

Neuroscientists claim that the human brain is the sexiest part of the body. They're biased, of course. But since progress in vaginal gadgetry has only come so far—can only flicker so much—to break them down is to see that they are merely machines. But the brain, in its entire mysterious splendor, is a semi-conductive, mass-transit factory of self-made erotica entitlement merely governed by one's own imagination. Or lack of. Sex begins and ends with the synapses, the impulses and the sudden rush of serotonin that is expedited down through the Modulla Oblongata and pumped directly into the fun zone. And although the adult retail industry concentrates on other, far more southern areas of the anatomy to build products for, the brain deserves some seduction, too.

Long before technology took over the genital trade, the only thing humans handled besides themselves were books. And now that the hysteria around E.L. James' "50 Shades of Grey" has gone global, books are sexy once again.

Since 1994, Entrenue distribution has maintained the largest and most diverse selection of books for adult retailers. The Phoenix, Arizona-based "boutique" wholesaler specializes in carrying an armory of literature—600 separate titles, in fact—including the newest and best-selling names, and featuring an assortment of genres.

"Books have been our mainstay since the beginning," says Entrenue's Brand and Marketing Manager, Lisa Mazurek. "We got into this market because of books, and that continues to be our main focus—sexual education. Although we diversified our line during the first five years, we primarily tailored our inventory toward the reader. We were successful with the 'how-to' genre back then. The instructional books and 'tips & tricks' titles would also do well and, of course, there were the art and photography books."

## The good book

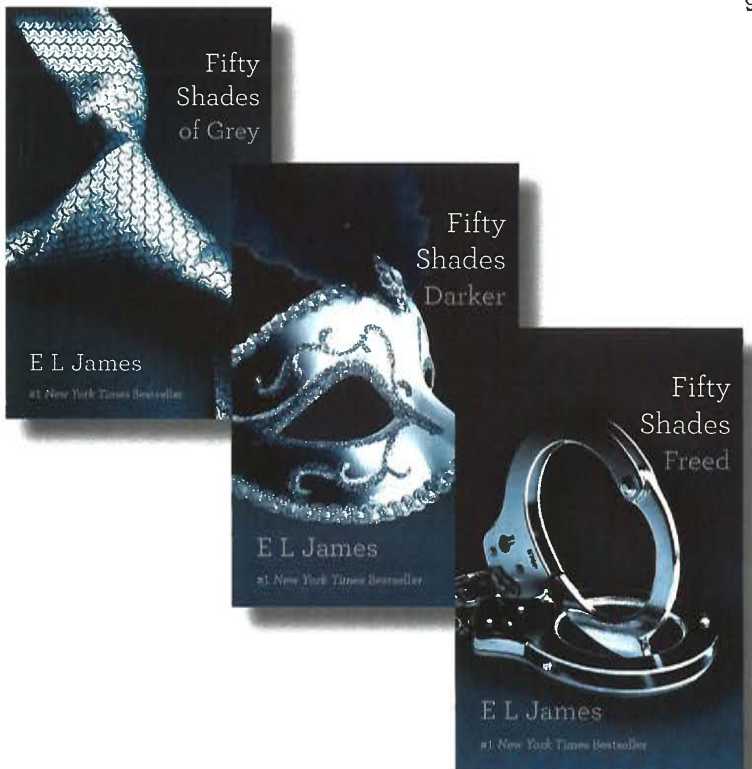
It's called "50 Shades of Grey," and by now your grandmother can recite the plot. In the wake of the trilogy's mass hysteria, adult retailers have been stocking up on anything related to the exploits of one Christian Grey. Responding to the basic supply and demand, Entrenue is presently carrying the original books ("50 Shades of Grey," "50 Shades Darker" and "50 Shades Freed"), as well as the Spanish versions, the audio version, and now the soundtrack "inspired" by the novel.

"Everything that has to do with 50 Shades is doing well for us," boasts Mazurek. "We've seen a 40 percent increase in the erotic fiction genre due in no small part to the strength of '50 Shades of Grey.'"

Where there's smoke there's fire, so when a phenomenon like 50 Shades latches on to the collective zeitgeist with no plan of releasing its grip, the inevitable companion books will soon follow. Responding accordingly, Entrenue also features other erotic fiction with similar themes to 50 Shades including instructionals ("50 Shades of Pleasure" and "The Many Shades of BDSM") to the blatant knock-off novels ("Bound by Lust" and "Gabriel's Inferno").

"BDSM, in general, is a huge genre for us at the moment," Mazurek states. "50 Shades has opened a new world to the general public, and what we're seeing is that people are wanting to read about true BDSM first through other books, and then graduate to purchasing the products that are featured in the books."

