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Stacey Marien Profile

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Pushing the Vendor to Improve ...
from page 20

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, in 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.

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)

against the grain
people profile

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Stacey Marien

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND BACKGROUND: I've worked at **American University** for 16 years. I started as the Business Librarian and then moved to Technical Services and became the Acquisitions Librarian five years ago. Prior to that I was the Business Librarian at **Elon College** (now University) for three years. I received my MLS from **UNC Chapel Hill**, MBA from **UMASS Boston** and a BA in Humanistic Studies from **McGill University**.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I garden, cook, read mysteries, volunteer at the local pet store and for a group that helps people age in place.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I'm a big mystery fan. Right now my favorite authors are **Christopher Fowler**, **Jussi Adler-Olssen**, **Martin Walker**, **ML Longworth**, and **Louise Penny**.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Having a column (*Let's Get Technical*) in *ATG*, of course!

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I cannot predict the future! 🐼

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 bookselling 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. 🐼

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-151207&utm_content=804451_DBW+Daily+-+120715+-+no+sponsor&utm_medium=email

<http://franklinstreetstories.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 **Alayne 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

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