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Both Sides Now: Vendors and Librarians--In Vendor/Library Negotiations: Both Sides Should Be Listening to the Same Radio Station

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Both Sides Now: Vendors and Librarians — In Vendor/Library Negotiations; Both Sides Should Be Listening to the Same Radio Station - W.I.I.F.M.

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From the Rolling Stones classic album, “Let It Bleed” the iconic lines; **“You Can’t Always Get What You Want, but if you try sometimes... you just might find... you get what you need.”** The song was written by **Mick Jagger** and **Keith Richards** in 1969 and the sentiments described hold true to this day both in our personal and professional lives.

The mythical, yet relevant radio stations’ call letters, W.I.I.F.M. indicate the most basic tenet that both sides of a negotiation need to understand about themselves and the other party, and that is **WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME – WIIFM**.

Clearly, each side will enter every negotiation understanding what it is they want. However, understanding what the other party wants and giving them the ability to achieve that goal to walk away with a deal that is relevant and fair should be the objective of both.

The savvy potential customer will inevitably ask the salesperson, “How will the product or services you’re trying to sell, help me personally and how will it help my organization?” In this example, the “me” took preference over the “organization.” That’s because if the buyer is being perfectly honest, the relevance of every purchase on behalf of their organization will be tied to that person’s professional and personal goals. If the product bought is successful, which in the library’s case means user community acceptance that translates to strong usage, then both the buyer and seller are satisfied. However, if the product bought fails to meet expectation of the user community, then the information professional’s judgment on making relevant purchases in the future for the library may be questioned. Therefore, the question of “what’s in it for me?” takes on increasing importance.

For the buyer with any hopes to achieve a successful outcome

in negotiating, one must always be thinking of how the product under consideration will ultimately look once it has been bought. Before the final sales or any monetary considerations are exchanged between the buyer and the seller, many questions need to be answered.

By purchasing this product, will it save time and money? Will it serve the widest populace of users at the library? Is the price reasonable? And ultimately, will I, as the purchaser, have done my job and as a result satisfy the expectations of the patrons of the library and my boss. Because, the bottom line is that we all work for someone. The supervisor has to be pleased and if that person is happy, then the employee can expect continued employment with the expectation of being possibly promoted in the future within the organization.

To set the stage for WIIFM to work for both parties, the buyer has to be transparent in relating the needs of the library to the seller. For example, the conversation between a buyer and seller of e-content at a University library may be:

“We have a visiting professor here from Argentina. She is well known as an expert in pre-Columbian history and we need better resources than the ones that are currently housed in the library. Given that she is a highly visible expert, we need to make sure our collection meets her requirements. The library director has made the enhancement of this collection a priority.”

The salesperson now knows that providing resources will not only enhance the library’s collection, but also make the buyer a hero in

the eyes of the library director and the professor. If the salesperson’s company has the right resources, then a sale is likely. WIIFM works for both if the seller can produce viable materi-



Pelikan’s Antidisambiguation from page 66

I almost forgot: want to give VR a try? Try googling “Google Cardboard.” This will get you to google.com/get/cardboard. There, you’ll laugh, and wonder why you or I didn’t think of this...

In the meantime, I just took delivery this week of another celestial globe, my third, if

you don’t count the one we had as kids (and which my older brother grabbed when we were divvying stuff up). That’s one for the office, one for the living room by the shortwave radio, and one to offer on ebay to defray the expense and to enhance domestic placidity. I just still like the format of the globe. It’s comforting, pleasing to the eye, requires no batteries, and has never once made me feel as if I might lose my canapés! 🐦

als at a reasonable price to fit the informational needs of the library on a timely basis.

In this case, the information professional is quite clear as to the most immediate needs that the vendor needs to fill for the library. Clarity of purpose is most essential if WIIFM has any chance of working for both the buyer and seller.

For sales reps, being aware of WIIFM is a major factor toward achieving their sales goals. It really doesn’t matter what product or service is being sold. In the final analysis — no matter the cost, the complexity of the product, or the people in the conversation — every customer wants the same thing: to gain professional success and approval from their supervisors, staff and peers. A successful salesperson understands this concept and does everything possible to make the customer look good within their organization.

Likewise, if the customer determines that the product and price presented meets all the needs of the organization, then the information professional must “coach” the salesperson as to how to navigate though the process of final approval. Because in the end, the salesperson must get that signed order form, purchase order number or whatever it is that makes the sale final. In sales, we say that we pay commission to salespeople when they bring in a “signed” order. We never pay commissions on a “mind” order.

For the buyer, WIIFM means understanding what the purchase means for not only the library, but more so, for the furthering of the purchaser’s career.

For the seller, WIIFM means presenting and selling a product that has benefits for BOTH the purchaser and the purchaser’s organization. 🐦

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