Bookends App

3 Bookends Online Merchandising

We recommend that Bookends additionally uses this app as an opportunity to sell **their own** books and merchandise towards a market of online consumers. Therefore, the app will contain an additional section dedicated solely to Bookends products, ensuring that the investment of this app will provide Bookends with financial benefits.

A — App-Based Transparency & Communications

1. ***Integrate event services*** *such as event advertisement and ticket sales into the newly developed Bookends app.*
2. ***Provide push notifications*** *to app users who have purchased event tickets to communicate any updates or changes in upcoming events.*
3. *Initiate an* ***"inbox" section within the app*** *to share updates and information about Bookends to improve transparency for key stakeholders.*

1 Event Service Integration

Along with the product integration provided by the implementation of Bookends' new app, we recommend that Bookends also integrate its services, such as celebrity visits and author book signings. This would streamline the event booking process to improve overall customer satisfaction, and would also allow increased access to Bookends' events, generating **higher ticket sales and thereby overall profit**. **Figure 5.4** depicts a prototype of the section of the app in which customers would have the ability to browse events and purchase their digital tickets for upcoming events at Bookends.

Figure 5.4: Events Section of the Bookends App

2 User Push Notifications

As Bookends has now integrated tickets into the Bookends app, they can now provide event attendees with notifications before their upcoming events. Since several customers have cited complaints involving last-minute changes in events, Bookends can increase **transparency** with customers by ensuring everyone who has purchased a ticket is receiving notifications about all changes involving their event. Therefore, Bookends should provide push notifications to event attendees with any key changes regarding event details **(Figure 5.5)**. Transparency is a critical element of CSR, and providing customers with essential updates before events ensures that customers are treated ethically.

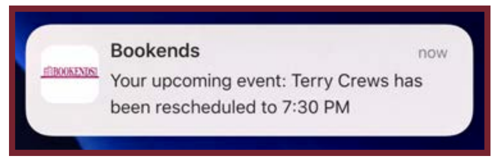


Figure 5.5: Push Notification

3 Digital "Inbox" App Section

As an addition to further ethical responsibility, **Bookends should increase transparency** not just with event guests, but across all stakeholders. These stakeholders include customers, employees, investors, and other community members impacted by the store's operations. To do so, we suggest that Bookends release frequent updates through the newly developed "inbox" section of its app **(Figure 5.6)**, allowing both stakeholders and users to gain a better understanding of ongoing activities occuring at Bookends. Doing so would enhance overall transparency and support the bookstore's Corporate Social Responsibility efforts.

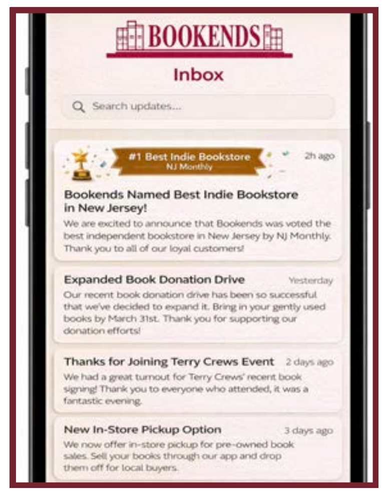


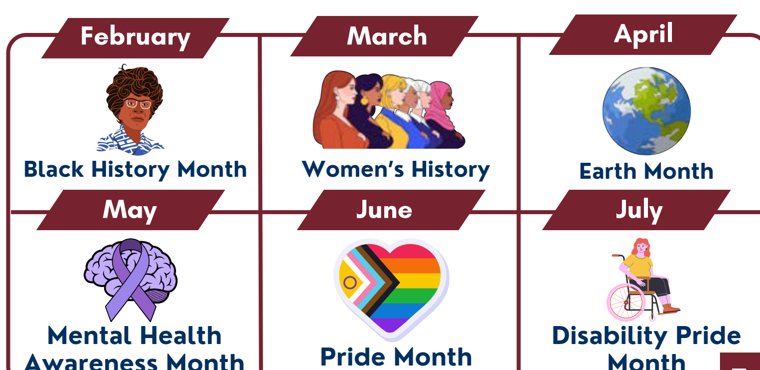
Figure 5.6: App Inbox

G — Giving & Awareness Initiatives

1. *Build a* ***schedule of national awareness months*** *for Bookends to participate in and celebrate.*
2. *Create* ***curated displays*** *for each month that highlight the selected topic.*
3. *Provide customers with the option at checkout to* ***round up their purchase*** *in support of the cause of the month.*

