

Quick Tips for Stronger Faculty Relationships

Your store's on-campus relationships are just like those between any business and its customers: The more frequently you can make a genuine connection, the more likely it is that you'll see positive results. So what strategies should you use to keep the lines of communication open with your school's faculty? We've paired advice from your peers in the industry with these key suggestions from Inc.com's Darren Dahl: ¹

1. Encourage Honest Feedback
2. Make it Personal

3. Establish a Routine
4. Meet Face-to-Face

Encourage Honest Feedback with *Charlie Rutt, University Store of UCM*

Chances are, there's at least one area where you can make the service you provide even better. What's the easiest way to find out what needs some work?

Ask your customers.

"We believe we need to be responsible enough to ask faculty 'Are we meeting your expectations?'" said **Charlie Rutt, director of the University Store at UCM**. "If I've got a relationship with the department, with the faculty, then it makes it easier to deliver 'bad' news (like back orders) and to work together to solve the problem. It also creates a continuing dialogue."

Make it Personal with *Kelly Holt, UC Davis Store*

Kelly Holt, faculty outreach coordinator for UC Davis Stores, also recommended taking a direct approach to win faculty over. "Don't just sell a product or service — be an advocate," Holt said. "If faculty feels that you have their best interest and those of their students at heart, they will see you as a partner in their academic mission rather than as an adversary. Most faculty care most about two things: measurable efficacy of their teaching and cost of the materials to their students. So demonstrate the value of your program. Let them know that everything you do supports them."

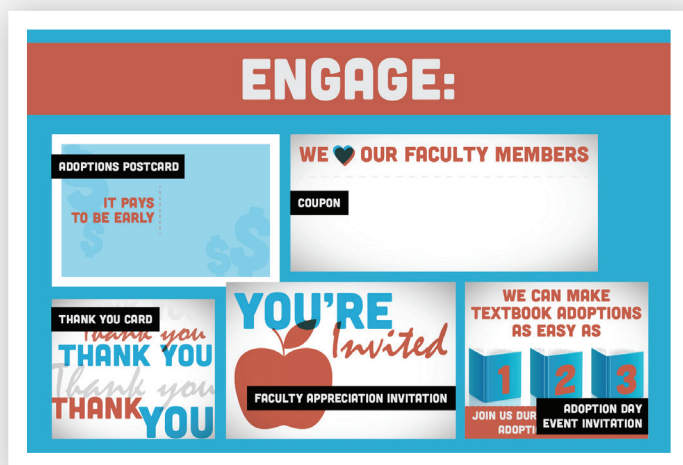
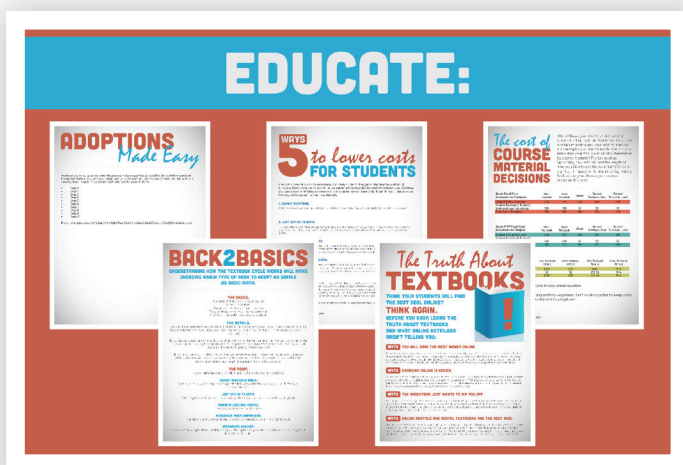
"An open, honest relationship demands clear communications of how each party is performing. Encourage constructive criticism and be brave enough to suggest ways clients can help your firm perform better, if you know where you stand, you can stand stronger."¹

~Patrick Scullin, Ames Scullin O'Haire

Establish a Routine

Most stores follow a set schedule when it comes to their deadlines for adoption submissions. While the exact timeframe may vary for semester or quarter schools, odds are that the timeline will be pretty similar each term. Make it easier for faculty to anticipate these pending due dates by sending reminder emails and posting plenty of signage.

Need some inspiration? In our February 2014 Marketing plan, we devoted an entire monthly marketing plan to help our customers Build Even Better Faculty Relations, with free, customizable posters and Web images in a variety of themes.²



Meet Face-to-Face

with *Dusty Guthier, Kennel Bookstore*

In addition to offering fun rewards, the staff at Kennel Bookstore at CSU-Fresno uses a three-part metric to track results and explain the process to faculty at an annual luncheon. The factors involved in the metric are **on-time submissions, adoptions turned in by buyback and then also by the first day of class.** Gathering and presenting this information helps the faculty truly understand how on-time adoption affects what course materials are available for students to purchase and the subsequent cost of those texts.

“When you present this to your faculty in this manner, they really begin to get it,” said **Dusty Guthier, Kennel Bookstore’s course material manager.** “They finally start to realize that it’s really important that they do turn their adoption in on time. And in general, we believe that our faculty are becoming more and more price-sensitive today in the materials that they’re choosing for their students.”

To help you spread the word, we’ve created a flyer to show how student savings are a direct result of the adoption process: “Your Guide to Adopting Course Materials” is available for download and distribution on Foreword Online.³

Token gestures also go a long way toward making faculty feel singled out — in a good way! Kennel Bookstore sweetens the process of adoption with seasonally-themed treat bags as a thank you for timely submissions.



Sources

1. How to Build Better Business Relationships. Inc. <http://www.inc.com/guides/201101/how-to-build-better-business-relationships.html>
2. February 2014: Build Even Better Faculty Relations. Foreword Online. http://foreword.mbsbooks.com/?page_id=8119
3. Your Guide to Adopting Course Materials. Foreword Online. <http://foreword.mbsbooks.com/?p=10988>