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Both Sides Now: Vendors and Librarians--When Is A Trade Show Not A Trade Show?

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6. The title is placed in an area in the Acquisitions department for MS. The Visual Media Collections Coordinator checks every day for new titles to pick up. It is her responsibility to check each video to make sure it works. The title is either routed in RMAD to Tech Passed or Tech Failed. If it's in the failed queue, the DVD is usually returned to Acquisitions to be returned to the vendor (this rarely happens). For those titles that pass, the following details are added to the Tech Notes field:

- Assigned call number
- Country of production
- Closed captioning/subtitle information
- If item is PAL and needs special playback equipment
- If item is a burned DVD-R
- Public performance rights status
- Any additional notes relevant to the Media Services Specialist when cataloging and considering circulation of the item (i.e. if this replaced a VHS and the VHS is now going to storage).

7. Those titles that are in the Tech Passed queue are then received in Voyager by the Acquisitions Specialist and non-credit card orders are invoiced. The title is then routed to the Paid queue in RMAD.

8. The Media Services Specialist catalogs the titles that are in the Paid queue and changes the queue to OCLC updated/final. He also updates our holdings in OCLC.

9. Sometimes a DVD will need original cataloging and will be sent to the Cataloging department instead of handled by the MS staff. In this case, the title is routed to the Original Cataloging queue.

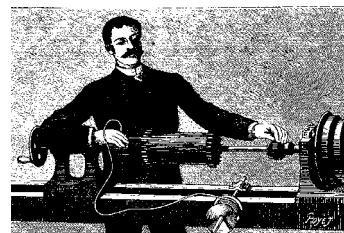
The Results

When we made the decision to tweak the ordering system to add in media ordering, we had to meet with all the parties involved to confirm workflows. This was a benefit to all departments (Acquisitions, Cataloging, MS,) as we were able to get together in one room and map out the workflow of a DVD, from requesting to ordering to receiving to tech check to cataloging. Many of us did not realize what other units were doing or not doing in the order workflow.

One of the biggest benefits to this system is the reduction of paper used. Almost all paper was eliminated by using this system. The Acquisitions Librarian still prints out the Purchase Order and joins it with a copy of the order confirmation. She uses this paper every month to keep track of her purchase card orders and to ultimately reconcile the orders with the charges on the purchase card.

The use of RMAD has made it relatively easy to track the whereabouts of a particular DVD within the library. There is better communication among the Media Librarian and those responsible for placing the orders. The turnaround for orders is much quicker, as it is usually 24-48 hours from the time the order is entered into RMAD to the time the order is placed. This results in more orders being processed per day. Those orders that are marked Rush in RMAD (usually a specific faculty request) are treated first.

Workflows have become streamlined and all departments involved have a greater understanding of each other's work. RMAD is really a "departments without borders" tool and crosses silos that had stood prior to its implementation and has helped to improve communication and reduce redundancy and inefficiency across multiple library departments. This is a tool that is used to do the work across all processes, from soup to nuts, and it has had a team-building effect. The librarians and staff are much happier! 🌍



Both Sides Now: Vendors and Librarians — When Is A Trade Show Not A Trade Show?

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Virtually every industry is aligned with one or more associations that organize and sponsor an annual trade show. Moreover, many of those associations will sponsor even more localized shows throughout the year so as to interest their members to attend the local meetings since they may not have the wherewithal to travel and/or have the necessary funding to attend the larger and more expensive annual meeting.

All vendors like well attended trade shows and conversely intensely dislike poorly attended ones. It's all about the company's ROI since the more people that visit the vendors' booth, the better the odds are of making more sales and even more importantly, interacting directly with more customers and prospects. A customer/prospect who is absent from a Trade Show is an opportunity missed, for both parties.

Associations encourage their members to attend local and/or national trade shows because where else can these people interact with all the important vendors within their industry

vertical? It seems quite simple that the ability to compare prices, products, salespeople, etc. of various companies in one day is preferable to having the sales reps from a variety of companies travel to the library over a period of many days. Furthermore, senior executive staff will inevitably be at the trade show booth to meet and greet. Sure would make sense to speak to the CEO, President and/or VP of Sales individually and collectively from the company to discuss whatever topics are on the customers' minds at the show.

Yet, many trade shows in the information industry are struggling with attendance which is not beneficial for vendor or attendee alike. When these struggles continue, a trade show booth becomes a seemingly deserted island in a lonely exhibit hall and passes from being a productive meeting to a non-existent one. That's when the dreaded "Not a Trade Show" rears its ugly head.

