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Customer service excellence

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# Customer Service Excellence Workshop

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# Customer Service Excellence Workshop

- Introduction
- The Problems with Publishers...
- The view from the other side...
- Charter Mark criteria – can it help?
- Conclusion

# Aim of today's Workshop

- To discuss the problems in the communication chain between publishers and librarians and what we should do to eliminate them
  - Results of two anonymous surveys for librarians and publishers
- Introduce the idea of Charter Mark as a way to improve quality
- To report back from this workshop in a future issue of *Serials*

# Survey

- Mailed at end of February to:
  - lis-e-serials
  - serialst
  - alpsp-discuss
- Over 120 library respondents
- Over 30 publisher respondents

# The Problems with Publishers .. The Library View

*"In the past life was easy. Publishers had little to do with librarians".*

Nol Verhagen  
Director of Libraries  
University of Amsterdam

# The Problems with Publishers .. The Library View

The Top Ten complaints:

1. Unannounced changes to online access policy  
What I dislike most is when they fail to tell me about product and policy changes
- =2. Journals moving publisher without announcement
- =2. E-Journals holdings changing suddenly mid-term
- =2. No gracing policy for online editions

# The Problems with Publishers

## .. The Library View

5. Journals dropping out of big deals mid-term
6. Online access for new subscriptions
7. Still needing thousands of subscriber numbers to get things done
8. Lack of transparency on titles retained after big deal is done



# The Problems with Publishers .. The Library View

9. Publisher website  
“improvements” with no notice
10. Lack of information on M&As

# The Problems with Publishers .. The Library View

- Issues can be grouped as follows:
  - Communication of changes
    - New titles, ceased titles, moving publisher, company acquisitions, product development
  - Clarity in negotiations on big deal
    - What titles will be retained; what happens when titles drop out mid-term
  - Publisher systems not adapting to the new online environment
    - No gracing policy, setting up new subscriptions, having to know thousands of subscriber numbers

# The Solutions for Publishers

## .. The Library View

### Communication of changes

- Lis-e-serials was set up as a forum for announcements and discussion
  - But not all publishers – or librarians - use it
- 84% prefer direct communication from the publisher
  - And we need to vary the way we do it – and use all methods we can, including direct mail, email and the subscription agents
- 49% felt that conferences shouldn't be used for announcements

# The Problems with Publishers .. The Library View

## Some of the comments:

If we use a subscription agent – that's where we expect the information to come from. Direct Mail.. Gets lost with so many other mail

Our subscription agent rarely forwards any publisher changes or announcements  
- don't send it to them!

I find it amazing the number of times I have to go find information from a publisher's website and inform the subscription agent.

# The Solutions for Publishers

## .. The Library View

- Aim for a mix of communications – and keep contact details up to date
  - Subscription Agent (we have to improve this process)
  - Direct mail
  - Listserv
  - Email
  - Newsletters (Blackwell, T&F, Elsevier)
- Librarians need to pass information on to the correct person if it isn't them
- Publishers should maintain accurate contact management systems - with a number of contacts possible per library
- One website for all publishers to submit changes to their titles and details on new titles

# The Solutions for Publishers .. The Library View

Clarity in negotiations on big deals

- Look at the detail
- Ask the questions
  - What will happen after the deal ends?
  - What will happen if journals change mid-term?
- Consider using intermediaries
- UKSG to organise a training seminar?

# The Solutions for Publishers .. The Library View

Publisher systems not adapting to the  
new online environment

“Publishers still informing librarians of  
access codes via mailing labels is bad  
enough, but today I had my agent  
asking me to check the mailing label  
for a change in subscription dates as  
the publisher refused to give the agent  
the information!!”

