



Scholastic for Embracing

Scholastic Book Clubs Co-Creates with Parents and Teachers

communispace™

20 Groundswell
09 Award
Submission

 SCHOLASTIC



embrace

THE SHORT STORY.

In August 2008, Scholastic Book Clubs wanted to make its iconic “flyer” even better, and decided to ask parents and teachers for their help and ideas.

The colorful Scholastic Book Clubs “flyer” has been a trusted place for generations of parents, teachers, and kids to buy quality, affordable books. The company wanted to do better; it wanted to find a better way to match the right child to the right books at the right time.

Utilizing a 10-week co-creation process, parents and teachers joined forces with Scholastic Book Clubs’ editors and designers to meet their goal. Through each phase of the product development process, the voice of their customers was woven into prototypes and new elements. The resulting improved flyer is a testament to the teamwork and sense of purpose that characterized this important initiative for Scholastic Book Clubs. With a newly-designed flyer that helps match kids with the right books, Scholastic Book Clubs has ensured its place as the “go to” source for parents and teachers who want their children and students to become better readers and love books.

A COMMON GOAL, A SHARED JOURNEY.

For 60 years, Scholastic Book Clubs has been a partner in literacy with teachers and parents, providing age-appropriate books that generations of kids have enjoyed. The Book Club flyers are not just a sales channel, but a school “event” each month as they arrive in class. Parents order from Scholastic Book Clubs to build a home library, teachers trust the company to provide quality, age-appropriate titles, and kids love the flyers because they can find books they want to read. However, feedback from Scholastic Book Clubs’ private Communispace communities and other sources revealed that teachers and parents had different needs when it came to the flyer, yet they had the same goal in mind—matching the right child to the right book.

Scholastic knew that to help improve the way parents, kids, and teachers find appropriate books from the flyer they needed to get both communities involved and working together. Making changes to this important sales channel for Scholastic, especially when it wasn’t broken, was an initiative that went straight to the heart of their brand. Scholastic knew that they had to get it right, or they could potentially risk losing what makes the Book Clubs unique and special.

Together with a private online community of 200 teachers and 100 moms, created with their partner Communispace, Scholastic went through each step of the product development process in 10 weeks. They developed not only a new flyer, but a new opportunity for Scholastic Book Clubs to connect with parents, kids, and teachers.

IDEATION, INSIGHTS, AND ITERATION DRIVE MEANINGFUL CHANGE.

Through a four step process of exploration, ideation, prototype development and testing, and finally production, Scholastic Book Clubs’ editors and designers worked alongside the community to deliver an improved product in record time.

Insights and ideas from members helped Scholastic Book Clubs at every stage of the process. For example, they learned that parents wanted to have a section with recommendations based on books their children already read and liked. Scholastic Book Clubs brought this idea to life with a section in the flyer where they take a very popular book series a number of kids have read, and suggest other books that are similar.

In another example, parents revealed that the way they are able to judge the difficulty of a book is to flip through it and see what the pages look like. This idea inspired Scholastic Book Clubs to add a feature in the flyer to show an interior page of a book in each of the four difficulty levels so parents and teachers can easily make the right book selection.

LESSON LEARNED: CO-CREATING WITH CUSTOMERS GETS AN A+

By working with parents and teachers along the way, Scholastic Book Clubs could feel confident it was on the right track with these changes. And the results bear this out: those who received the redesigned flyer were more likely to order from Book Clubs and purchase more books when they buy.

- The initial test phase of the new flyer resulted in a 3% lift in sales, which, if borne out in the national rollout, will mean millions in new revenue for Scholastic Book Clubs.

This result is especially impressive given the tough economic climate that existed during the time of the new flyer test phase.

Additionally, Scholastic met their goal of using testing and development dollars more efficiently by creating a product with the voice of the customer already embedded in it. Lastly, what they learned by working directly with parents and teachers through the development process will help inform their growing e-commerce business.

“Comments from parents and teachers tell the full story,” said Judy Newman, President of Scholastic Book Clubs. “There was no way we could have gotten to this breakthrough without working directly with parents and teachers at every step of the way. We showed them our prototypes. They showed us theirs. They gave us open access to their lives and mindset so that we could truly bridge the gap between what teachers need and what parents want.”