The tell-tale signs of a "Not Trade Show" are when aisles at the exhibit hall are devoid

of attendees. It's the old bowling ball routine which says that if you rolled a bowling ball down an aisle of a trade show and avoid hitting anyone with it, then that show is useless. Or if you see groups of salespeople aimlessly talking to one another at their booth, then that qualifies as "Not a Trade Show" as well. And when a Trade Show Is Really Not a Trade Show, that morphs into a waste of time and money for exhibitors and attendees.

What causes this phenomenon to happen? Who bears the burden of blame? Actually the association, the vendors and the attendees have to take some degree of responsibility when the trade show ceases to be productive for one or two or all three parties.

In my 30+ years of being an active participant at trade shows both as a vendor and an attendee, I have seen the good, the bad and the ugly. On the vendor side, I have seen sales reps

continued on page 78

literally snoozing at their booth. I have seen them eating and drinking an assortment of food items, even spilling some of the remnants of that food on their clothing. I have seen reps too engaged in conversation with one another while failing to connect with customers as qualified prospects walk on by. The attendees may have been prompted to ask a question or two, but they choose to be polite not wanting to disturb the internal salesperson's incredibly important conversation. I have seen reps with their backs to the audience. I have seen reps making personal phone calls, and the list goes on and on and on.

On the attendee side, I have had visitors to the booth just wanting to stock their bag with the company's give-aways. "Ooh, you guys have the BEST sticky pads. Can I have a bunch for the people back at the library?" "Sure" says the rep. "I'd like to share with you information about our latest database offering." "Hmm, not right now; I'll be back later" is sometimes the response. Unless the sale rep makes a concerted effort to schedule a time and date later in the conference, "later" usually never happens. I have seen attendees wander aimlessly through the exhibit hall without having a prior plan as to which vendors are needed to be seen. And I have seen associations make it as difficult as possible for their members to visit the exhibit hall.

Much like the buying and selling process, in order for all parties to achieve, even a modicum of success trade show participation has to be a joint effort. What this means is that just showing up at the exhibit hall by both the vendor and the attendee is simply not enough. So, what do the vendor, attendee and association have to do to make the trade show a success?

Vendor

First and foremost, the question of "why are we going?" needs to be answered. And once the company has made the decision to attend, then that rationale must be passed on to the sales staff. Secondly, besides the sales staff, who from the company is attending to support the sales effort and what is each person's role at the show? Furthermore, how many on-site appointments are the salespeople expected to have? And finally, what are the goals and objectives for the staff attending so as to understand the metrics of expectations as results are analyzed after the show?

For example, the company might say, "We are attending the annual association conference in Denver from July 6-8 this year. Our main goal is to introduce our newest database product. Only the salespeople from the Western District will be there. That would be Chris, Marian and Kevin. Supporting their efforts will be Marge from marketing, Tom the VP of Sales. Murray, the President of our company is expected to be there on July 7th. A pre-show mailer will be sent 90 days in advance of the show to every registered attendee. That will be followed up with another email blast 30 days prior to the show offering each attendee to be

entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate for listening to the details of our new database product at the booth. Each salesperson will be expected to make a minimum of three appointments at the booth with customers and/or prospects and should include the Marketing Director and /or VP of sales as often as possible at those meetings. Murray has expressed an interest to see some key clients, as well. Finally, our main goal is to reach as wide an audience as possible to show our new product to the industry.

In one brief paragraph, the company has set the guidelines. WHY are we going; WHO will be there; WHAT will we be doing there; and most importantly, THESE are the expected goals and objectives. The bottom line is that somewhere in the deep recesses of the company's accounting department, someone has prepared a report for Murray outlining all the costs associated with attending the meeting in Denver. It had better be a profitable show or else Murray will have to explain why not to some unsympathetic investors or members of the board of directors.

Attendees

Whatever industry specialization your library may be, the organization for which you work expects that attending a trade show is not only an extension of your work day, but also a vehicle by which new products, technologies and ideas are brought back to the library. Of course, your management knows that there will be a bit of sightseeing, vendor dinners and receptions, and a fair amount of lounging, but the intent of paying travel expenses to attend the show should result in a positive outcome for the organization. Therefore, what can be done to ensure that the attendee not only sees and interacts with a specified amount of vendors, but also makes time to see some sights in the host city, attend some vendor receptions, speak to authors of books relevant to the profession and gain new understanding of relevant products and technologies?

