

Supporting Publishers with Design and Optimisation of their Distribution and Sales

PCG has helped Publishing Houses to model the impact of making changes to their current Distribution and Sales approach

Case Study - November 2022

PCG are often asked to commission reviews which help publishing businesses to understand the domestic and international distribution and sales channel options available to them and to make recommendations as to how to improve on their current arrangements.

Distribution arrangements can be long-standing and represent a significant change to a publishers commercial and operational model. Distributors and sales providers need to align with the firm's overall mission and strategic vision including its sales goals. A publisher's list needs to 'fit' the portfolios of sales service providers. For such a move to add value, improved terms, sales growth and/or improvements in service level need to be clearly identified and quantified.

For most publishers, growth has been experienced over the last couple of years. The majority of sales are online with the biggest export market for UK publishers being the US. Specifically, publishers wanted to:

- Have more agency in the management of Amazon accounts.
- Grow sales internationally through development of new retail channels.
- Reduce distribution costs.

This case study illustrates PCG's 'Programme of Work' and the 'Solutions' identified for a publisher via a recent project.

PCG's Approach

Stage 1 - Commercial Review

PCG conducted a thorough analysis of:

- Existing commercial terms.
- Performance in different markets.
- Performance via different retail accounts.
- The commercial model, including stock turn, returns ratio, etc.

Having developed a detailed model of their publishing, we identified weaknesses in their current arrangement and established a clearly defined set of success criteria for any potential new partner to fulfil.

Stage 2 - Supplier Research and Analysis Methodology

Our approach was facilitated via a discrete approach to each of the identified new distributors on behalf of the publisher to help to build up a commercial and operational assessment of the benefits and trade-offs of a potential move.

In this stage we:

- Surveyed a researched list of potential distribution and sales partners in the UK, US and export markets.
- Conducted structured interviews with a short list of suppliers.
- Developed a detailed analysis of the commercial benefits of different cost structures using historic sales data.
- Developed a detailed qualitative analysis of the differing benefits to the publisher of questions such as portfolio 'fit' and sales and marketing approach etc.

Stage 3 - Reports and Recommendation

PCG provided a report to help the publisher to understand and appraise the options available to them for global distribution and sales with a deep dive assessment of the alternatives available should they wish to move to a new distribution and sales partnership.

This included:

- Detailed insights into our recommended service providers.
- Assessments of the benefits and trade-offs of each.
- A PCG short list of our 'best fit' recommendations for them.

PCG also was able to recommend specific suppliers that would optimise:

- Sales reach and effectiveness.
- Marketing opportunities and marketing management.
- Amazon account management.
- Breadth of distribution.
- Distribution and sales costs.

Our carefully costed and research led recommended approach, based on the options investigated, provided analysis as to what options existed and how the publisher could in our view leverage them.

Stage 4 - Ongoing Advice

We are continuing to provide ongoing help and support at the request of the client.

Happy PCG Clients

PCG has commissioned distribution and sales related projects for the below clients. Some very kind words about our services can be found here: [Publishing Consultancy Group Testimonials](#).



Pitch Publishing is the UK's leading and most-prolific independent sports publisher, with a vast catalogue covering football, cricket, rugby, boxing, golf, athletics and other sports.



Established in Edinburgh in 1974, Publishing Scotland is the network, trade and development body for the book publishing sector in Scotland.



The world's most respected provider of global best practice. ITIL[®], PRINCE2[®] and MSP[®].



The world's first Oxbridge preparation school.



Kogan Page is a leading independent publisher of award-winning business books from global experts, academics and specialist professionals, helping organizations and individuals thrive in the evolving business world.

BLACKWELL'S

Blackwell UK, also known as Blackwell's and Blackwell Group, is a British academic book retailer and library supply service owned by Waterstones. It was founded in 1879 by Benjamin Henry Blackwell, after whom the chain is named, on Broad Street, Oxford.



our vision is to improve the world through literacy. That's why we have been providing quality, reliable classroom and library resources internationally for over 20 years.



Launched in 2015, UCL Press has quickly established itself as a high-quality open access university press.