# The Solutions for Publishers

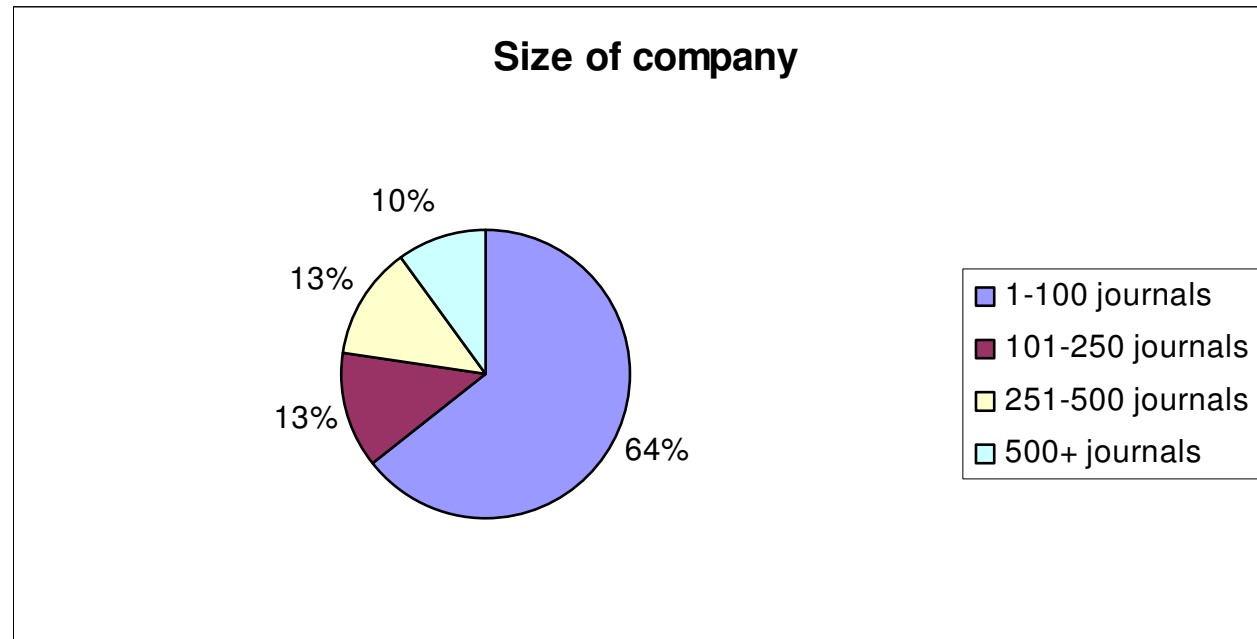
## .. The Library View

- Think carefully about why you don't have a gracing policy following the end of the volume year
  - Lobby via Ingenta, subscription agents etc., for publishers who still don't grace
  - Agents to provide much more information to publishers about IPs, IDs etc
- We need to think of a better way of identifying customers (not mailing labels!)
  - Institutional identifier project – Swets/British Library/highwire/Ringgold etc
- Invest in a subs system which links into your online site – it will save time and money in the long run – and make 95% of your customers very happy!