1 Awareness Month Schedule

Starting in February of 2027, Bookends will begin celebrating nationally honored "awareness months", ranging between cultural heritage, diversity, mental health, and sustainability. All chosen months will be relevant to community causes that were identified in our research to ensure that customers will be interested in the displays and will remain loyal to Bookends. Our team developed a proposed schedule for each celebrated month:



2 Curated "Awareness Month" Displays

Similarly to that of competitor's strategies, we recommend that Bookends curates displays related to each recognized "awareness month". Displays must be strategically composed weeks before the beginning of the month and should contain books that raise awareness towards the designated cause. Books will be chosen for a diverse range of customers, ranging from small children to seniors. For example, during Earth Month, Bookends' display will include children's books such as "The Lorax" and mature books such as "How to Avoid a Climate Disaster" **(Figure 5.7)**. Our team recommends that the book display is placed near the front of the store to indicate Bookends' dedication to social awareness. For example, if a first-time customer enters the store and notices the display, they are likely to experience a **positive moment of truth**, meaning their initial perception of Bookends will be positive, increasing the chance of retention. Since survey results indicate that local community members care deeply about these causes, we foresee that Bookends will be able to increase additional book sales through these displays as well.

Figure 5.7: Earth Month Display

3 Round-Up Options at Checkout

To improve Bookends' financial contributions to the surrounding community, Bookends should ask customers upon checkout whether they would like to round up their total to support a local cause. The cause will be chosen based on the designated month and will thus change monthly. For example, during Earth Month, perhaps Bookends will direct donations towards the World Wildlife Fund. Our team recommends that Bookends releases further information either on the app or in-store to acknowledge the organization that proceeds will be donated towards **(Figure 5.8)**. This way, customers are aware of where their donations are going towards and are potentially more inclined to round up.

Figure 5.8: Round-Up Info

E — Employee Engagement

1. *Initiate **monthly all-staff meetings** to ensure employee satisfaction.*
2. *Increase participation of employees through **volunteering and overall encreased engagement**.*
3. ***Enhance employee benefits & bonuses** given to Bookends' employees.*

1 Monthly All-Staff Meetings

To ensure that employees continue to feel engaged and fairly treated within their roles, we recommend that the Bookends management team holds monthly meetings for all staff members. These meetings could take place during the first week of each month, with employees encouraged to debrief any concerns from the prior month and openly discuss their perspectives on their roles. This would allow employees to feel seen and heard in their positions.

2 Volunteering & Employee Engagement

To increase engagement among employees, we recommend that Bookends expand employee roles and responsibilities. This would not entail an increased workload, but rather a shift in tasks to help employees feel more engaged and satisfied in their roles. For example, employees could collaborate to curate displays presented for each awareness month. They could also participate in charitable efforts during their shifts by helping to sort and manage book donations collected during donation periods. As employees become more engaged, it is likely that Bookends will experience improved customer service, and employees will develop a more positive attitude toward their work.

3 Employee Benefits & Bonuses

Although Bookends employees currently receive a 20% discount at Bookends, we recommend that Bookends offers employees benefits that are comparable to those of their competitors, such as Barnes & Noble's 50% employee discount. However, since Bookends is limited to large sums of spending as a small bsuiness, Bookends should **implement a "bonus" system**, where employees who have stood out in customer service should be recognized with a Bookends gift card at the end of the month. This way, Bookends employees are encouraged to improve customer experience while also being recognized for their work.

