

CHALLENGES FOR MIDSIZE PUBLISHERS IN A CHANGED PUBLISHING ENVIRONMENT

WHITE PAPER



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It's hard to imagine an industry today that has not been affected by shrinking budgets, higher cost of doing business, and the ever-increasing need for faster response times. Midsize publishers are no exception.

What was once a fairly straightforward deliverable – printed material – has evolved to become a much more complex set of demands, compounded by technology advances that have simultaneously challenged and sustained the publishing industry. The business model of most midsize publishers is no longer applicable, and realistic solutions are hard to pinpoint and even harder to come by.

So how are midsize publishers reacting to this changed environment? More to the point, how are they defining the current challenges in a way that fosters good decision making about the right solutions? At least some progress can be made by recognizing the common challenges that nearly all midsize publishers are experiencing.

CHALLENGE 1: MULTIPLE PRINT AND WAREHOUSE LOCATIONS

Imagine trying to prepare and serve a five-course dinner with kitchens in five different locations and your guests in another. How do you coordinate to ensure each course is correctly prepared and arrives at the right time? What if a guest has a special request and you need to respond quickly? How can you ensure efficient, consistent service for each guest with so many moving parts?

Publishers who are dealing with multiple print and warehouse locations face similar dilemmas, not to mention the cost-prohibitive nature of such arrangements. The ability to consolidate and manage from one “kitchen” greatly improves efficiencies for publishers and timely delivery for customers by increasing process visibility and benefiting from economies of scale. There are emerging publishing partners who can actually provide that singular point of service (print and eBook production, order fulfillment, warehouse and inventory management, and retail and wholesale account management), scalable to fit the publishers’ needs.

CHALLENGE 2: INCONSISTENT SERVICE AND QUALITY ACROSS VENDORS

Good business practice dictates that a healthy return on investment is measured not only in dollars saved, but in value gained. A publisher’s good reputation can be compromised by bad vendor service that impacts customers, and no amount of damage control can undo a negative customer experience – or justify dollars saved from doing business with inconsistent vendors.

Conversely, superior customer experience that results from great vendor service can have a positive impact on a publisher’s bottom line as well as the soft ROI of maintaining a good reputation. Having a consistent, trusted publishing partner that offers flexible, scalable service can keep customers happy and important business relationships intact.

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“In today’s world it is important to do things right and provide quality on the first go around.”

– Production group lead,
CA publishing company

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CHALLENGE 3: INACCURATE INVENTORY COUNTS

Real physical inventory demands real, accurate record keeping. One of the benefits of maintaining inventory in one location is the concurrent possibility of realtime inventory data. This data gives decision makers the ability to make informed, strategic determinations that can help manage costs. In addition, realtime data allows flexibility to adapt to long-term changes in business climate as well as short-term fluctuations.

Multiple solutions currently exist in the marketplace to manage data inventory, but the key to solid realtime data is a publishing partner that can offer flexible solutions which include realtime inventory data as part of the inventory solution.

CHALLENGE 4: DECLINING RUN LENGTHS AND LACK OF TIMELY REPORTING

Producing a large run for every title isn't always an option for every customer. Some titles require short run lengths, and the unpredictability of others can result in wasted inventory. One solution is working with a vendor that has the ability to produce your titles offset, digital, or print on demand from the same facility on a title-by-title basis. This provides more flexibility to adapt to changing demands without having to figure out where the title needs to be moved to maximize the value for the publisher.

A publishing partner that can offer these solutions, especially in conjunction with timely, accurate reporting, can assist the publisher in realizing significant cost savings across the life of a title. Such solutions also make compliance easier and more current, relieving the stress and reducing the risk of possible noncompliance with reporting requirements.

SOLUTION: FORMING A RELIABLE PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP

The four challenges discussed here are common pain points currently experienced by most midsize publishers across the board. Sustainable solutions require both flexibility and reliability on the part of the publishing partner selected to fulfill the vendor role.

The ability to customize solutions and scale to the needs of each publisher are also factors every publisher should consider – a one-size-fits-all approach is not in the best interest of any publisher when considering the increased demand for faster response times and agility required to meet fluctuating needs. Publishers should actively seek such a partner that goes beyond the role of vendor to help the publisher sustain its business.

For more information visit:
corepublishingsolutions@thomsonreuters.com