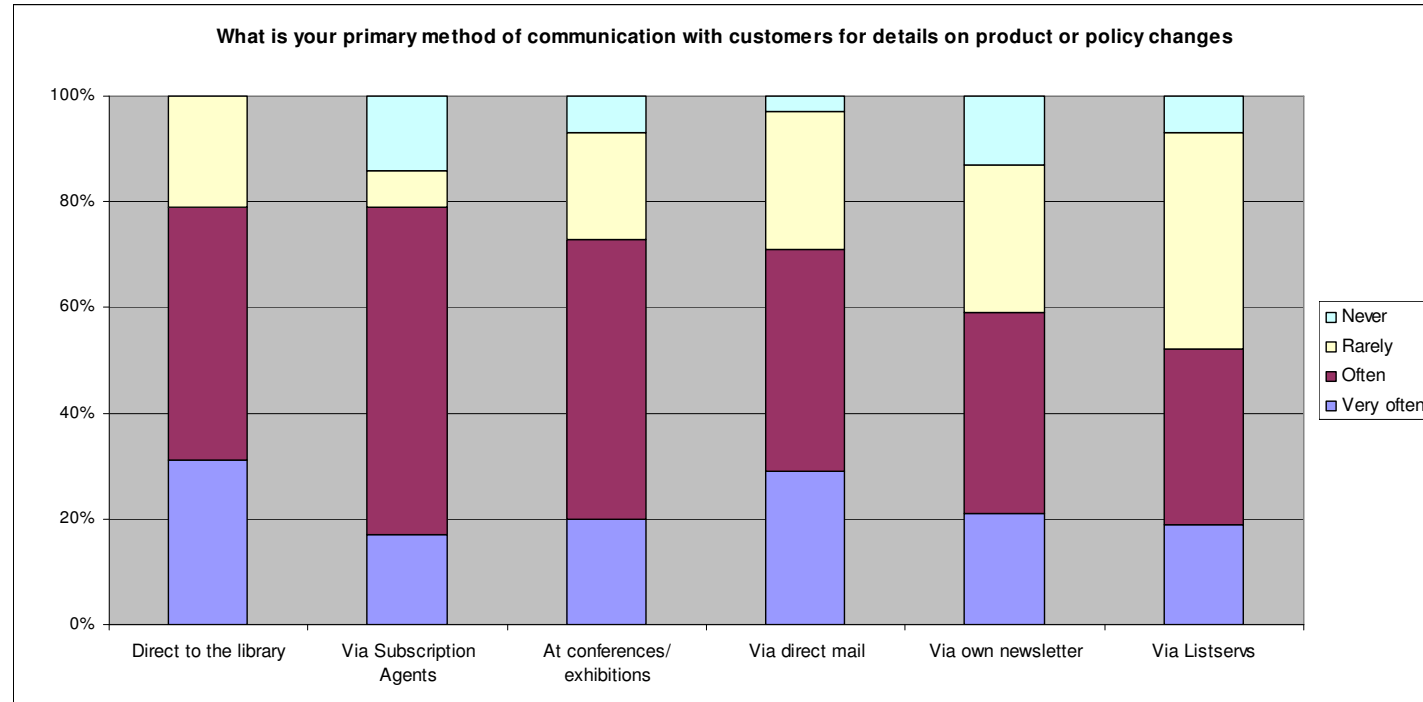


# .. The Publishers View

Results from the survey:



