

As seen in

P-O-P TIMES

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Borders Pitches to 'Potter' Faithful

Borders, Ann Arbor, Mich., took its P-O-P content to a new level for the seventh and final installment of the "Harry Potter" series, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," by focusing on a contentious issue among the book's core fans: whether Severus Snape is Harry's friend or foe.

The bookseller fueled the debate among book enthusiasts online, at "Harry Potter"-themed events and in stores. Within the retail environment, it urged fans to declare their Snape stance by picking up stickers that read "Snape is a very bad man" or "Trust Snape." It also produced nearly 1,200 floor units featuring oversized bookmarks with trivia and alternate depictions of Snape as an ally or enemy, a spiral-bound 75-day countdown flipbook to the July 21 release date, pegs and takeaways for customers.

Rich Fahle, director of content, says the team's intimate knowledge of both the book and its viral fan base enabled them to come up with a distinctive campaign. "There's a certain amount of street credibility that comes with talking to serious fans in the language that they speak themselves," Fahle says. "Everybody in this building is a 'Harry Potter' addict, so it was easy for us to make the connection."

Nona Bennett, a creative services specialist at Borders, says they built off knowledge from previous "Harry Potter" displays to develop a durable floor unit that could stand up to heavy foot traffic and regular handling by employees and customers. "We've had seven chances to get it right."

The basic display, measuring 20 inches wide by 60 inches tall by 24 inches deep,

was made out of litho-mounted corrugate, which popped apart and was held together with Velcro. Bennett says **Integrated Merchandising Systems (IMS)**, Oak Brook, Ill., was "extremely instrumental" in perfecting the display. **Rapid Displays**, Chicago and Union City, Calif., produced.

The stickers, which were distributed from the retailer's information booths, were so popular that Borders issued a second round of them.

"'Harry Potter' sold something like 12 million copies globally, and we definitely got our piece," Fahle says. "It's about winning over customers over time, providing them with new and interesting stuff, so when it came time to pick it up they wanted to choose the store that showed a true love of the book."

— Maya Payne Smart



Floorstands for the seventh and final "Harry Potter" book counted down to the release date and asked fans to take sides on the series' most contentious character (inset).

Product: "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows"

Number of displays: 1,200

P-O-P companies: Rapid Displays, Chicago and Union City, Calif.; IMS, Oak Brook, Ill.

Introduction: May 2007

Duration: Temporary

Construction: 100# litho-mounted to 200# "B" flute corrugated

Set-up: Retail staff