COMPASS ROSE WORKS

Book Sales & Inventory Tracking Guide

A practical workbook for knowing how many books you have, where they are, what sold, what was given away, and what those sales actually produced.

1. BUILD AN INVENTORY BASELINE

Good inventory records begin with a physical count. Record each title and format separately, then update the count whenever books enter or leave your control.

- Count every book physically on hand.
- Separate paperback, hardcover, special edition, or other formats.
- Record new inventory when books are purchased or received.
- Record every movement: sale, consignment placement, complimentary copy, return, damage, or adjustment.
- Keep books stored at outside locations visible in your records even though they are not physically with you.

Title / Format	Physical On Hand	Books on Location	Total Controlled

Inventory equation

Beginning inventory + books received - books sold - complimentary/damaged/lost copies - books placed elsewhere + books returned = expected books on hand.

2. RECORD EVERY BOOK MOVEMENT

Inventory becomes trustworthy when every change has a reason and a date.

Common movement types

- Inventory received / purchased
- Direct sale
- Event sale
- Website or online sale
- Consignment placement
- Consignment return
- Complimentary / review / promotional copy
- Damaged or lost copy
- Inventory correction after a physical count

Date	Title	Movement	Qty	Location / Note

Control point

Do not wait until the end of the month to remember where books went. Record the movement when it happens or as soon afterward as practical.

3. TRACK SALES CONSISTENTLY

A sales record should tell you what sold, where it sold, how the customer paid, and how much money was actually received.

Date	Channel / Event	Qty	Price Each	Gross	Payment

Sales channels to distinguish

- Direct in-person sale
- Author event or signing
- Website / online store
- Bookstore or retail consignment
- Wholesale / bulk sale
- Other

Event sales closeout

Books taken	Books sold	Comp copies	Books returned	Gross sales

Reconcile before you leave

Whenever possible, count books and reconcile payments at the end of an event while the information is still fresh.

4. CONSIGNMENT & BOOKS ON LOCATION

Books placed at a bookstore, gift shop, venue, or other location remain part of your inventory until they are sold, returned, or otherwise accounted for.

Location	Date Placed	Qty Placed	Qty Sold	Qty Returned	Balance

For each consignment relationship, record:

- Contact person and location
- Date and quantity delivered
- Retail price
- Commission or fee percentage
- How and when sales will be reported
- Payment schedule
- Unsold-book return expectations
- Date you will follow up

Follow-up dates matter

Books on location should never become invisible inventory. Schedule periodic checks so you know what has sold, what remains, and what money is due.

5. UNDERSTAND THE MONEY BEHIND THE SALE

Gross sales are not the same as profit. A simple per-book calculation helps you understand what each sale contributes.

Retail price per book	$_____
Less retailer / consignment fee	$_____
Author proceeds before book cost	$_____
Less your cost per copy	$_____
Approximate clear book profit	$_____

Monthly snapshot

Beginning books on hand	_____
Books received	_____
Books sold	_____
Other books out / adjustments	_____
Expected ending books on hand	_____
Physical ending count	_____
Difference requiring review	_____

MONTH-END CHECKLIST

- ■ Perform or spot-check a physical inventory count.
- ■ Review books placed at outside locations.
- ■ Reconcile sales records to payment records.
- ■ Investigate unexplained inventory differences.
- ■ Record income and related business expenses.
- ■ Back up your business records.

Notes / discrepancies to investigate:

If you cannot tell where your books are, you cannot accurately tell what your author business is doing.