



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

# BUYING AND MERCHANDISING OPERATIONS RESEARCH

ANNA DICKSON & CHRISTINA WEISPFENNING  
APRIL 25-28, 2026





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
A. Description of the business or organization	4
B. Description of the target market (demographics and psychographics)	4
C. Overview of the business or organization's current business strategy relating to corporate social responsibility initiatives	5
<b>III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Description and rationale of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study	6
B. Process used to conduct the selected research methods	8
<b>IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>9</b>
A. Findings of the research study	9
B. Conclusions based on the findings	12
<b>V. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN</b>	<b>13</b>
A. Objectives and rationale of the proposed strategic plan	13
B. Proposed activities and timelines	14
C. Proposed metrics or key performance indicators to measure plan effectiveness	17
<b>VI. PROPOSED BUDGET</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>20</b>

# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Collects book donations for local causes.</li> <li>-Donates up to 15-20% of proceeds.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recyclable bags provided for customers at checkout.</li> <li>-Cardboard shipping materials recycled.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Employees receive fair hours and wages.</li> <li>-Avoids deceptive greenwashing.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attracts <b>25,000-30,000</b> patrons to downtown Ridgewood annually, stimulating the local economy.</li> </ul> 



**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.



### Primary Research

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



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.

### 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.

### SWOT Analysis

### 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.



### 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.



### 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.



### 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.



### 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	
<b>P</b>	App Coding Development & Beta Testing Stages												
				App Rollout									
<b>A</b> (same as P)	App Coding Development & Beta Testing Stages												
				App Rollout									
<b>G</b>	Build Schedule	"Awareness Month" Book Displays and Round-Up Donations											
								Staff Reflection					
<b>E</b>				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

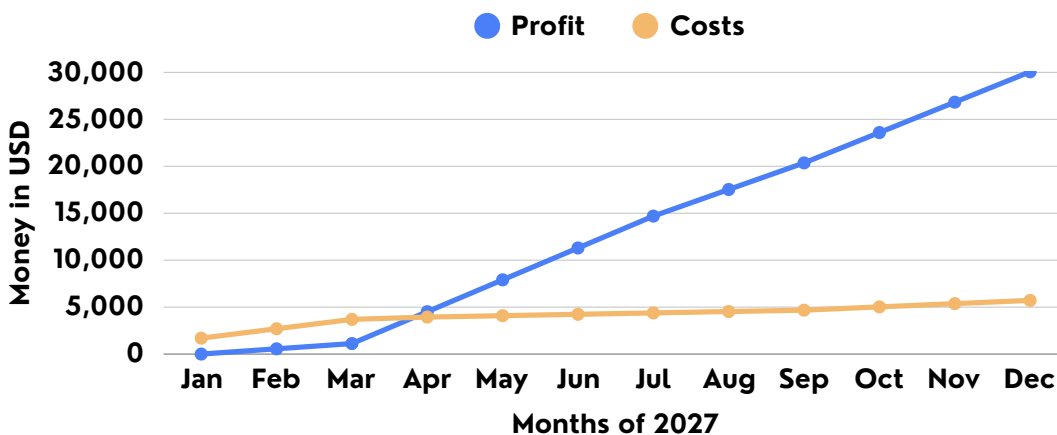
**Above 85%**

**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
<b>TOTAL COSTS:</b>			<b>\$5,717</b>

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



## 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**