

Planning Strategies to Make Your School Book Fair a Great Success

by Denise Blumenfeld from Instituto Alberto Einstein, Panama

★ Introduction

Good afternoon everyone!

I would like to start this session in a different way:

I ask everyone to take your cell phones out, and access the following site please www.Kahoot.it

Game Pin:

Login with a Nickname please, and wait for the others.

★ Now let's start the Kahoot Survey

Main Speech:

Generally, anyone could organize a book fair. But you will agree with me that, depending on your position and your interest, the focus of the book fair will change. If you are a bookseller, your main interest is to emphasize book selling. Your stand, the way you promote new titles, are the most important things for you as a bookseller in this type of event.

But... let's think, how will you organize a book fair if you are a synagogue?

- You need to guarantee that you'll have booksellers with some select books according to your synagogue values and religious trend.

- If you are an Orthodox Synagogue, for example, you would dislike maybe if a bookseller brings Siddurim than includes Mothers inside the Amidá.
- If you are an University, your books will be more academic and science oriented, than if you are planning this event for a kindergarten.

So all of this leads us to the first step in planning a book fair, which is: FINDING OUR TARGET!

1. Who is your target? Who are the people that will come to your book fair? What is their age group? Which are the languages they speak?
2. What are the values of my organization? Is our religious orientation aligned with my book fair? (orthodox, liberal, inclusive)
3. When is the best time, of the year, to have a book fair? Why?
4. How many days? Would it be open during the evening? could parents of students attend?

These are all important questions to answer when planning your book fair.

Now, let's think about MARKETING:

Our book fair, at Instituto Alberto Einstein, is promoted in three different ways:

1. **Promoting the need and importance of reading.** How can my target will be interested in reading: Our school has a reading campaign called L.E.V. *Leer Es Vital*, (Reading is Vital). *Incidentally, as you may know, LEV in hebrew means Heart and just as it is vital for the heart to beat to be alive, so is reading in education. Just*

thought you should know how we arrived at the name for our reading program. Therefore, our book fair is focus on reading, with strict policies for publishing houses who would like to sell at our fair. For example:

- coloring and sticker books are banned (even books with all jewish content)
- diaries
- encyclopedias
- dictionaries
- educational toys, are not allowed.

They are banned because they are not aligned with our reading campaign.

We select booksellers whose books are for Kinder thru High School students, in Spanish, Hebrew and English, with content aligned to our school's religious values. Clearly it is "customized" and a bit difficult than to acquire a book fair package from a publishing house. Selecting a book fair package, it's easy because all decorations, slogans, book selection and everything else is pre-arranged by them, but doing it this way, it may not include jewish titles, books of all ages and, most importantly, some content may not be in agreement with our overall school's values.

2. Second, we **promote our fair using a different Themes or Campaigns** every year, such as: ("Reading gives you superpowers" or this year book fair will be "Reading is a treasure. Get Hook in a good

book”).“graphic campaign”: We work with our graphic designers and prepare a campaign, which includes: Posters, bookmarks, donation stickers and flyers. Let’s see some examples. (Show the photos in the presentation). We have a *homeroom door decorating contest*, inspired by the Theme of the fair, to create excitement among all students.

3. AND the Third way **we promote our fair is by giving our students a great learning experience** at the book fair: We plan activities to do inside our library, for example: storytelling done by grandparents, puppets show for kinder students, scavenger hunt for elementary students and *Ted Talk* Style guest presentations, for Middle and High- School students.

SO OUR FINAL STEP IN PLANNING OUR BOOK FAIR IS: **MAKING OUR BOOKFAIR PROFITABLE.**

This aspect of the fair came about because we wanted to meet some of the library’s financial needs: such as purchasing new books, fundraise for buying customs, tablet computers, new book shelves and others.

Most institutions have some kind of budget for the library but, sometimes your library needs things that goes beyond their regular budget too. Therefore, a book fair is a great opportunity to get extra funds.

During our book fair, there's a library stand devoted to book donations. Librarians pick books they think would be interesting for students, then parents buy them for donate to the library.

We have an excellent group of mothers who volunteer during this event, and we organize different activities together to boost more books donation, for example: photobooth tickets, contest tickets.

Back in 2015, the library received one book for every ten books sold by each publishing house. The Pros and Cons of this are:

Pros: Getting the books we wanted from the publishing houses.

Cons: some publishing houses weren't that accurate with calculating the amount of books to be donated. So, we decided to charge every publishing house a participation fee and as we percentage of overall sales.

This way, the library chooses to use this money on book fair books or using the cash for other purchases.

IN CONCLUSION: all of the strategies we apply, are planned to make a Day School Book Fair a great success, and fulfill our most important goal: *to give our students a great learning experience.*

Thank you for taking part in this presentation!

