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ATG Interviews Andrew Hutchings

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ATG Interviews Andrew Hutchings

CEO, Blackwell Book Services

by **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: Congratulations! We understand that Julian Blackwell has just appointed you CEO of Blackwell Book Services. You have been with Blackwell for twenty years. Can you tell us what different positions you have held at Blackwell's over that time period?

AH: I started work for the Blackwell organization in 1987 as a trainee Computer Programmer. Since then I have worked in IT, Product Development, Project Management and Distribution. Over the last 2 years I have been the Managing Director of Blackwell Book Services in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. I spent three years based in Lake Oswego, Oregon during the late 1990s leading the integration of the UK and US business units.

ATG: After years of very little if any turnover at BBS, we have noticed a high degree of turnover in the past five or so years. Why do you think this is?

AH: During the last decade the entire Library community has undergone some dramatic changes. Blackwell as part of the library community has not been immune to changes — in both our services and staff. I am very happy to be leading a company that has a great mix of long term employees, with such knowledge of the community we serve, and newer employees who bring valuable experience gained outside of Blackwell.

ATG: What happened to Susan Peterson? She was only CEO for six months?

AH: Susan led the US business through a transition period within Blackwell. We thank Susan for her contribution in moving Blackwell forward. As we continued to move forward and assess our business, it was decided that Blackwell Book Services needed a CEO coordinating strategy at a global level.

ATG: I understand that Celia Wagner is back at BBS after a brief hiatus. Can you tell us what Celia will be doing?

AH: Celia Wagner is leading the New Titles, Approvals and Acquisitions teams



within Blackwell. Celia is also spearheading the introduction of an exciting group of new services and features we will be introducing in the coming year.

ATG: What are your plans for BBS over the next five years?

AH: With the very rapid changes to how information is accessed, it is creating significant new challenges for libraries and it is Blackwell's job to deliver solutions that help Libraries overcome these challenges. In discussions with the Blackwell Board Members, my goal and mission is to manage this transition and ensure that Blackwell is providing the services Libraries need now and in the future. Our board backs Blackwell Book Services 100% and has made substantial funds available to me in support of this goal.

ATG: You have been based in England, though you have lived in the US for many years also. Where will you put your belongings these days?

AH: My home is 20 miles outside Oxford, in the Cotswolds. I live there with my wife and

two teenage daughters. I will be splitting my time between the UK and the US.

ATG: BBS just bought a Dutch bookseller a month or so ago. Does this mean you plan to expand? How will this affect your European sales team and library customers in that part of the world?

AH: The purchase of Houtschild International Booksellers will help us offer a more comprehensive range of books to libraries, everywhere. The financial pressures that all libraries are facing have led to an increased focus on workflow simplification. This acquisition will have many benefits for all Blackwell customers and we are very excited to have announced such an acquisition.

ATG: Can you talk about your partnership with ebrary and the ECHO product? Are eBooks going to go anywhere?

AH: The ECHO product, and our ebrary partnership, is a key strategic initiative for Blackwell. Blackwell ECHO is a hosting and distribution platform for eContent. It was built using the ebrary technology and integrates with Blackwell Collection Manager, providing an efficient and familiar way to simultaneously discover and order both print and electronic materials. eBooks will be a very significant part of both libraries and Blackwell's future. Blackwell is working on a number of initiatives that will make the collecting of eBooks a much simpler process in the future.

ATG: Ingram has entered the academic bookselling space with a high profile. Can you comment on them as a competitor?

AH: Ingram and Blackwell have enjoyed a positive relationship over many years. I do not expect this will change following their acquisition of Coutts. Competition within the library supply industry is good for libraries. It ensures that all the library supply companies are working hard to provide a quality service at a good price. 🌿

Interview — Buzzy Basch from page 56

ATG: You are a pretty independent person. Is this going to work for you? How long do you see it lasting? Do you have an exit strategy?

BB: My plan is to continue to move Basch forward for years to come. When asked what I plan on doing in my retirement, I tell them this is retirement. We should all be so fortunate to find something we enjoy doing with our time. Basically, this all should work for Prenax, Basch employees, and the library community. I plan to work at making it work

ATG: What's going to happen to the Reference Shelf? Is that part of the sale?

BB: The Reference Shelf is part of Basch Subscriptions and was part of the sale.

ATG: Where can we see you next? In Charleston?

BB: Judy and I are on our way to the Fiesole Retreat in Hong Kong in April along with many other conferences in the interim. Of course, we will be in Charleston in November.

ATG: Thanks, Buzzy. Good luck and have a great trip! 🌿

Something to Think About from page 59

and Circulation can have the organizational meetings they need. There are also times when the flu bug hits and we need everyone on the staff filling in the blanks to get the job done or when a crisis bears down, such as the recent tornado, to cover all of the extra bases needed in the recovery processes. We are all ready, willing and able to help in this venture and the patrons benefit from our extra experience and expertise. Coping is our best skill and finding the answers our best product. What better combination? Have you thought about this before? It is something to think about! 🌿