In response to completing the sales motif, Entrenue also offers Sportsheets' 50 Shades-inspired line from the Sex and Mischief Collection, as well as crops, whips and floggers from manufacturer Ruff Doggie Styles. "And we've doubled our inventory of restraints, but that almost goes without saying," says Mazurek. →



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**— Lisa Mazurek of Entrenue**

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## The textbook definition

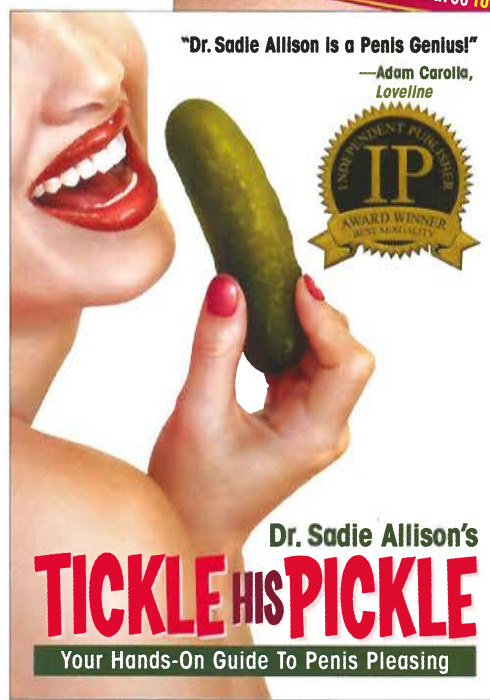
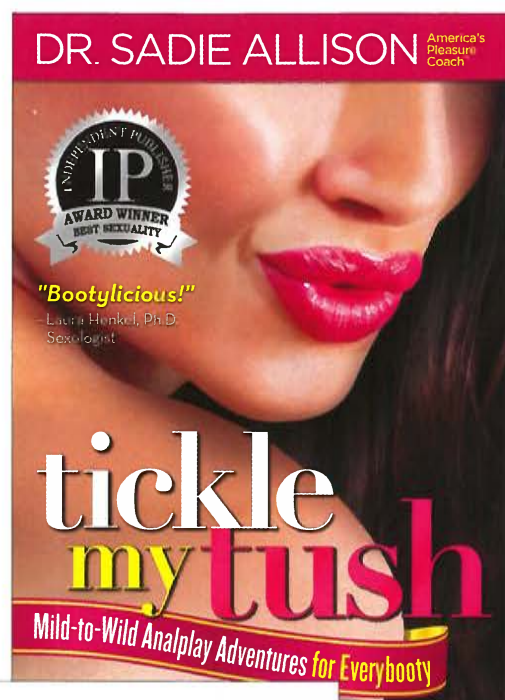
Since we were old enough to string words together to form sentences, there has never been another to seize our attention like the word "sex." But in the cyber age of Monkeyspank.com and Urban Dictionary, finding out how to perform a Rusty Trombone (look it up) or a Dirty Swirly (don't ask) isn't that difficult a task. However, for couples that are interested in learning about the art of lovemaking, nothing beats the instructional book.

Besides the basic tutorials that can appear to be a little too clinical, Entrenue has a vast assortment of modern books that highlight or emphasize Kama Sutra, sex tips, dirty talk, erotic dancing, sexual health and libido.

"Bringing home a book and leaving it around for partner to find or reading it together, thereby discovering new areas of your intimacy, is a shared activity," says Mazurek. "Also, books entice communication about sex, which is a key area for any couple. So unlike e-books or what could be found on the Internet, having that book in the lap of you or your partner is benefit as well as a turn-on. And no matter what a couple is interested in learning more about, chances are we have a book for that."

One of Entrenue's best-selling authors is Sadie Allison. "Dr. Sadie," as she is commonly known around our industry, is founder and CEO of Tickle Kitty, Inc. Allison has received great acclaim in the mainstream for her series of books (the "Tickle" series and Toygasms) that emphasize the fun and discovery of human sexuality and relationships.

"We have always sold Dr. Sadie Allison's books and love them!" exclaims Mazurek. "She does an amazing job of condensing a lot of information into the perfect bite-size pieces customers love to read quickly. Her graphics are fun and sexy. She is extremely helpful to retailers for two additional reasons: she usually doesn't name products and toys by brand, so that retailers can sell the brands they carry, and she doesn't print a retail price on the back of the book, so retailers are able to mark up at their discretion."



