



Higher Education Textbook Publisher Gains Control Over Inventory by Consolidating Operations

BEYOND INK



Background

A higher ed academic textbook publisher, whose founder, a former college professor, simply felt his students were paying too much for their textbooks. He made it his mission to remedy the situation and, after writing his own textbook, dedicated his efforts to producing quality, affordable textbooks for students nationwide.

"BR has proven to be solid partner in printing and fulfillment. In our 8 year history with BR, we've found them to be communicative, reliable and cost-effective. Unlike other vendors, BR allows great flexibility in updating orders in real time and is able to handle detailed kitting projects. We are fortunate to have forged such a strong relationship with BR's team."



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Challenge

Managing 250+ titles printing from numerous print suppliers and shipped to multiple warehouses made maintaining adequate inventory levels a challenge in order to capture unexpected sales. The publisher faced an increasing amount of book orders, however order quantities decreased. Communication delays with the warehouses and long print production schedules resulted in inconsistent speed to market, forecasting difficulties, and cash flow fluctuations.

Solution

With a print-on-demand strategy not viable within their current vendor pool, the publisher looked to BR to help build a replenishment solution when titles were running low.

Leveraging BR's fulfillment expertise, we recommended the publisher consolidate their warehousing operations from 5 to 3—2 of which are BR San Jose and Kentucky locations. Now managing 20,000 to 40,000 units, depending on seasonality, BR enhances the publisher's operations by:

- Instituting a hybrid model of book replenishment consisting of both automated and manual order processing
- Implementing a print/pull workflow to exhaust inventory and print balance on-demand
- Digitally printing new titles for testing, before their offset printer produces initial longer run quantities
- Enhancing bindery operations to 3-hole drill, shrink-wrap and perfect bind

- Rebinding gently used editions
- Adding variable codes into editions for a complimentary online experience
- Warehousing, pick-and-pull, packaging and shipping to end users

Results

Since working with BR for the past seven years, the publisher has realized increased bottom line growth, improved forecasting accuracy, reduced risk, improved time to market, and most importantly a renewed concentration on their mission of publishing affordable higher education content by leaving the print, warehousing and fulfillment details to a trusted partner.



BEYOND INK

WEB: brprinters.com EMAIL: info@brprinters.com

San Jose (HQ), CA
665 Lenfest Rd.
San Jose, CA 95133
408-278-7711

San Diego, CA (CDM)
7606 Miramar Rd.
#7100
San Diego, CA 92126
856-677-1727

Denver, CO
5050 Moline St.
Denver, CO 80239
303-765-1383

Independence, KY
10154 Toebben Dr.
Independence, KY 41051
859-292-1700

Appleton, WI (NGS)
2600 North Ballard Rd.
Appleton, WI 54911
920-734-7500

Cincinnati, OH
3962 Virginia Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45227
800-598-7808