Book Pricing Update

Celia Scher Wagner

Blackwell

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2027

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
Book Pricing Update


by Celia Scher Wagner (Blackwell) (WAGNER@BNAMF.BLACKWELL.COM)

If you are reading this column you probably spend your days with books, in one way or another. Maybe you spend your day (or your budget) thinking in terms of Library of Congress classifications. But do you ever get to show off your knowledge, or amaze your friends? Here at last is your chance! Sharpen your pencil, and

Test Your Knowledge — or Your Intuition — About Academic Publishing and Pricing!

Consider the universe of new academic monographs published by Trade, Scholarly, Science/Technology/Medicine (S/T/M) and University Presses. Consider the Broad Library of Congress classes (A - Reference, B - Philosophy and Religion, etc...). Then answer the following questions.

1) In which three LC classes are the most new academic monographs published? (Hint: If you added the three together, they would account for half of all new academic titles.)

2) In which two LC classes does the average monograph cost the most? (Hint: One class appears as an answer in this and the previous question.)

3) What portion of all new academic monographs are published by University Presses? ___ 10-15% ___ 25-30% ___ 40-45% ___

4) In which three broad Library of Congress classes do University Press publications account for more than half of all new academic titles? (Hint: One of these classes sees fewer than 100 new titles a year.)

5) In which LC classes do University Presses publish the smallest percentage of the universe? (Hint: These will come as no surprise.)

6) Publishers sometimes offer new titles simultaneously in both cloth and paper bindings. How often are new titles published simultaneously in cloth and paper? Does this vary between University Presses and other presses? How often: ___ Does it vary by type of publisher? ___

7) If your library bought all new academic monographs, choosing cloth bindings whenever they were available, what would the average academic monograph cost?

8) How much would the average University Press title cost?

9) Libraries have traditionally preferred to buy clothbound editions of new titles, when both cloth and paper were available. In recent years, though, some libraries have reversed that policy, asking for "paper-preferred" whenever simultaneous cloth and paper editions were available. If your library bought paper-preferred in all cases where both formats were published simultaneously, how much of the budget would you save? ___ 8% ___ 17% ___ 32% ___

10) Buying paper-preferred would cut the budget by a different amount, according to the subject area in question. Spending in Z - Library science, for instance, would only drop 2%, while spending in U - Military science, would drop 8%. In which LC class would spending show the largest percentage drop?

11) If you bought paper-preferred University Press titles whenever both editions were available, how much of your University Press budget would you save? Which LC class would see the largest percentage drop? ___ 8% ___ 17% ___ 32% class: ___

12) Suppose your library decided to switch from the traditional cloth-preferred to a paper-preferred collection development policy. Would you total dollar savings be higher on University Press titles, or on non-University Press titles?

13) In which subject areas would you save the most, and the least, on simultaneous cloth/paper editions? ___ Humanities ___ Social Science ___ Science

14) Essay question: In his Against the Grain article, "Paperbacks on Approval" (v.7, no.3, June, 1995, p.16), John M. Haar of Vanderbilt University reported an 18.8% savings by buying paper-preferred. Mr. Haar writes, "My study was admittedly quick and dirty and included a small sample..." What could skew a small sample of titles to make them show a higher, or lower, percentage of savings than the universe of publishing would suggest?

answers on page 47

As many of you will remember, the prestigious medical journal, The Lancet, was acquired by Elsevier in 1991. This journal, whose current editor is the 33-year-old Dr. Richard Horton, plans to launch a CD-ROM product in the first quarter of 1996. This will combine a fully searchable archive of the last three years of content of the journal with hypertext links to EMBASE references. Also projected are a number of similarly structured subsidiary Lancet CD products dedicated to individual medical specialties such as cardiology, oncology, and infectious diseases. For further information, contact David Gilbertson at <d.gilbertson@elsevier.co.uk>

The other day I was sitting in the doctor's office with my daughter (who has been bitten by colds, fever, etc., etc.) (In fact, if we have another winter like this I think I will move to Hawaii. And assassinate the groundhog!) Anyway, I was just sitting, perusing a magazine called Family Life when what should stare up at me but Ken Kister's byline! This was the October 1995 issue and Ken was giving advice to parents about some atlases worth buying for their kids. Like wow! Even the...
Harvard Business School Publishing

60 Harvard Way
Boston, MA 02163
Tel.: 1-800-988-0886 Fax 617-496-1029
email: custserv@cbspub.harvard.edu

Harvard Business School Publishing is a not-for-profit, wholly owned subsidiary of the Harvard Business School whose mission is to improve the practice of management and its impact in a changing world. Distinguished by access to ideas, authors, and companies, Harvard Business School Publishing has the ability to deliver the most compelling and influential business information in any medium that best serves customers' particular needs: books, journals, the Harvard Business Review, multimedia reference and management development products, cases and videos.

