WORKSHOP 8: Collection Development, Acquisitions, and Vendor Relations

ARLIS/NA
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Banff, Alberta, Canada
Saturday, May 6, 2006
9:00am – 12:30pm
**Introductions**

- **Moderator:** Beverly Joy-Karno
- **Speakers**
  - Dawn Henney
  - Alyssa G. Resnick
COMMUNICATION...

- Is the KEY to an effective library-vendor relationship
- Main theme throughout presentation
VENDORS

- Library is primary customer
- Monograph and serial vendors
- US and Foreign vendors
- Specialty vendors – out of print and/or subject
VENDORS: Services

- Expectations set by who is primary customer
- Vendors who don’t deal primarily with libraries may not understand library needs
VENDORS: Ordering Direct from Publisher

- You may get a bigger discount
- Probably won’t get value-added services
  - Tracking expenditures
  - Reports by call no./subjects
- Usually requires pre-payment
  - Library vendors bill
- Publishers do not speak the library lingo
  - Library vendors/sales can be librarians
VENDOR SERVICES: Title Selection

- Slips
- Lists – new subject/collection areas, list of all titles published in last x years on x subject
- Websites – ordering and other services
- Annotated catalogs
- Don’t be afraid to ask for lists
  - Customized for collection
  - Core lists/core bibliographies
VENDOR SERVICES: Discounts

- Don’t be afraid to ask
- Know how they are applied, is there a $ amount?
- If vendor doesn’t get discount you won’t, item may not be cancelable or returnable
VENDOR SERVICES: Shipping & Handling

- Some vendors ship free, depends on agreement
- Many vendors having to add surcharge to cover additional costs of shipping foreign materials
- Added fees for rush materials, per item, expedited handling
VENDOR SERVICES: Other expectations

- Expect timely response to questions/problems
- Expect annual visit
- Hands on training in use of electronic resources
  - Web ordering, downloading, reports, tracking, etc.
- Be prepared for cold calls
VENDOR SERVICES: Invoicing

- How is the invoice rec’d? with items/in box, mailed separately
- Number of copies of the invoice
- EDI invoicing
- How many line items on invoice
- Mixing firm orders, approvals, standing orders
- Mixing accounts, purchase orders
VENDOR SERVICES: Accounts

- Multiple accounts
  - By department, branch, etc.
  - By account number, project number, etc.

- Multiple mailing addresses
  - Bill To
  - Ship To
VENDOR SERVICES: Speak Up!

- Ask for what you need
- Vendor may be able to do a “manual” workaround to a problem
- More customers asking for a particular service increase chances it will be standard
  - This is how enhancements are developed
VENDOR SERVICES: Customer Service Expectations

- Dedicated representative
- Good transition when staff changes
- Contact from vendor when changes occur
- Notification when price exceeds what item ordered at, either $ amount or percentage
- Return policy
  - How easy is it to return something
VENDOR SERVICES: Value added services

With or without fee

- Cataloging
  - Bibliographic records – brief to full
  - Promptcat records – via OCLC with charge

- Shelf ready (aka Processing)
  - Fee depends on extent of physical prep (marking, stamping, barcode, etc.) &/or format
  - Minimum charge
VENDOR SERVICES: Website

- Create lists
- Order
- Download
- Track orders – see shipment date, invoice no./date
- Preview approvals
- Browse vendor created lists
- Review subscription information
  - See previous payments
  - Last issue supplied/billed
- Different account levels
  - View only, order, create accounts
- Run reports
- May have images – book covers
- Book reviews
- Review account information/profiles
- View consortia information
APPROVAL PLANS: Basics

- Collection Development policy key in setting up an approval
- What are you collecting?
- Scope of collection
  - Size
  - Budget
  - Staffing
  - US/Foreign
  - Language and subject
- May not be appropriate for small budgets
APPROVAL PLANS: Selection criteria

- Each vendor has different ways of setting up a plan
- Slips only or slips and books
- Slips may be by call no. or by subject
- How to get at ‘art’ not classed in N’s
  - Archaeology
  - Non-western
  - Crafts
APPROVAL PLANS: Set Up

- Work closely with vendor to set up plan
  - Involve all appropriate selectors/bibliographers
  - May take many months/meetings/emails to get plan you want
  - Always additional tweaking needed after plan implemented
  - TAKES TIME
  - No expectation that plan is set in stone, make changes as needed
- No extra cost to have approval plan
- Approval plan may be automated or work done with book in hand
  - Sometimes mix of both
- Get list of specific criteria/time period to see if you missed anything
APPROVAL PLANS: Set-Up/Services

