

Publisher Alley

Sales Data and Calculations Update

February 5, 2010

This month, there are two related changes happening in the background of the Publisher Alley database.

1. Comparable-title sales figures will become more precise.

Until now, the formula used to derive 30-, 60-, or 90-day sales has been based on monthly approximations. Titles published at the beginning of a calendar month actually ended up showing more sales than those published at the end of a month. Because Pub Alley stores daily sales information for all titles, we have the ability to show the precise number of units sold from pre-publication through 30, 60, or 90 days after the pub date. Beginning sometime during the week of 2/8/10, comparable-title sales will be calculated in this way.

Some implications:

Old buy reports stored on Pub Alley

Beginning sometime next week, all reports will automatically be populated with numbers from the new equation. This means that in an older report, some suggested buy quantities will seem high when compared with the revised comp-title sales.

Demand calculations for comparable titles

Pub Alley does not store daily demand info, so the demand numbers for comp titles will continue to be based on a monthly approximation.

Publication dates

If a title misses its publication date (is released earlier or later than expected), publishers should contact datafix@baker-taylor.com to have the date adjusted. If not, when the title is used as a comp, sales will be inflated or low. This is not a new development, but low results are more dramatic with the revised calculation.

2. Database growth is being managed to increase processing speed.

We mentioned above that Pub Alley stores daily sales for all titles. This is exceptional—other reporting systems bundle sales by week or other standardized periods to limit updates and the amount of data being stored. We presently have 11+ years of daily sales history, and there are about 6 million titles in the database. With new titles being added at an unprecedented rate due to e-content and other factors, it's time to reign in the data to ensure timely searches.

Beginning sometime this spring, Publisher Alley will cease to include daily sales data for any titles from 1999-2001. Lifetime sales figures (since 1999) will remain available for all titles. With that adjustment, we will be carrying 8+ years of daily sales (2002-Present). We expect that this timeframe will become standard: next year we will begin with daily sales from 2003-2010.

Some implications:

Sales parameters beginning or ending prior to 2002

These ranges will either generate results of 0 or partial results for the period. For example, a date range of January 1, 2001, through December 31, 2001, will return 0 sales for all titles. A date range of December 1, 2001 through January 31, 2002, will return sales for January 2002 only. (The same applies currently for pre-1999 sales parameters.)

Comparable titles

Any comparable titles published prior to 2002 will show 0 sales and demand for the buy period in buy reports. They will also show 0 YBP Approval Sales in Excel output from the buy report. Lifetime sales will display. In general, more recent titles are better predictors of new-title potential and are preferred by B&T buyers.

Note: We are NOT removing any titles from Publisher Alley—only daily sales records prior to 2002.

We will update this news item when changes are implemented. If you have questions, please contact Jamie Carter at 603-746-3102, x3287 (jamie.carter@baker-taylor.com).