2015

Stacey Marien Profile

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7233

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
the road and upset the good customer service I have come to expect.

Bob’s Story

Every unhappy customer is unhappy in her own way. Tolstoy himself couldn’t have done a better job of showing how that is true than our partner and friend Stacey Marien has done. And in the early period she describes, Coutts gave Stacey and her American University colleagues plenty of ways in which to be unhappy. The famous Tolstoy quotation comes from Anna Karenina. Fortunately for us all, and unlike the novel, our story had a painful start yet ended well.

In fact, though, Stacey concludes with one last “if they could only” statement, and so the story hasn’t really ended at all. The scariest kind of customer, in a business where so many details can go wrong, and where all of us can see so many ways to improve how libraries acquire their books, are the “happy” customers you never hear from. For one thing, they are not helping you to improve. You might get the idea you’re doing pretty well. Never a good idea, this business, to get too satisfied. For another, that customer might be doing all her talking to your competition, and not to you.

We’re glad Stacey talked to us in 2010. A better Tolstoy reference for the book vendor world at the time would have been War and Peace. Blackwell customers had to move, one way or another, there was upheaval in all directions, and corporate change was only a part of it. 2010 was also a year when eBooks reached a certain tipping point and vendors had to get down to serious work to support integration with print books.

American was among the first of our customers to use the OASIS “Review Shelf” for online selection of print and eBooks. We’d worked hard to be the first vendor to offer that service to academic libraries. Among the Blackwell customers who joined Coutts, American was the first to set up shelf-ready service for the print books they bought. So beyond the basics involved in setting up a new account, which can be complex enough, such as getting the invoices right, and the shipping details, and the customer service communications, there was an extra layer or two of complexity.

Did everything go smoothly? Just re-read Stacey’s contribution for the answer. Did things go terribly wrong? Read Stacey for that answer too. Where my Tolstoy referencing goes off the tracks is with the first part of that famous Anna Karenina quotation, that all happy customers are alike. They are not. Today, I count 28 active OASIS users at American University. These AU users have been trained to use a customized interface to support a particular workflow involving selections, record downloads, and EDI orders for print books as well as eBooks. Many of these transactions result from the outputs of the profiles we have established with AU selectors in 30 different subject areas. Some of these profiles prefer print books, some prefer eBooks. Some have variants in support of eBook and print book DDA programs. Some profiles support approval plans, others don’t. We maintain some 300 active AU standing orders for series titles and annuals, blocking these against each of the profiles. We record AU purchases under about 140 different funds.

This amounts to a substantial sum of money each year. We are glad to have that business, of course. And we are equally glad to have a librarian like Stacey as our principal contact at American University. “Stacey puts the facts on the table,” as one of my colleagues says. Stacey was not only organized, direct, persistent, and patient in her criticisms and suggestions, but she also offered all of this in a spirit, as she says, of partnership.

The business of academic book selling is always, it seems, in transition. In that year of Blackwell and eBook transitions, establishing a new account resembled R & D work. Later, Ingram moved the Coutts operation from Niagara Falls, Ontario to La Vergne, Tennessee and Fort Wayne, Indiana. That transition, as Stacey relates, was not always, as we vendors like to say, “seamless.” We are now a ProQuest company. Our principal competitor in North America, who is also our partner in the business of selling eBooks, has a new parent company too. Publishers, always our suppliers, now are both partners and competitors as well. We are all busy reinventing ourselves, competing and collaborating with one another at the same time, while preparing for whatever comes next.

It’s not easy work. We need the help of librarians like Stacey, whose example shows that your best customer, despite what you’d like to think, might be an unhappy customer.

Rumors

from page 6

last night, I was talking to my husband about Barnes & Noble and how I liked it. “I hate it,” he said, “Everything is jumbled together with coffee and snacks and toys and all kinds of magazines and comic books. It’s not a serious bookstore.” “Yes,” I agreed, “but you can go in and see people reading and don’t have to be in front of the computer to find things.” Back Talk this month by Jim O’Donnell (p.78) brought back memories of the now defunct Intimate Bookshop in Chapel Hill, NC back when I was an undergrad. Bookstores are wonderful, aren’t they? http://money.cnn.com/2015/12/04/investing/barnes-and-noble-sales-nook-amazon/?utm_source=nl&utm_campaign=dbw-smo-nl-barnes-and-noble-sales-nook-amazon/?utm_medium=email http://franklinstreetstorys.com/stories/intimatebookshop.html

I didn’t spend much time with her in Charleston. My bad! Regina Gong — isn’t she doing a fabulous job of book reviews for us librarians? As a technical services librarian, I am especially interested in Mary Beth Weber’s book on Rethinking Technical Services (see p.35). And aren’t you enjoying Stacey Marien and Aalyne Mundt’s regular column, Let’s Get Technical, see this issue, p.57.

Talk about “rethinking,” don’t miss our Biz of Acq column in this issue, p.70. It’s about continued on page 29