



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

Broadcast Operations The Vendor/Customer Relationship



A conversation between Karen Johnson and Richard Rudman

[December 2013] Where you buy products and services is important. The lowest price might save a few dollars but you easily can lose all those savings should you need assistance or maintenance support – and find yourself dealing with a company not set up to respond well.

Here, satellite space provider Karen Johnson has a chat with Richard Rudman about uplinks, sales, and a great vendor/customer relationship.

KJ: It is not every day that you get the opportunity to sit down and talk without interruption to one of your customers, especially one as capable and talented as Richard Rudman.

Richard is the owner and principal of Remote Possibilities – Contract Broadcast Technical Services out of Santa Paula, California.

Before becoming a consultant, Richard was the Director of Engineering for KFWB: CBS Radio in Los Angeles for nearly three decades. Richard hung out his own shingle after retirement and now advises a number of broadcast clients, including Gold Coast Broad-

casting – a group of radio stations in Ventura, California.

When you meet Richard you cannot miss his quiet charm, his vast knowledge of broadcasting, or his precise attention to detail. To say that Richard knows his way around a transmitter site would be an understatement!

SEEING THE OTHER'S VIEWPOINT

My 12-minute chat with Richard gave me an opportunity to understand how our customers view us and our product a bit better.

During our chat, we discussed why he and his clients chose satellite as their primary means of audio delivery, the importance of service before – and after – the sale, and how he views the traits that Ka You Communications feels has set us apart from the other guys out there.

KJ: How long has Ka You been assisting your clients with satellite services. Five years, right?

RR: *Five years, yes, but it seems like yesterday.*

Before satellite, for the first client – which is basically an FM main and boosters – we had tried a number of different experiments, trying to deliver audio to the sites. The issue we were experiencing with the Internet was a timing problem with the audio. Because of the need to deliver audio from Ventura back to the LA basin, terrestrial STL's would have involved multiple hops and a great deal of expense and complexity.

At that point we started to look at satellite. I did some research and I really went through the list of satellite vendors. I came up with Ka You as one of the three vendors we looked at. After looking at what Ka You had to offer – and the way they approached sales and customer service and quotes – it was apparent to me that I would be recommending Ka You to my client in this project.

The clients, after meeting Mark (Johnson, Ka You's Director of Technology) decided to move ahead as well.

KJ: (Laughing)... There you go!

KEYS TO A GOOD RELATIONSHIP

RR: *Anyway, I think there is a key for any vendor trying to sell a product to a customer who has never bought that product before and is looking at the range out there.*

It is really all about building the trust level of confidence that implies that the vendor is oriented towards the customer in a way that is going to benefit the customer.

KJ: Yes, we believe that is very much so.

RR: *So I can report that when we started to receive the equipment to put in the uplink and get everything working, and over time when we turned the system up, Ka You has been there when we have needed them – telephone support or parts, or anything that we needed for the system.*

I really have to rate Ka You right at the top of all the equipment people that I deal with in the broadcast industry. That includes a 30-year career of being in the decision-making process on equipment selection. I really think – and again, this may sound funny because I am Jewish – I think that probably I could describe you as a faith-based company.

KJ: Yes, that would be accurate.

RR: *And, therefore, I would be very surprised if you did not believe in applying the Golden Rule to customer relations.*

Not that I want to turn this into a religious discussion or anything, but I think too often aspects of religion like morality and responsibility often are left out of a lot of sales relationships. I find these two traits to be invaluable if I am trying to make a recommendation to one of my clients. I do not make any money from any recommendations – I believe that consultants should not do so – but to my clients my reputation depends on the quality of my recommendations. That is why I feel comfortable about recommending Ka You as a satellite integrator/provider.

Over time I think that my faith in you has been supported by results.

KJ: Well, thank you. Our works are important to us, and being able to accomplish that in a way that not only pleases our customers but pleases our Father is what we look to do. But yes, moving on and trying not to sound too preachy –

RR: *Karen...Amen!*

KJ: (Laughing...) Yes! Amen! Stepping away from the pulpit now!

TIME ZERO

RR: *OK. Regarding the satellite component, it allows my client to deliver audio to all the sites that need it – which now has evolved now to two main transmitters and three FM boosters.*

The result is what an engineer would call “time zero.”

Because of the satellite uplink to downlink, the audio arrives back to earth at all the downlinks at roughly the same time; very close to the same time. We apply GPS-based pilot and carrier sync at transmitter sites so that we are able to limit the amount of interference between the boosters and the main, and between the two mains – that is important because they are all on 104.7.

That is what satellite brings to the party: the ability to bring audio to the sites at essentially time zero.

KJ: Has anything surprised you about using satellite?

RR: Yes – the fact that we found a vendor that practices what they preach, so to speak!

Actually has been an interesting education for me because I never had to put an uplink together before. Sometimes when you deal with manufacturers you do not get all of the support and training that you need to do a project that is new to you. I feel that to the extent that we needed it we got everything we needed, when we needed it.

Sure, from time to time we have had a couple of equipment problems and some questions about the uplink. But if I do not get a live person immediately when I call, I can pretty well rest assured that I will get a call back pretty quickly.

KJ: That is good to know! Do you have any advice for those thinking about using satellite?

RR: Originally, we ordered a basic system. But as we put the system in I realized that, over time, if you are trying to create a reliable 24/7 service, eventually you have to build in back up capability.

Mark and George (George Gimourginas, Ka You Director of Business Development) have been very patient with me and the client, educating us on what would be needed to create the right back up for what we have, so that we can try to ensure 24/7 reliability.

KJ: My last question for you: do you see satellite as part your future delivery systems?

RR: Well, right now I have made a recommendation to the client to replace the original MPEG 2-level transmission system with basically AAC encoded equipment, the next generation state-of-the-art for KU band audio delivery.

We are now waiting for the client to make a decision. But basically I am convinced that satellite, and Ka You, is the way to go.

KJ: Thanks, Richard. I am glad you understand our passion to work personally with our customers to design and implement the best satellite system for their needs.

Karen Johnson is the Vice President of Ka You Communications, a mission-focused satellite services company providing reliable, cost-effective transmission solutions to commercial broadcasters, ministries, universities and government. Find out more about Ka You, by checking out their website at: www.kayoucommunications.com.

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