# .. The Publishers View

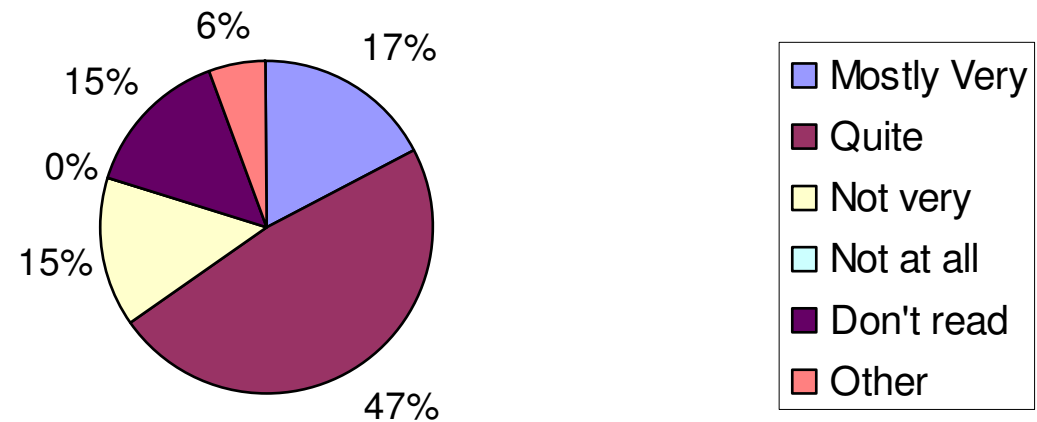


## .. The Publishers View

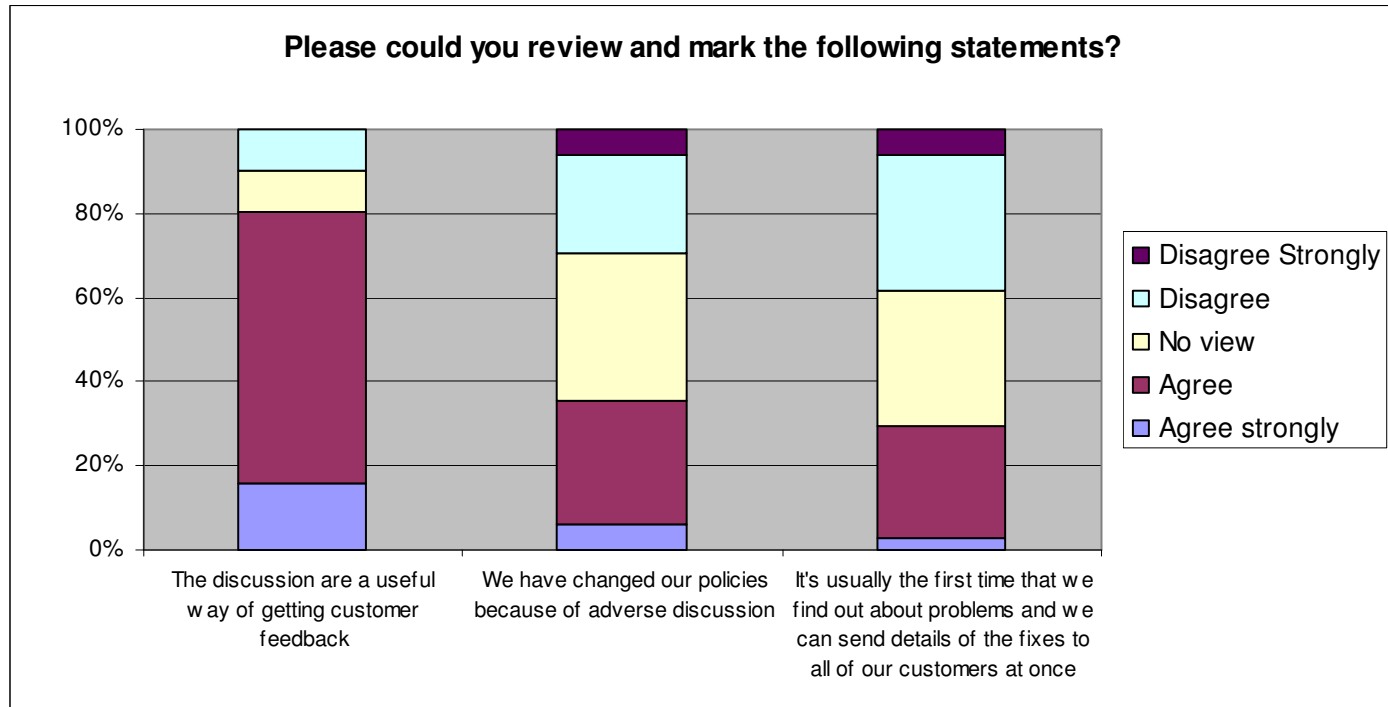
- Publishers rank listservs as the least often used form of communication to the libraries
- However, 64% rank them as useful, knowledgeable or constructive for discussion on their products