Our team outlined a year-long timeline to carry out the ***Turn the P.A.G.E.*** *Campaign beginning in January 2027. If such proposed outlines are successful, they will remain ongoing, meaning that Bookends should continue these initiatives into 2028 and beyond.*

Proposed Timeline

2027	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
P	App Coding Development & Beta Testing Stages											
				App Rollout								
A	App Coding Development & Beta Testing Stages											
(same as P)				App Rollout								
G	Build Schedule	"Awareness Month" Book Displays and Round-Up Donations										
								Staff Reflection				
E				Initiate Staff Meetings						Employee Bonus Rollout		
							Employee Volunteering					

→ ***App Check-Ups***: *Ensure the app is working properly and make coding improvements as needed.*

C. Proposed metrics or key performance indicators to measure plan effectiveness

Metric	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
App Adoption Rate: Track the number of app downloads and amount of active users per month.	**60-75%** Download Rate	**35-60%** Download Rate	**< 35%** Download Rate
Second-Hand Book Transactions: Track the total number of resale book listings and completed transactions.	**150+** Avg. Monthly Transactions	**75-150** Avg. Monthly Transactions	**< 75** Avg. Monthly Transactions
Event Ticket Sales Growth: Measure the percent increase in event tickets sold following app integration and increased guest retention due to improved transparency.	**+15% or higher** Increase	**+10% to +15%** increase	**< +10%** Growth or Negative Growth
Round-Up Donation Participation Rate: Measure the percentage of customers who choose to round up their purchase and track total donations from round-ups.	**40-60%** Round-Up Rate **~$4,200** Annually	**20-40%** Round-Up Rate **~$2,520** Annually	**< 20%** Round-Up Rate **~$1,260** Annually
Employee Retention Rate: Track the percentage of employees retained over the course of a year along with the number of new onboarded employees.	**90-95%** Retention	**75-90%** Retention	**< 75%** Retention
Third-Party Review Score Index: Analyzing ratings across Google and TripAdvisor, reflecting experiences, transparent events, and brand perception. Bookends' current reviews are 4.2 on Google and 3.8 on TripAdvisor.	**4.5 - 5.0** Average Rating	**4.0 - 4.5** Average Rating	**< 4.0** Average Rating

**gauged on a yearly basis*

Customer & Employee Satisfaction Rates

To measure how customers relate to implemented initiatives, we will curate customer surveys to be filled out by shoppers and event attendees. The questions will be structured on a **1 to 5 scale** to help our team calculate overall satisfaction rates. After receiving responses, we will develop a **"Customer Satisfaction Index"** to determine how initiatives are being received by customers. To calculate the Index, we will divide the number of positive rankings (**4's and 5's**) by the total number of responses. This value will provide an approximate percentage of customers who are satisfied with the results of Bookends' Turn the P.A.G.E Campaign.

Sample Questions

1. How easy is the app to navigate?
2. How satisfied are you with the transparency of your overall experience?
3. How impactful do you find Bookends' in-store displays?
4. How likely are you to shop at Bookends again?

Bookends staff will receive their own employee survey to fill out at the end of each month. Similarly to that of the customer survey, questions will be structured on a **1 to 5 scale** to calculate an **"Employee Satisfaction Index"**. This Index will be calculated identically to the Customer Satisfaction Index, where positive rankings such as 4s and 5s will be considered satisfied results. Understanding these values and rankings will help Bookends comprehend their overall performance and allow for any necessary changes in the Turn the P.A.G.E. campaign.

Sample Questions

1. Do you feel your role is meaningful and engaging?
2. How positive is the work environment at Bookends?
3. How likely are you to continue working at Bookends in the next year?
4. How meaningful do you find Bookends' CSR initiatives?

Satisfaction Rating Benchmark

Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
85-100%	70-85%	50-70%	30-50%	0-30%

VI. PROPOSED BUDGET

P — **Pre-Owned** Book Marketplace
A — **App-Based** Transparency
G — **Giving** & Awareness Initiatives
E — **Employee** Engagement

$4,422 (P & A) | $695 (G) | $600 (E)