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## Show and tell

Since the primordial grunts of the caveman, words have been sexy. But the rule is, movies can apply to books too: to say it, show it. While books entice one's imagination to explore their sexuality, Mazurek believes that explicit content still serves a purpose between the covers.

"There are attractive ways of being explicit," Mazurek states. "Explicit sells better in our market because it is less available in the mainstream. That said, we choose things that are explicit, yet are still tasteful and modern-looking."

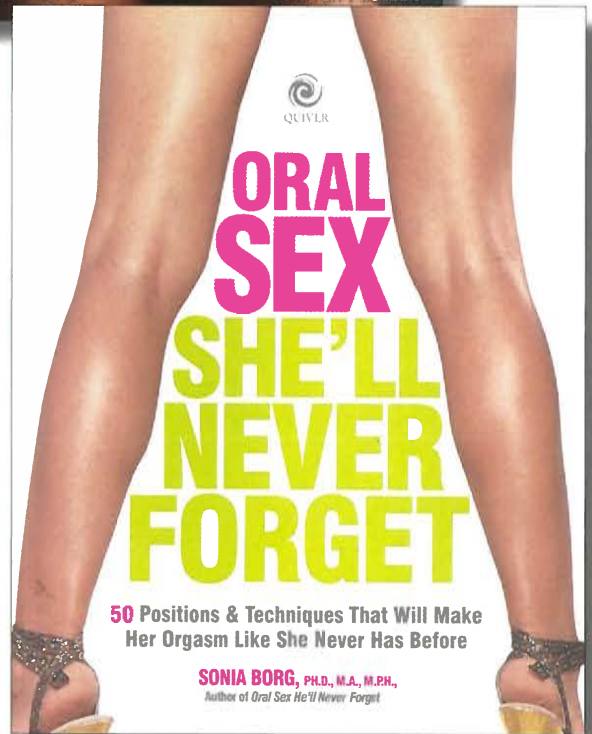
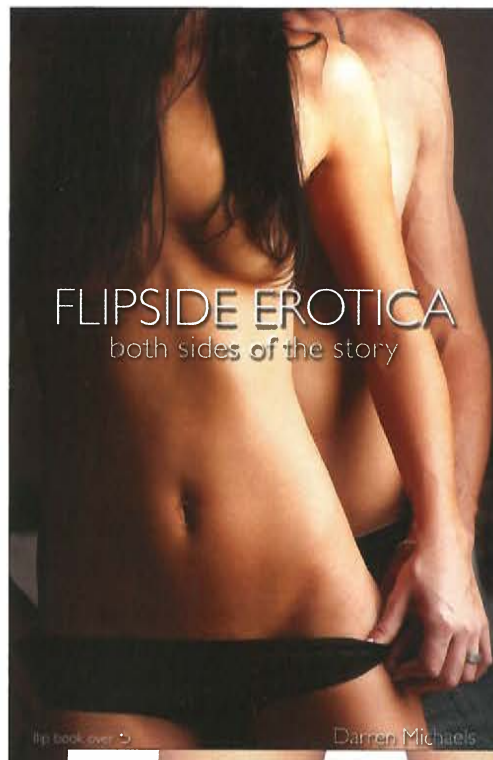
And certain trends still remain: women are the main buyer of erotic fiction, while men are buying those on positions, techniques and books about the penis size, strength and health. But for either customer, it's important for retailers to make these buying options attractive in their store.

"I think that retailers need to write reviews and post them near the books, while also cross-merchandising them in other areas of the store where 'like' products are being sold," Mazurek offers, noting that most current version of Entrenue's library will be featured in their brand-new 2013 catalog entitled "Love Life." "For example, merchandise some BDSM titles near ropes and restraints. Depending on the customer demographic, try not shrink-wrapping the books (or at least leaving one sample out). Face the books forward, verses seeing titles on the spine. Also, keep a staff library and encourage the staff to read the books. Not only will they sell more, they will also know more about all of the products you carry."

Carrying books in your store makes a statement that you are a community resource. It lets customers know that your company values having a well-informed staff and sharing sexual education and product knowledge with the public. And with the 50 Shades phenomenon sweeping the nation, erotic fiction is on more women's radars than at any time in recent history.

"Everyone is doing a 50 Shades of something, and we're happy to provide every option available for their customers today," Mazurek states. "Since the release of '50 Shades of Grey,' it has proven that the physical book is still very much alive and kicking and that books about sex have not been taken over by the advent of the e-reader. The 50 Shades books proves this point in spades." **E**

For more information, please visit [Entrenue.com](http://Entrenue.com) or call (800) 368-7268.



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