# .. The Publishers View

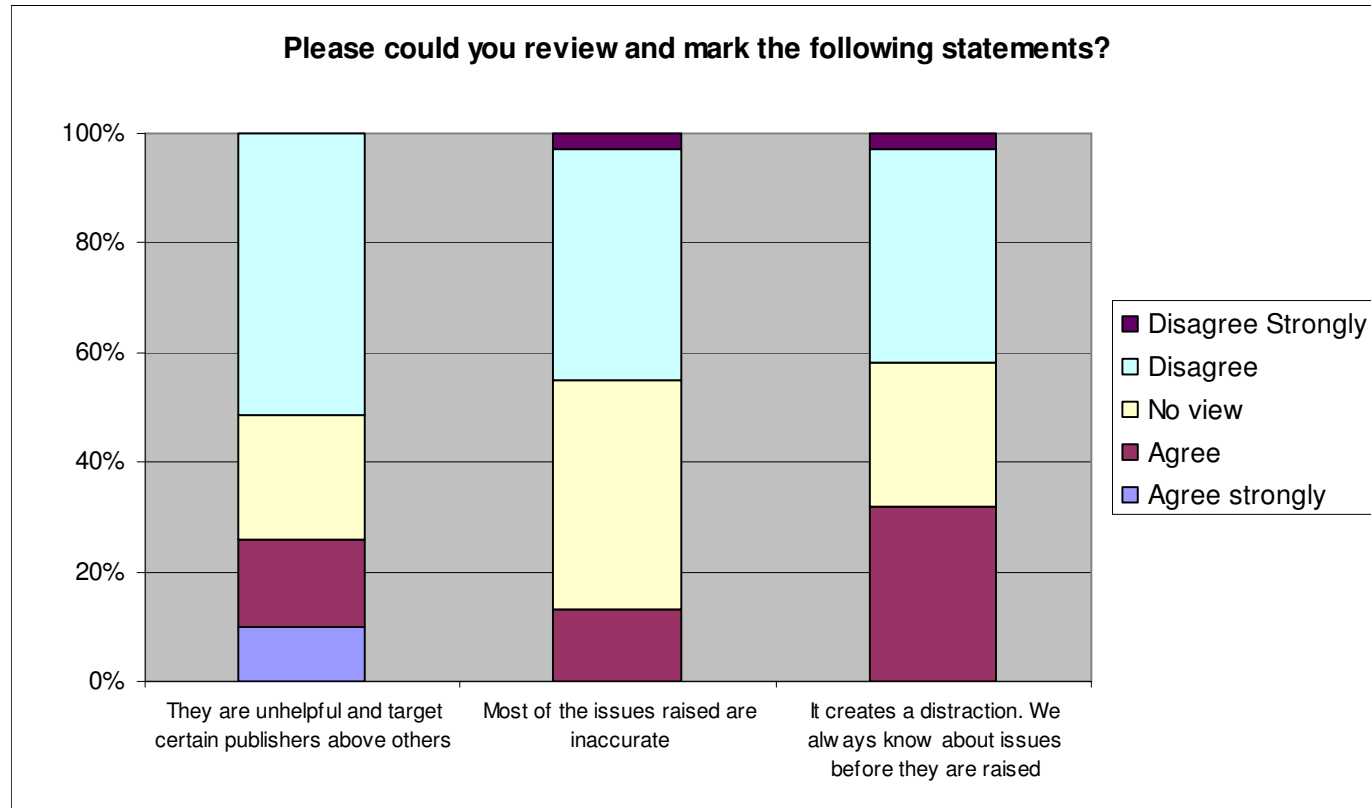
How useful/knowledgeable/constructive do you find listserv discussions about publishers' products on the whole?