Harvard Business Review — In the more than 70 years since it was established, the bimonthly Harvard Business Review has dedicated itself to the power of ideas and to the proposition, in editor Nan Stone's words, that "effective management ends in action but begins in thought." Harvard Business Review's goal is to publish articles of long-standing significance that advance the theory and practice of management. New ideas from academicians, consultants, practitioners, and government leaders continue to provide teachers with fresh views on the way the world conducts business.

Harvard Business School Press — was established in 1984 with a mandate to publish books that represent the best of contemporary thinking in business and management, that are the product of sound research or professional practice, and that will influence the way readers think and act. Manuscripts considered for publication by Harvard Business School Press are reviewed by peers and approved by the Publications Review Board. This review process is unique in trade and business publishing, and ensures the quality and relevance of books that carry the Press imprint. Although the Press enjoys a unique vantage point on business from its close association with Harvard Business School, it has never been the "house publisher" of Harvard Business School professors. Faculty members are not obligated to publish with the Press nor is the Press obligated to accept faculty manuscripts. Thus, the Press has been able to sign authors from a variety of fields and can cite academics, executives, journalists, consultants, and a three-star Army general among its authors. The Press has published such notable titles as The Loyalty Effect, by Frederick F. Reichheld, and Competing for the Future, by Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad, which was selected one of the ten best business books of 1994 and hailed as "the year's best management book" by Business Week. Harvard Business School Press books are distributed to the trade by McGraw-Hill.

In addition, as part of the growing reference program which presently includes the Career Guide series, the annual edition of the Harvard Business School Core Collection, published in conjunction with Baker Library, and A Critical Guide to Management Training Videos and Selected Multimedia, the Press has just introduced Profiles in Business and Management: An International Directory of Scholars and Their Research on CD-ROM to help serve the research needs of the academic and library community.

Cases — Harvard Business School Publishing offers an extensive selection of cases, which reflect a broad range of industries, companies, and business decisions.

Harvard Business School Videos — take viewers behind the scenes of leading "best practice" organizations. Harvard Business Review Videos bring to life articles from the journal and offer supplementary materials to help discussion leaders facilitate action-oriented meetings.

New Media — High Performance Management is the first program in the multiple award-winning Interactive Manager™ Series and is the result of a unique partnership between Harvard Business School Publishing's new media experts and the management development teams of world-class organizations.

---

Book Pricing Update
from page 47

12) It's almost even. You would save a little more than half on University Press titles.

13) Paper-preferred savings in the Sciences would equal only 2.5% of your budget. In the Humanities, you would save about 8%. In the Social Sciences, you would save nearly 15%. Very few Science titles are published simultaneously in cloth and paper. Since the Sciences have the highest prices, there are virtually no savings to be made by switching to a paper-preferred policy. In LC classes Q - Science, and R - Medicine, paper-preferred would save only 3% of the budget. In classes S - Agriculture, and T - Technology, the savings would be 2% and 1%, respectively. See answer #2 above.

14) This is the real question. Only 8% of the budget would be saved if 1) you bought every academic monograph published and 2) you bought paper-preferred whenever possible. Yet many libraries report higher than 8% savings when they switch policies. Why? Possible answers include:

a) "Really good books are published both in cloth and paper." Publishers might be knowingly offering only their potentially most popular titles in both formats, and libraries would buy these books regardless of the format, anyway.

b) "We always buy University Presses." Many libraries buy University Press titles in a nearly "blanket" fashion, and non-University Press titles more selectively. Since University Presses are the ones providing both formats, if libraries buy University Press titles disproportionately, then libraries will see higher savings than "average."

c) "We buy Science selectively." Science has only a 2.5% savings for paper-preferred titles, so switching to paper-preferred would not benefit a Science collection much, if at all. Conversely, a non-Science collection would save significantly more than 8%.

d) "We buy expensive books selectively." As mentioned above, the most expensive books rarely appear in both cloth and paper formats. If libraries favor books in the mid-price range, they will see more simultaneous cloth/paper titles than "average."

Give yourself 1 point for every correct answer to questions 1-13. Be generous. Being close counts. Give yourself 10 points if you came up with an even remotely convincing answer to number 14.

Scoring — 1-23 Bravo!