Total Investment: $5,717

Projected ROI: $30,060

Projected Donations: $2,620

Activity:	Associated Costs:	Details:	Subtotal:
P - Pre-Owned Book Marketplace **A - App-Based Transparency**	Steps P and A share the same costs.		**$4,422**
Development and coding of the Bookends app.	Hire a developer who will use the suggested AI platforms to develop the app.	$100/hr, approximately 30 hours to develop the app. $100 x 30	**$3,000**
Integration of transaction services into the Bookends app.	Transaction fees associated with the integration of Stripe's online payment services.	Stripe charges **2.9% + $0.30** per successful card charge. Assume Bookends makes 1,800 annual transactions with an average total of $15. 1,800 x ($15 x 0.029 + 0.30)	**$1,323**
Publishing of the Bookends app on the Apple App Store.	Allow Bookends to be accessible on the Apple App store by paying a yearly fee.	Set price of $99/year.	**$99**

Activity:	Associated Costs:	Details:	Subtotal:
G - Giving & Awareness Initiatives			**$695**
Create a display shelf for each "awareness month" celebrated by Bookends.	New shelving for the displays.	$695.00 for an eye-catching display, one-time cost; to be reused for each month.	**$695**
E - Employee Engagement			**$600**
Offer "bonus" rewards for Bookends employees on top of their regular employee discount.	$50 gift card given to one chosen employee weekly.	$50 x 4 times per month = $200 3 months = $600	**$600**

TOTAL: $5,717.00

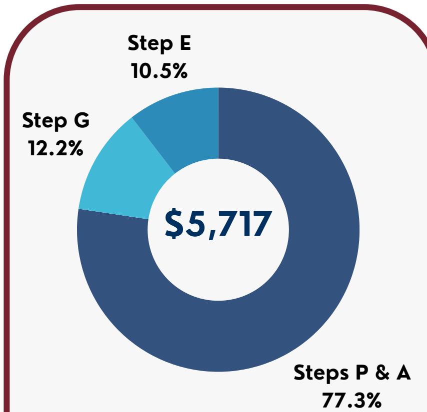


Figure 6.1: Prospective Budget Allocation

Return on Investment

*To ensure that the **Turn the P.A.G.E. campaign** results in economic benefits for Bookends, we will track the Return on Investment of our proposed initiatives. This will be calculated by determining the net profit of the proposed strategic plan **(amount gained minus amount spent)** and dividing that number by the cost of implementation. This will help our team determine how much Bookends will benefit financially by going forward with our team.*

$$\textbf{ROI} = \frac{\text{Net Profit (in 2026)}}{\text{Cost of Implementation}} \times 100$$

P

Assume about 150 books per month, or 1,350 books in 2027, originally valued at $20 each, are sold via Bookends second-hand book exchange. On average, assume these books will be sold at 60% of their original price, meaning they will be listed at $12 on the app. Since Bookends retains 30% of these margins, Bookends keeps $3.60 of profit.
$3.60 x 1,350 = $4,860 annual profit.

Remember, Bookends is also utilizing the app to sell its own merchandise as well. According to the American Booksellers Association, adding an online sales option can increase sales growth by about 15%. Since Bookends makes about 50 daily transactions, we can assume that Bookends could sell about 7 extra books online per day. While each book at Bookends is about $20, margins on books are about 50%, meaning that Bookends profits about $10 for each additional book sold. 7 books per day accumulates to 49 books weekly, 196 monthly, and 1,764 in the 9 months after the app is published.
$10 x 1,764 = $17,640 annual profit.

A

By increasing event transparency, it is likely that Bookends will retain more customers due to increased event satisfaction. Assume that around 2 customers per event decide they are not returning to Bookends due to a negative experience regarding transparent communication. If Bookends hosts 75 events in the 9 months after the app is published, they could retain 150 customers who would each be providing Bookends around $20 profit on ticket sales.
$20 x 150 = $3,000 annual profit.

G

As community members have shown interest, we can assume that Bookends will be able to sell about 2 books per day from the "awareness month" display. This is equivalent to 14 books per week, 56 per month, and Bookends will be hosting 6 "awareness month" displays, meaning 336 additional books sold. As stated prior, Bookends makes about 50% margins on their books, meaning they profit about $10 from each book sold.
$10 x 336 = $3,360 annual profit.