# .. The Publishers View



# .. The Publishers View

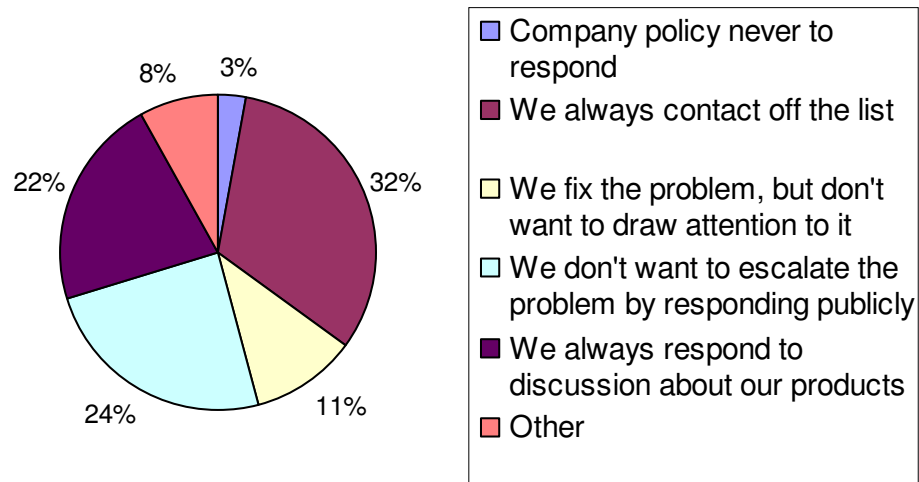


## .. The Publishers View

- A common complaint from librarians is that publishers do not respond to discussions about products on listservs
- So we asked them why...

# .. The Publishers View

Listservs often complain that publishers do not respond to discussions about products on their list. If you don't respond, could you tell us why?





## .. The Publishers View

*“I think that when a librarian raises an issue on a discussion list they are posting as an individual, not necessarily as the formal mouthpiece of their organization. If I were to respond I would be considered the formal mouthpiece of my publishing house and never as an individual – so the communication is not parallel. It’s unbalance from the get-go”*

# .. The Publishers View

*"You don't wash dirty linen in public"*

# .. The Publishers View

- Now over to you!

# Charter Mark



- Aimed primarily at Government or public services
  - <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/chartermark/>
  - “The UK Government's national standard for excellence in customer service”
  - 6 criteria for excellence

# Charter Mark



- Criterion 1 – Set standards and perform well
- Criterion 2 – Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff
- Criterion 3 – Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice
- Criterion 4 – Continuously develop and improve
- Criterion 5 – Use your resources effectively and imaginatively
- Criterion 6 – Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve

# Charter Mark



## Criterion 1 Set standards and perform well

- You need to show that your organisation:
  - sets clear service and performance standards by consulting customers
  - meets those standards
  - monitors and reviews performance against standards and publishes the results
  - designs, puts into practice and monitors standards with as little unnecessary paperwork and administration as possible

# Charter Mark



## Criterion 2 Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff

- You need to show that your organisation:
  - actively works with (engages with) customers, partners and staff to make sure it delivers high-quality services
  - consults and involves present and potential customers of public services, partners and staff
  - is open, and communicates clearly and effectively in plain language and in a number of different ways
  - provides full information about services, their cost and how well they perform

# Charter Mark



## Criterion 3 Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice

- You need to show that your organisation:
  - makes services easily available to everyone who needs them, offering choice wherever you can
  - treats everybody fairly in access to services and service delivery, and pays particular attention to people with special needs



# Charter Mark



## Criterion 4 Continuously develop and improve

- You need to show that your organisation:
  - always looks for ways to improve services and facilities, particularly when using technology
  - puts things right quickly and effectively
  - learns from, and improves as a result of, complaints, compliments and suggestions
  - has a clear, well-publicised and easy-to-use complaints procedure, with the opportunity for independent review wherever possible

# Charter Mark



Criterion 6     Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve

- You need to show that your organisation:
  - has reviewed and is aware of its impact and potential usefulness in the local and national communities you serve
  - has made some contribution to enriching the social or economic life of those communities, beyond the strict requirement of excellent service delivery, through positive, discretionary initiatives and imaginative use of resources

# Charter Mark



- Criterion 1 – Set standards and perform well
- Criterion 2 – Actively engage with your customers, partners and staff
- Criterion 3 – Be fair and accessible to everyone and promote choice
- Criterion 4 – Continuously develop and improve
- Criterion 6 – Contribute to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve

# Conclusion

- Libraries are learning from the private sector (publishers) about marketing to their customers
- Is it time for publishers to learn from the public sector (libraries) about customer service?