

THIS MARKET, THIS MONSTER

An FOC COMEBACK PROJECT

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Project proposal

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OVERVIEW

Retailers put their heads together and expose some light to what is needed for a true comeback of comics post-Covid19. These truths are the product of an immeasurable amount of cumulative years of experience, expansive educations from numerous fields (Nod to Joe), and a love for our chosen path.

GOALS

- Give quantifiable ideas that have a history of proving themselves.
- Submit these ideas in a forum that all relative publisher & distributor partners both see them and respect the subject matter at hand
- Contribute to the discussion, without vitriol, a substantial and long-lasting path back to the top.

SPECIFICATIONS

1. If PREVIEWS continues monthly, to be listed, a periodical MUST have all art present. (90% would be minimal acceptance with 100% of covers) No more "FOC" surprises.
2. ALL publishers who can meet the mechanical standard of accepting revised orders at 3 weeks before print should be on FOC. Everyone else should be discouraged from handling their own printing.

3. Fewer variants. Less is more, money not spent on a variant will be spent on another comic or collected version...or maybe they spend on the materials needed to protect those comics and strengthen the shop.
4. Everything within a series must get the series code attached in the master data file. Publishers should be required to review the master data file for accuracy before it is released each month. If it isn't included in previews and/or the master data file, it has to wait till the next PREVIEWS and/or FOC.
5. A single issue story/one shot should be clearly labeled as such in our solicitations. Stop using the #1 issue bait that implies a new ongoing. It's not needed if the content is quality and gives value back to the consumer. Consumer trickery and publisher wordplay are not needed to return the market to a healthy place.
6. Establish a flat rate shipping percentage from suppliers. Pass on negotiated savings in freight to the next link in the supply chain, Publisher - Distributor - Retailer. This benefits all involved as it would drive down dollars demanded from consumer.
7. Standards training on the ways to safely pack and ship things? These are collectibles in the eyes of almost every single end user.
8. Not every issue of an ongoing comic needs to be a twelve-issue story. A decent percentage of product that is one and done storytelling would extend the shelf life of the product and increase our sales to new customers. Recent history showed a lot of effort is wasted on obtaining even more of an existing customer's money, rather than bringing a new person in the door. A person new through the door wants a comic book with a beginning, middle, and end (At the beginning of their journey at least).
9. Longer delays between single issues and trade paperback release. This empowers the single issues to feel more valuable month in and month out by making them the only way to read the comic. We have to remove the, "I'll just wait for a trade mentality". A very high majority of readers use this as a way to simply "pass" on a series. It was created, implemented and is now a very destructive mechanism in the marketplace.
10. Delay digital release. Relatable entertainment media like movies have their digital releases months after they are released in theaters. It would be beneficial to not cannibalize the market share.

11. Titles that are going to be delayed for more than 2 weeks past the solicited on sale date cannot be listed on the FOC.
12. Late shipping product from publishers should be made returnable with no FEES.
13. Any product that changes to a higher price after being solicited gets mandatory returnability with no fees.
14. Line of DOLLAR comics with original content from publishers that drive the bus.
15. Previews needs to be streamlined. Are separate catalogs for Marvel & DC needed? Get this back down to a single catalog for comics...possibly split into two catalogs; one for publications and one for collectibles.
16. Trades beyond volume 4's? Possibility of NOT collecting every arc in the TPB format. Sales to retailers (especially non-returnable books) are not what actually sold to consumers. Maybe that arc wasn't good and in the end if someone wants it, they can shop that top-stock. Flipside is bigger trades, the 5 issue marvel trades are about as skinny as a DC prestige format from the 90's, and average \$16. More content would justify the price.
17. Returnability as common practice. Negotiate a flat amount of each issue of returnability or a percentage of returnability. 100% of publishers trying anything would be a start.
18. Marvel's over print policy is a choke-point for material flow from publisher to reader. We need an overprint policy that allows easy reorders (within reason, of course).
19. FRESH BLOOD, a push for promotions aimed at kids and teens. These need to explain the comic concept. There is a large portion of the general public with no idea fresh stories are coming out every Wednesday. They think we are selling the same books from their childhood.
20. AWARENESS about what exactly can be found in a shop every Wednesday. Instead of the five dollar Tuesday delivery free, Use that to create a "Promotion/Advertisement" pool that is used to promote NCBD.
21. Weekly series are 100% returnable. At least after issue #1.
22. Frequency of new titles defaults to monthly for the first 3 issues. This allows retailers to find the ceiling. Afterwards, go twice monthly if a publisher chooses to do so.

23. Always seek to increase market share for the companies that need the direct market to stay in business. This more evenly distributed and diverse market would only strengthen the marketplace in its entirety.
24. Would a Shonen Jump model from the top 5 publishers work. One large book with an anthology of stories, from the absolute top creators, black and white, 100s of pages. \$9.99.
25. Proper data for Point of Sale Systems.
26. Advertising Support in Superhero movies for LCS, Characters in movies holding the comics they came from asking viewers to support their comics and the local shops that sell them. LCS can ask for pop up shops in theater lobbies for outreach and sales geared towards movies.

- Takeaways
- Meaningful
- What a great start. Not all ideas should flow any further in this discourse. Make 'em count.
- Keep it Civil
- This shouldn't become the podium to castigate every entity that has wronged you. Create a civil well thought out presentation and be able to say this is how we come back. Let's work together to lay the foundation for return.