

Joshua Westbrook's

GUIDEBOOK TO

ETERNITY

10 Tips to Keeping your Favorite
Comic Book Store in Business



T E A M
W
ENTERTAINMENT

FORWARD

Hey! You actually opened up my guidebook, which means either one of two things:

A.) You're totally trippin' over that awesome cover art.

B.) You don't want to see your favorite comic book store close its doors for good.

Well, let's assume it's the latter for now and proceed with that. Today, my friends, is a new golden age for comics. Big budget blockbusters, awesome new titles, and enough memorabilia to put Taneleer Tivan in a coma. However, comic books stores, fine establishments that have stood in some cases for over two decades, are closing down. Lots of people are going digital to buy their comics, but don't be fooled, that's not the only reason. Now is the time to be the hero instead of reading about one, and save comic book stores everywhere! This guidebook will walk you through 10 tips you can use to make sure that the comic book store you love never goes down.

Joshua Westbrook

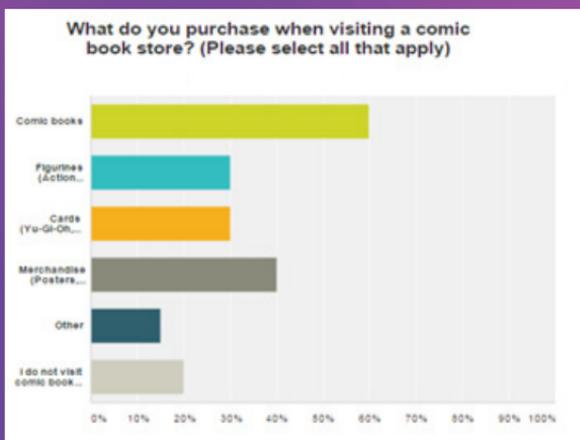
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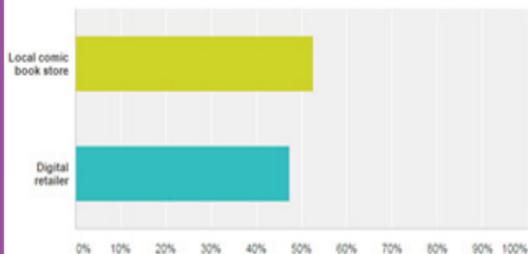
THE FACTS

Alright, I'm gonna go ahead and give it to you straight: Comic book stores are going down by the dozen. The majority began after 2010 (The introduction of the comiXology app for those of you following along at home), and while digital comics may have been a catalyst, it is certainly not the sole reason comic book stores are going out of business.

Research shows that the **number one purchase** people make when visiting comic book stores is **still actual comic books**.



Where do you purchase the majority of your comic books?



Statistics also show that, though **just as many people** are **purchasing digital** comics that are **purchasing physical**, about **63%** of readers preferred method of comic book reading is still traditional paper.

But here's the rub...

NOBODY IS GOING TO COMIC BOOK STORES!!!

The attendance numbers are sad! Which leads us directly into our first tip...

TIP 1: VISIT MORE OFTEN

How many times do you head down to the 'ol brick and mortar comic shop? Once a month? Once a year? You haven't been since you were 12? Well, what exactly are you waiting for?

Come on in!

Even if you don't go in with the intention of buying something (That new Avengers won't drop for another 3 weeks!) you never know what you'll find. Did you know that about 53% of people only visit their local comic book store a few times a year! That is crazy! Over half of the comic reading population only go to comic book stores once or twice a year, and about **20%** don't go **at all!** You want to keep this place around, then you have got to come in more often! Make it a fun trip. Take your friends, take your significant other, take your kids! You drive by it all the time, just pop in, say hi. I promise you, it'll be well worth your time.



TIP 2: TRY SOMETHING NEW

TIP 3: VARIANTS

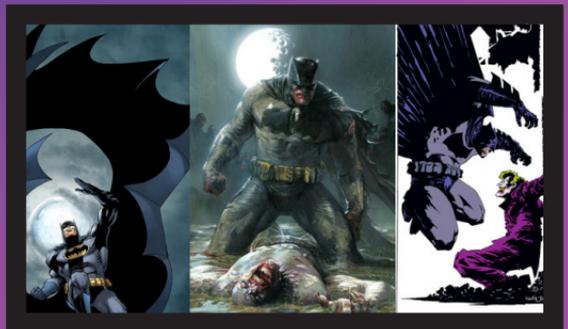
Ever find yourself saying “Hey, that’s an awesome variant cover! Wish I had that.” Well, uh, news flash... You can! It’s sitting there for sale! I know I’ve bought my fair share of variant covers that were way cooler than the

actual cover. Big publishers, especially Marvel and DC, love their variants. Some covers are literally blank, but hey, that’s someone’s style. The thing is, the stores stock up on these variants, but if no



one buys them, then that’s just a waste. So don’t just stare in awe at a variant that puts the original cover art to shame.

Next time, take a chance, and pick it up.



