



**Art Libraries Society of North America, 34th Annual Conference
Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta, Canada, May 5-9, 2006**

**Workshop 8: Collection Development, Acquisitions, and Vendor Relations
Saturday, May 6, 2006, 9:00 am – 11:30 pm**

Moderator: Beverly Joy-Karno, Howard Karno Books, Inc.
info@karnobooks.com

Speakers:

Dawn Henney, University of California, Los Angeles

Alyssa G. Resnick, Brand Library & Art Center

Recorder: Marilyn Healey, University of Georgia Libraries

This power point presentation was a dialog between the Librarian's point of view, represented by Dawn Henney and the Vendor's point of view, represented by Alyssa Resnick. Each of them proceeded through the details that a librarian needs to attend to when starting or managing book and serial approval plans.

The various types of vendors were defined and discussed. Publishers who sell their own books may give bigger discounts but are less understanding of the library world in which we operate. Vendors who represent many publishers often have librarians on their staff and are familiar with the needs of a library. There are vendors who may cover many subjects and those who specialize in art books, contemporary art, a geographical area or books that are out of print.

A librarian needs to understand and communicate with a vendor so that they are familiar with the services they offer. Many vendors have customer representatives who you may come to know. They will be familiar with the details of your account.

Vendors will send you notifications of what books they are handling on a regular basis. It may be through the mail, electronic or post. They may send catalogs or slips. The slips may be customized to your needs or everything they sell. They may have a website that is searchable with their entire stock available or they may not. It all varies.

You might receive phone calls from vendors that you do not deal with. Their job is to promote their products and services. These unsolicited calls are called "cold calls". You may or may not have time for them but you can schedule them to call when you do have time. Many vendors will visit you in the library. They will probably let you know in advance. The visit provides you with time to get some of your questions answered. You will need to familiarize yourself with; how they bill, the frequency of the billing, how they expect to be paid, how they handle returns and a lot more.

Many vendors offer Value Added services such as cataloging and preparing the books for the shelf. All of these extras are paid services. You may be able to negotiate for the level of treatment you want.

Approval Plans take time to set up. There are a number of details that you need to be clear about before you contact a vendor. You need to know how much you can allocate to the plan. What are the subjects you want covered? In addition you need to know what kind of framework the vendor follows so that you can tailor your profile as specifically as possible. Some plans are very broad but if your funds are limited you will have to narrow the scope to keep the plan on target. You can exclude certain types of materials such as exhibition catalogs, trade books, subsequent editions, subsequent volumes of a multivolume set, publishers, time frame and so on.

When the plan is set up you can ask a vendor to send you slips according to your profile so that you can evaluate their choice before spending any money on it. You can set this up with more than one vendor and compare the results. It takes time to get the plan to be what you want. After the vendor has time to get the ball rolling then you can decide. When things are not the way you need them to be you can make changes. Most vendors allow you to return books but if your returns are too heavy it means you need to do some tweaking to your profile.

It is also important that you have a good understanding about your Acquisitions Department. You need to know who to communicate with and find out how invoices are handled, how credits apply, how you go about claiming a book that did not come.

An important key is to set up lines of communication with the vendor and consider them a colleague. This point is emphasized throughout the process. Another key is to be aware of the ethics involved in asking for services such as profiled slips. You should honor the vendor who supplies them with your orders. This is not the case with unsolicited slips or mass subject slips.

The session closed after several exercises to reinforce some of the main principles laid out.