- How often are shipments
- Exclusions
- By publisher, other
- Standing Order stoplists, other stoplists
- $ limits
APPROVAL PLANS: Selecting Vendor

This can apply to selecting vendors in general

- Use who you know if you are happy with existing services
- Get references
- Create RFP (if required by institution)
- Try firm ordering first
- Good relations as important as getting right materials
  - If you don’t feel well looked after there will be a problem
- If not happy don’t burn any bridges
  - Customer reps change companies
  - Companies bought and sold
  - People talk
  - Be honest about why you are terminating business
  - If you can’t be honest … blame the budget
APPROVAL PLANS: Selecting Vendor

This can apply to selecting vendors in general

- Face to face communication always good
  - Conferences excellent opportunity
- Follow up time frame
  - Library follow up and vendor follow up not the same, vendor on faster track
- How many vendors do you deal with?
  - Not all the same, don’t provide same service/materials
  - What are your needs?
    - Will one-stop shopping work for you?
- Agreements often set for specific time
  - Renew & review annually
- Returns
  - Discounts may be based on no return policy
  - Exceptions for damaged materials
APPROVAL PLANS: Selecting Vendor

Comparing vendors

- Can ask two or more vendors for list of titles using specific criteria/time period to compare results – who supplied best list for you
APPROVAL PLANS: vs. Blanket

- Expectation of return different
- Approval & Blanket: terms often used interchangeably
- Blanket may also mean standing order
APPROVAL PLANS: Performance expectations

- Need to allow time for problems to be resolved and reflected in shipments
  - Work with vendor on time frame to resolve problem
ACQUISITIONS: Things to know

- Who does ordering? In or out of your dept.?
- How do you request order?
  - Does location play a part? Same office/building?
- What format is order request in?
  - Slip
  - Blurb
  - OCLC printout
  - ?
- How is order placed?
  - Electronic – email or web
  - Mail printed order
  - Fax
- Who determines vendor?
  - Is there a list?
  - Does Acq Dept. know?
  - Selector indicates?
  - Direct or with vendor?
ACQUISITIONS: Things to know

- Claiming
  - How
  - How often

- Not in stock
  - How long is order unfilled before cancellation?
    - Agreement with vendor
    - Procedures in place?

- Cancellations
  - Who
  - How notified
  - Serial cancellations
    - Determine early in year as renewals come in summer
    - Labor intensive

- Re-order
  - Automatic or selector decision?
ACQUISITIONS: Things to know

Invoicing

- Who pays the bills?
- Who cuts the checks?
- How timely is payment?
  - Institutional bureaucracy is key
- Statements/dunning
  - 30 days means nothing
  - Library vendors well aware of how libraries work
ACQUISITIONS: Things to know

Returns
- Cost of returning vs. keeping material
  - Set $ threshold
- Returns for damage
  - Must contact vendor before returning
  - May supply replacement without return of damaged item
- Returns on approval
  - Explain why
- Firm order returns
  - Get permission

Credits
- How are they processed? Short pay or credit
### ACquisitions Department

**Source of important information about vendor’s abilities/practices & customer service**

- Claim response
- Response to other problems
- Quality of shipping and shipments
  - Size, packing materials, weight
  - Damages in transit
- Is vendor following invoice/shipping instructions?
- Timeliness of response to problems
- Not mixing accounts or material types on single invoice
- Get mailing addresses correct
- Taking names OFF accounts (library staffing changes)
- Good follow up on serial cancellations
- Good reports/lists
SCENARIO 1

- Selector cancels subscription/orders because of perceived overcharging and reorders with another vendor.
- Selector does not discuss with Acquisitions before contacting the vendors.
  - What should the selector have done?
  - Why should Acquisitions be involved?
SCENARIO 2

- Selector puts a hold/temporary stop on an approval plan because of a perceived overspending.
- Selector cancels the plan 3 months later.
  - What discussion should the selector have had with the vendor?
  - What could the vendor have done to assist the selector?
SCENARIO 3

- An approval plan consistently goes over budget.
- The plan is automated and materials are selected according to established criteria.
  - What can the library do?
  - What can the vendor do?
SCENARIO 4: ETHICS

- Library needs to be able to identify whether a vendor is doing something unethical.
- Acceptable forms of gifts from a vendor to a library.
- Librarian needs to know institutional policy about accepting gifts.
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