Let's face facts here, a lot of comic book stores are small corner shops shoved between a tattoo parlor and a burger joint. What I'm saying is they're easy to pass by unless you know where they are. And many people may not. In fact, my friend showed me where to find 3 of the 5 comic shops I frequent! Had it not been for him, I'd only know of two, one of which I found on accident. So suffice to say these people could use some word of mouth. Spread the word! Tell your friends, tell your family, tell your neighbors, tell your dog even!

The next time you walk out of the big **Avengers** or **Batman** movie with your group of buds, say "Hey guys, great movie, huh? Let's run by that comic shop on 5th and grab some of that sweet source material!" Now there is a 98.75% chance that they will laugh at you, and go about their day. But that 1.25% is that one guy goes "There's a comic book store on 5th?" Then **BOOM!** New customer!



Hail **HYDRA!** Um...
I mean... go to the
comic book store!

You could post a pic of that big stack of comics you just hauled out on social media and comment "Yep, just snagged these bad boys at Such-and-Such

Comics!" Who knows? Someone might like your post, and then decide to go check it out themselves! So just keep talking about your favorite comic book store, getting the word out there. Who could it hurt? Besides, you never know who's listening.

TIP 6: RESEARCH FROM THE SOURCE

So, you hear **Iron Man 3** is doing the Extremis storyline, or Batman v. Superman ‘borrows heavily’ from the Dark Knight Returns. You’re saying, “Huh, I never read any of those. Better hop on **Wikipedia!**” Well, sure, you could go Wiki everything. Or, you could go grab the Extremis and Dark Knight Returns graphic novels. Not only do you get more information, and a richer experience, but you pick up on lines and images they take straight from the comics. You recognize homages and Easter eggs sprinkled throughout. And, you feel at least 35% smarter than everyone else in the theater!



I mean, wouldn't you argue that everyone who'd read the **Harry Potter** books had a better movie going experience? It's the same for comic books! In fact, if you go up to the counter

and ask for all the essentials for **Sandman** or **Preacher**, they'll tell you where to start, where to go, and where to finish. They'll grab you a nice 3-inch thick stack of glorious homework that'll get you nice and familiarized with the characters and storylines that you maybe don't know so much about. And that's way more efficient than scrolling through the thousands of digital issues



wondering which ones are important and which ones to skip. So forget **Wikipedia**, go straight to the source!



Here's a little known fact: Some people might not go to comic book stores because they're afraid they won't find what they want. I don't blame 'em though. One of the comic book stores I go to sold out of Miles Morales's first comic in **2 hours**! 2 shocking hours!

Like... what!? With odds like that, some might feel the bright lure of Comixology calling their name. Well how do you avoid situations like this?

Get a box!!!

And not just any box, this is a special kind of box. Almost every comic book store has some form of system where you can let them know what comics you want and, as they come in, they take one aside just for you! It's like **VIP** treatment, except not really though, but still, it's pretty close. Then, that first issue of the big new character or event is yours **guaranteed**! It's like preordering a video game, making sure you've got your copy ready. This way, you don't need to look like an idiot digging through the shelves looking for the issue that sold out just before you got there. Like I did... very often... before I got a box!

TIP 8: MAKE SOME FRIENDS



Do you sit **alone** at the lunch table?

Do people call you **weird**?



Do you constantly find yourself pulling your head out of a **toilet**?

If you're experiencing these symptoms, then you're more likely than not a...

NERD!

But let me tell you, fellow reader, you are not alone. Because in the comic book store, everybody is like you! It's full of all kinds of sweaty weirdos that welcome each other with open arms. Comic book stores are where you can walk in on a Wednesday afternoon dressed as **Lara Croft** and nobody bats an eye. You're free to be you, it's the ultimate judgement free zone! I mean... you may get called out and challenged by a hardcore fanboy, but since when is arguing about fictional characters not fun! So go on, mingle, make conversation. You spot someone with a **SHIELD** logo on their shirt, ask them if they watch the show. That cutie over there has a **Pokéball** keychain, go ask 'em if they'll chose you! Geek out with the guy behind the counter about the latest issue in a game changing comic event or join in on the latest **Walking Dead** spoilers. Socialize, find people that like to do what you do. That's when a comic book store becomes more than place to buy comics. That's when it becomes a home away from home.



TIP 9: HEAD OUT TO THE EVENTS

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Psst. Guess what. I got a secret. And a jar of dirt. But I also got a secret. Listen carefully now: your local comic book



store does more than just sell comics. That's right, they host all kinds of events. Signings, card game tournaments, special guests stars... **Free Comic Book Day!** Come on, what reason do you have to not go to a comic book store on Free Comic Book Day? You get a free comic! Several! You can even dress up if you want!

The employees work so hard to put together nice special little events for the public to come enjoy, it'd be nice if people would go to them! Keep an eye out for ads sitting on the counter or taped to the door. They'll let you know when something big and fun is going down. All you need to do is show up. With your jar of dirt.

**FREE
COMIC
BOOK
DAY**

TIP 10: NEVER TRUST A PIRATE

AFTERWARD

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