E

By improving employee engagement and thereby employee retention to 90-95%, Bookends will have to hire three less employees in 2027. According to our team's research, employee onboarding costs involving administrative tasks such as paperwork, payroll, and compliance can be up to $400 for a single employee.
$400 x 3 = $1,200 saved.

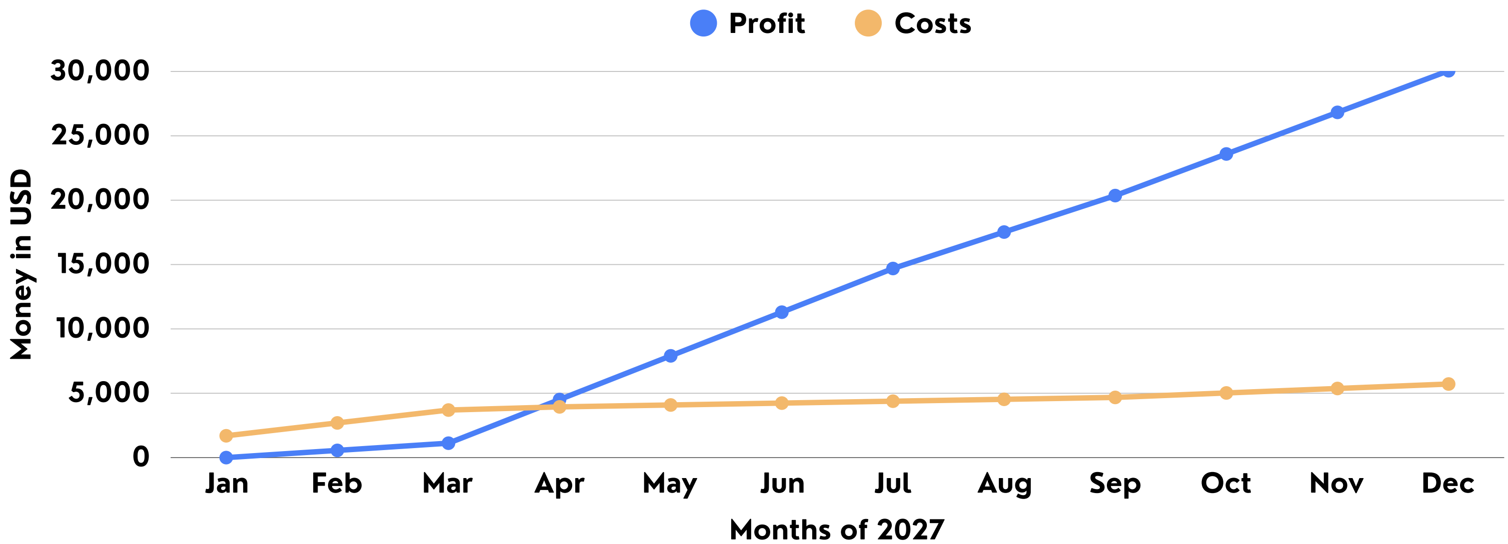
Additional Annual Profit:

(generated by the Turn the P.A.G.E. campaign)

$4,860 + $17,640 + $3,000 + $3,360 + $1,200 = $30,060

$$\textbf{ROI} = \frac{\$30{,}060 - \$5{,}717}{\$5{,}717} \times 100 = \mathbf{425.80\%}$$

Turn the P.A.G.E. Return on Investment



*As shown in the chart, Bookends will **break even in April of 2027**; according to our timeline, this break-even point is logical as it aligns with the month of Bookends' app rollout. We expect that Bookends will experience a surge of sales following the release of their app, which is why the break-even point occurs in April.*

Financial Benefit Towards Society

*It is important not to overlook the financial contributions of customers provided by donation roundups upon checkout. Bookends will make about 52 transactions per day, equivalent to 364 per week, 1,456 per month, and over the course of the six-month "awareness month" campaign, an estimated total of 8,736 transactions. With a targeted round-up participation rate of 60%, about 5,242 of these transactions will participate in the round-up. With an average of $0.50 per roundup, **Bookends will raise about $2,620 for causes over the course of six months**.*

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