Vendor Training: An Assessment from Two Camps

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Why are you here?
Overview of session

- Why study vendor training for electronic resources in libraries
- Research relevant to vendor training
- Survey
- Discussion leading to “what can I take home?”
Cost of Vendor Training
Are we getting the best value for our database expenditures?
Where is the cost?

- Embedded in resource
- Survey respondents indicated charges for training
- Staff time: coordination, attendance, use of space
- Vendor investment in the provision of training to libraries
Research

- Malcolm Knowles, Father of Adult Learning
Applying the principles of Malcolm S. Knowles, leader in adult education

- Theory of adult education based on two principles
  - Process should start with and build on backgrounds, needs, interests, concerns.
  - Adult learners must be active participants in the learning process.
Why is it important to build on background, needs, concerns

According to Knowles, by providing the training content in the context of the learner’s own life situation, it leads to:

- Internalizing the information more quickly
- Retaining it longer
- Applying it more confidently
Survey

- Conducted two online surveys on the effectiveness of vendor training
  - Library community, ERIL-L listserv
  - Vendors
    - CSA
    - H.W. Wilson
    - EBSCO
    - ProQuest
    - OVID
    - Thomson Scientific
    - Thomson Gale
In its simplest form, same message is directed to two groups and the results are compared.
Survey Results

- Participants
  - Library Community: 480 responses (27% response rate)
  - Vendors: 36 responses
Library respondents: very effective vs. somewhat effective
Library respondents finding vendor training very effective vs. somewhat effective

- 102 respondents
- Participation is encouraged
- In-person training most effective (64%)

- 80 respondents
- Participation: neutral, encouragement
- In person training most effective (27%)
Library respondents: vendor training very effective vs. somewhat effective

- Vendor training: great importance (65%)
- Very positive attitude in library for training (66%)
- Importance of vendor training is more important now (78%)

- Vendor training: some importance (71%)
- Somewhat positive attitude for training (48%)
- Importance of vendor training is more important now (58%)
Library respondents: vendor training very effective vs. somewhat effective

- Consider training prior to purchase (58%)
- Will web training meet your needs, yes (61%)
- Consider training prior to purchase (32%)
- Will web training meet your needs, yes (34%)
Comparing the results: Library community and vendors

- Level of participation
- Value and effectiveness: in-person training
- Overall effectiveness
- Importance of vendor training
- Web-based training
Top comments from each group of library respondents

- **Very Effective**
  - Customization, 16%
  - Interactivity, 12%
  - Frequency, 10%

- **Somewhat Effective**
  - Customization, 17%
  - Trainers, 13%
  - “no sales pitches,” 13%
Free Response from both camps

- Library Community (230 responses)
  - Training
  - Usage
  - Format
  - Trainers

- Vendors (24 responses)
  - Training
  - Usage
  - Format
Future Considerations for vendor training

- Sell the benefit
- Determine needs of group
- 15 minute workshop
- Allow for interactivity/hands-on time
- Bargain for more time
  - Hand-outs
  - Frequently asked questions
  - Clarity on what is needed
Discussion and Questions
References