

Media Release

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A MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS: WHY SOME PARTNERSHIPS JUST CLICK

In recent years, travelers have become accustomed to seeing high-end national and international brands in the airport – Armani, Bulgari, Coach, Hugo Boss, Michael Kors and the like. These savvy brands have come to appreciate the strategic value of staking their claim to the lucrative travel retail dollar, and have established outposts in airport concourses around the globe.

Now joining the ranks of these luxury brands in their recognition of the power of travel retail is Cirque du Soleil, the extraordinary Quebec-based arts and entertainment company that is a dramatic blend of circus arts and street performance. Cirque has drawn over 100 million customers since 1984.

As part of the brand's marketing philosophy, Cirque du Soleil develops strategic alliances with companies that reflect its own values of excellence, quality of service, strong community involvement and "making the impossible possible."

Cue Hudson Group, in the person of Sara Hinckley, VP of Book Buying & Promotions. Not swinging from a trapeze, but clearly feeling a sense of kinship with at least her marketing counterparts at Cirque du Soleil. Hinckley states: "Our two companies share an uncommon devotion to satisfying our customers. And Cirque is clearly taken with the opportunities presented by Hudson's volume of customer transactions – some 90 million a year."

Hinckley says that collaboration talks began last year and were greatly boosted by a Cirque du Soleil performance at Hudson's Management Seminar & Vendor Show in Las Vegas last December.

"Our teams got to talking, and realized that we had a firm foundation to build on. We wished to pass along a variety of 'goodies' to our joint customers, like show discounted tickets, free tote bags, books and an exciting sweepstakes."

Thus was born this summer's promotion, and very likely additional co-productions later on. "As one of the largest book retailers in the country, with over \$75M in sales last year, Hudson, like Cirque du Soleil, is very much in the 'imagination' business. It is a fact of airport retailing that even in this era of e-books, travelers still enjoy reading traditional books of every kind, as long as it is a great read for their flight. What many people don't realize is that the assortment in every Hudson Booksellers/Hudson News book section is hand selected for that location by experienced booksellers who are familiar with that particular market. This is an approach that resonated with our friends at Cirque du Soleil, who are equally granular in their customer offerings– La Nouba in Orlando, Florida; eight resident productions in Las Vegas, and 11 touring shows currently travelling around the globe."

Remember Charlotte's Web? Try Sara's...

Hudson Booksellers recently inaugurated a new online bookselling site, www.HudsonBooksellers.com. This e-commerce venture was developed through the American Booksellers Association's Indiecommerce platform. In addition to offering Kobo e-books, HudsonBooksellers.com makes it possible for customers to shop for any book, in any format, at any place or any time – while building on the convenient experience of shopping at the most trusted brand-name bookstore for travelers.

Notes Hinckley: “Travelers are familiar with Hudson Booksellers and our passionate, expert team. We don’t just sell books, we love books, all books – the widest and best selection of bestsellers, business titles, local authors, international prizewinners, along with quirky cult classics and overlooked works from small, independent presses. We have been the traveler’s local bookstore for over 20 years, a cultural gateway between their home cities and the world.”

Now that same blend of personal service and bookselling expertise comes to the Internet. The site will offer customers what they’ve come to expect from Hudson’s brick-and-mortar stores: guidance from booksellers (including hundreds of personal reviews and suggestions) and an interactive “Ask a Bookseller” feature.

There will also be continually updated news and information about books that are hot with travelers, book signing events and special offers, such as a special launch discount of 40% off the first order (physical books only) and free shipping for any purchases over \$75. All the customer has to do is register for an account and use coupon code JUSTLANDED.