

Relationships with publishers, vendors, and intra-institutional units

Overview

- Can end up dealing with lots of individuals and entities outside of your library
- Some outside of your organization – publishers, database vendors, aggregators, system vendors, etc.
- Some inside your organization – Office of Research, Office of Sponsored Programs, College/University IT, etc.
- Important to optimize those relationships in order to provide the best content and services possible to your users

External relationships – lots of possibilities

- Commercial publishers (Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, etc.)
- Not-for-profit publishers (often societies, e.g. IEEE, ASTM, SAE, etc.)
- Generalists/aggregators (Ebsco, Proquest, etc.)
- Database vendors (Clarivate, Elsevier, ACS, IET)
- Library system vendors (Ex Libris, etc.)

- Plus more specialized product and service providers (library movers, storage experts, furniture reps, etc.)

Establishing a relationship

- To start, reps are not your friend, nor your enemy.
- They have a job to do, just like you do. Often that job is to try to sell you something.
- Some reps are warm, friendly and relaxed, while others are more distant, professional and formal
- Sometimes what you want and what they want intersect and sometimes they don't.

Differences between library vendors and others

- Non-library entities trying to sell a product or service advertise (TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, social media)
- Some call you (telemarketers) or knock on your door, but most don't contact you directly
- Library product/service companies advertise at library-specific venues (conferences, etc.), via email/e-newsletters, a few still use paper
- Many also try to contact you directly, either by phone or via a visit to your library or a meeting at a conference

How to work with them, part 1

- First - it's OK to (politely) say NO. Given most libraries' budgets, we'll say NO more often than we'll say yes. Reps understand that (at least ones with any experience do). With so many products and services to choose between, far more clients will say no than yes, at least at any given time.
- Good reps work to understand their clients' circumstances. Not so good reps just try to sell you stuff. If a rep WANTS to know more about your circumstance, if you're willing to take the time to tell them, DO SO. Good reps learn from those interactions and respond to you and your library's situation accordingly.

How to work with them, part 2

- If a product or service is something you KNOW you and/or your library is not interested in or will not be able to afford, feel free to say NO (politely) before the rep spends 15 minutes trying to sell you the product or service. Doing that mean nobody's time is wasted.
- BUT, if you're not thoroughly familiar with the product or service, are not absolutely SURE it's something your institution would not be interested in, or if you don't know how much it costs, then maybe you DO want to hear the rep out so that you can make the most informed decision possible. But if the timing isn't convenient, SAY SO, and offer a day/time to talk with them.

Intra-institutional units

- ACRL ReSEC Relations Subcommittee explained
- Sometimes intra-institutional relationships can be just as important, but also as confused and frustrating, as are relationships with external publishers and vendors
- Examples – Office of Research, Office of Sponsored Programs, Office of Grants and Contracts
- Important of building relationships with those units, whether you or someone higher in your food chain
- UW example

Questions?

Mel DeSart

desart@uw.edu