All associations inevitably send out a pre-conference mailer detailing the sessions, keynote speaker and of course, the vendors attending. Not only are the vendors listed, but their booths and locations are clearly spelled out. At this point, it's essential that an individual roadmap for the attendee be created. I want to see vendors A, B and C. A is on aisle 309, B is on 112, and C is the first booth as I enter the exhibit hall. OK, now I know where my main vendors are located. Creating this roadmap will ensure that all three are visited. Add to the map any other vendor locations and that completes the first step.

Making specified appointments with key vendors supplying the library is also an essential of successful trade show attendance. If the sales rep has not reached out to you, then it is incumbent upon you to reach out to them and schedule a specific time and date to meet with the company. Moreover, you can request that a person from marketing, product management, training, executive staff, etc be present at the meeting. Whether it is to compliment your sales rep, inquire about a new product or voice concern over an issue, making the appointment

will go a long way for the company to attentively answer your questions.

Upon returning back from those three days in Denver, the attendee must take the time to write a report to management as to what was learned at the show. Why was it important for me to attend? What benefit for our organization was derived by being there? How can that new knowledge be applied to our library? In other words, management must be made aware of why it is important to attend. Too many times, information professionals tell me that they cannot attend an upcoming show because their management has reduced the funding needed to attend. To counter this, management has to be made aware of how attending will benefit the organization. However, if you don't tell them, they won't know.

Associations

The third leg of this three legged stool is the organization, itself. What is the organization doing to make it as easy as possible to exhibit for vendors and make it as easy as possible for the association members to attend?

To keep the vendors satisfied and returning year after year is quite simply to provide a well lit, well ventilated exhibit hall held in a city that the membership can easily travel to and stay at hotels with somewhat reasonable room rates. Moreover, the association needs to assist the vendors in reaching a wide audience of membership through mailings and email blasts expounding on the benefits of why the show is the "latest and greatest." Booth space rental rates, Internet connections, and freight charges should be held to a reasonable \$ rate so as to interest as many vendors as possible to attend. Providing statistics, offering a multi-year commitment at a discounted rate, creating an "exhibits only" time for attendees each day of the show will go a long way to bringing vendor and information professionals closer together.

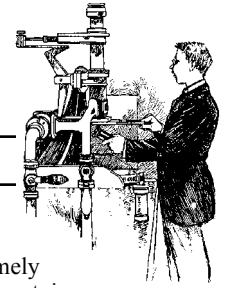
Recently, while attending an information industry trade show, I spoke to an exhibitor who was bemoaning the lack of qualified prospects passing by his booth. He told me that this was his last year attending and went on to say that the all trade shows in all industries are suffering declining attendance.

There is an organization called the **Center for Exhibition Industry Research** www.ceir.org. The **CEIR** Mission: **CEIR** provides industry-leading research on the North American exhibitions and events industry globally which optimizes performance, increases engagement, and addresses emerging customer needs. In looking at some of their statistics, many association trade shows are showing significant growth and popularity. One only has to look at the **Charleston Conference** that has enjoyed significant growth and contains the blueprint of how a trade show can be successful. **CEIR** provides statistics that point out that trade show attendance in certain industries is increasing.

In thinking about what song title best exemplifies what a successful trade show experience should be for both the vendor and attendee, the answer was quite clear. "It Takes Two to Tango" written by **Al Hoffman** and **Dick Manning** was recorded both by musical greats,

continued on page 79

Decoder Ring — Museum of Science Fiction Launches Scholarly Journal



Column Editor: **Jerry Spiller** (Art Institute of Charleston) <yeri.spiller@gmail.com>

Washington D.C.'s **Museum of Science Fiction (MOSF)** published the first issue of their new scholarly journal in January.¹ The **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction** is available online for free download in PDF format. Content is available under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license. Each peer-reviewed article begins with an abstract and list of keywords. The journal's editorial board includes scholars **Rachel Lazarus**, **Heather McHale**, and **Barbara Jasny** (also Deputy Editor of *Science*), as well as prominent sci-fi authors **Nancy Kress** (*Yesterday's Kin*, *Beggars in Spain*) and **Ben Bova** (*Orion*, *Mars*).

Figure I: MOSF Journal of Science Fiction, Image: MOSF



Volume 1, Issue 1 begins with a letter from editor (and M.L.S.) **Monica Louzon** welcoming both readers and submissions from authors:

The prospect of creating an academic journal for the **Museum of Science Fiction** filled me with elation and trepidation. My months of research

and planning would be for naught if I couldn't assemble the necessary teams of editors, peer reviewers, and — most importantly — authors who would breathe life into the **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction**. My vision was — and still is — not to replace the other well-established academic journals of science fiction studies that already exist, but to complement them.²

Introductions to the journal are furthered with reflections on the nature and importance of Science Fiction from *Science Fiction Studies* editor **Veronica Hollinger** and **Science Fiction Research Association Pioneer Award** winner **Allison de Fren**. The articles in the inaugural issue are indeed widely varied and deliciously well grounded in critical theory. It is wonderful to see references that list not only the likes of **Herbert** and **Zelazny** but also **Derrida** and **Marx**. It's hard to beat a table of contents that includes titles like these:

"Biogenetics, The Nation, and Globalization in Paolo Bacigalupi's *Critical Dystopias*" by **Derrick King**

"Gods of War Toke While Riding a Vimana: Hindu Gods in Three Indian Science Fiction Novels" by **Sami Ahmad Khan**

"Loving the Other in Science Fiction by Women" by **Karma Waltonen**

"Paul's Empire: Imperialism and Assemblage Theory in **Frank Herbert's Dune**" by **Amanda Rudd**

The collection is not only well rooted in Sci Fi's past but quite contemporary, even prescient, as befits the genre. **King's** exploration of the complex trappings of globalization, Neoliberalism, climate catastrophe, and the perils of privatization in **Bacigalupi** could almost come from 2016 U.S. election headlines (if we actually discussed issues instead of theatrics, but I digress).³ **Waltonen's** discussion of the dynamics of sex and power in the works of **Octavia Butler**, **Marge Piercy**, and others is also riveting, and is tagged with "inter-species sex" as a keyword.⁴ **Khan's** study of the represen-

tation of Hindu gods in English-language Indian works is extremely interesting. Plus, it contains subheadings like "Flying Saucers Battle Al Qaeda: Hindu Gods as Ancient Astronauts" and "Stoned Gods versus Brain-dead Zombies."⁵ Are you reading this? Why aren't you reading this?

You could even be writing this, if you have the chops. The journal invites submissions of 5,000 to 8,000 words, plus a 150-200 word abstract, via its Website: <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/about/submissions#onlineSubmissions>.

But get on that. **Louzon** notes in her introduction to this first issue that, "we are thrilled to say we already have many more manuscripts under consideration for our next issue."⁶

I can't wait to read them. 🌱

Endnotes

1. **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction** 1, no. 1 (January 2016). Accessed March 9, 2016. <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/index>
2. **Louzon, Monica**. "Letter from the Editor." **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction** 1, no. 1 (January 2016): 1. Accessed March 9. <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/index>
3. **King, Derrick**. "Biogenetics, The Nation, and Globalization in Paolo Bacigalupi's *Critical Dystopias*." **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction** 1, no. 1 (January 2016): 4-16. Accessed March 9. <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/index>
4. **Waltonen, Karma**. "Loving the Other in Science Fiction by Women." **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction** 1, no. 1 (January 2016): 33-44. Accessed March 10. <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/index>
5. **Khan, Sami Ahmad**. "Gods of War Toke While Riding a Vimana: Hindu Gods in Three Indian Science Fiction Novels." **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction** 1, no. 1 (January 2016): 17-32. Accessed March 10. <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/index>
6. **MOSF Journal of Science Fiction**.

Both Sides Now ... from page 78

Pearl Bailey and **Louis Armstrong** in 1952. It was a bestselling song that was not about trade shows, but it sure was about two parties getting together and after all, isn't that what trade shows are all about? 🌱

*Mike is currently the President of **Gruenberg Consulting, LLC**, a firm he founded in January 2012 after a successful career as a senior sales executive in the information industry. His firm*

*is devoted to provide clients with sales staff analysis, market research, executive coaching, trade show preparedness, product placement and best practices advice for improving negotiation skills for librarians and salespeople. His book, "**Buying and Selling Information: A Guide for Information Professionals and Salespeople to Build Mutual Success**" is available on Amazon, Information Today in print and eBook, Amazon Kindle, B&N Nook, Kobo, Apple iBooks, OverDrive, 3M Cloud Library, Gale (GVRL), MyiLibrary, ebrary, EBSCO, Blio, and Chegg. www.gruenbergconsulting.com*