ASSESSMENT GUIDE
BOOK PUBLISHING

KONICA MINOLTA

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Giving Shape to Ideas

STRATEGY

Print Providers leveraging Konica Minolta's business development program Digital1234 can walk through this "Assessment Guide". This is a business based questionnaire covering a range of crucial business topics. Using a simple and visual traffic light system, each question can have three results:

Green – No or little experience, with a lot of opportunities for growth
Yellow – Some experience, but still room for improvement
Red – Good experience, and well underway to attain the business benefits in this area.

This assessment will allow you to quickly identify areas of your business that could benefit from change by exploring each particular business opportunity. Konica Minolta could partner with you to succesfully implement this new exciting opportunity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Pate is a veteran in Book Publishing with a focus on new technologies. He currently serves as Director of Digital Programs for Edwards Brothers Malloy, a leading book and journal manufacturer. An early adopter of Digital Printing of books, he served as Senior VP of Business Development at On Demand Books, and Senior VP Global Operations at Lulu.com. He was on the early team at Lightning Source as VP Business Development. Prior to that he was Exec VP and COO at Rutledge Hill Press, successfully transitioning that general trade publisher to become part of Thomas Nelson. It was there that he first incorporated the very early print on demand capabilities as an inventory solution. From there he has been a key proponent of technologies enabling the exploding self-publishing and web based publishing markets. He has given talks worldwide on „The Convergence of Technology and Intellectual Property". A native of Nashville, TN, Andrew has earned a BA from Vanderbilt University and a MBA from Xavier University.

The following questions will help you to assess to what extend book publishing is a good opportunity for your business. For a book production facility to run succesfully, there are six strategies (or aspects) that should be in place. So we've developed questionsto evaluate the viablitily of each of these strategies:

Six Strategies to Successfully Provide Book Manufacturing Services

1 Offer Digital Book Production
a. Color cover printing
b. Monochrome or color text production
c. Finishing – typically perfect binding
2. Automate content management workflow
3. Automate order management workflow
4. Standardize materials for efficiency
5. Create a marketing and implementation plan
6. Identify long tail opportunities

For each of the strategies, there are questions intended to clarify your chances for success!

1.   Offer digital book production

Books are complicated products with additional demands on a printer.

Do you have experience in producing book or manuals?

- Yes, we have produced bound matter such as books and manuals.

- Some, we have printed text and cover and outsourced the binding.

- No, we have no experience with any book like product.

Do your customers have book and manual product?

- Yes, for internal use as well as for sale to the end users.

- Some, but the product is usually for internal use only.

- No, but they might develop a line at some point.

What level of experience do you have with color printing on coated paper board and film lamination?

- A great deal, as we have produced full color pieces and have had them laminated.

- Some, but we have outsourced the work as part of another project.

- Almost none, we have not had any requests for this work.

Is your sales and customer service group able to serve the book market?

- Yes, our group is very adept at identifying and serving special customer needs.

- Maybe, we would need to learn more about particular requirements.

- Not likely , as our people are experts at just what we do now.

2.   Automate content management workflow

Automation means fewer touches and higher profits when ingesting and processing cover and text files for printing.

Do you own or use preflight software to verify print ready files?

🟥 Yes, we own that software and also create print ready pdf's from application files.

🟨 Yes, but we provide the service but use an outsourced vendor.

🟩 Almost never, we check it for print quality on the printer.

Do you have adequate computer storageand a database to store content and metadata?

🟥 Yes, we have adequate storage capacity and a folder structure to store necessary pieces.

🟨 Maybe, we have a file system but it is only for one job at a time.

🟩 No, we only use the printer systems.

Do you have any existing automated workflows?

🟥 Yes with one or more customers work.

🟨 Partially, for example we accept orders and print files on a ftp but manually handle from there on.

🟩 No, we are pretty manual on every order.

Do you have programming resources and experience with XML – type automated partner interchanges readily available?

🟥 Yes, we have programmers and IT specialists at ready access.

🟨 Maybe, but we need to understand more of the requirements.

🟩 No, we have no on going relationship with programmers.

3.   Automate order management workflow

As with the content, automatic order processing will lead to higher profits and fewer mistakes.

Do have the ability to accept orders electronically?

- 🟥 Yes though our website and using web services or file transfer protocols.

- 🟨 Maybe, some customers email their orders in a relatively standard for.

- 🟩 No we only accept physical orders.

Do you have an order management system that will deliver the work to printers and prepare invoicing?

- 🟥 Yes we use an end to end order management system that works with our print software as well.

- 🟨 We have certain parts of the process automated but others are manual, or our different systems do not update one another.

- 🟩 No, each operation is a separate activity.

4.   Standardize materials and specifications

Most books use similar materials especially text stocks and and fall into few trim sizes.

Do you have ready access to 80 gsm white text papers and a natural or cream shade?

- 🟥 Yes it is readily available.

- 🟨 Maybe but I can order through Konica Minolta.

- 🟩 No I will have to special order.

Do you have access to cover papers and coating capability?

- 🟥 Yes, we have lamination or UV coating in house.

- 🟨 We have small capabilities.

- 🟩 No we would have to outsource this function.
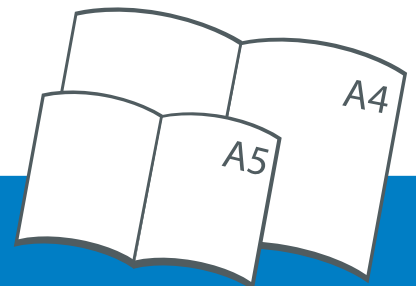
In my market, most books are in the in the standard trim size ranges and have simple perfect binding such as A4 and A5?

- 🟥 Yes, these are very common sizes.

- 🟨 Some, but there are many oversized and very small books as well.

- 🟩 No, all the books in my market seem to be odd sized and have elaborate binding and decoration.

5.   Create a marketing and implementation plan

As with any new business project, it is essential to have a comprehensive plan to direct your activity.

Do you have the inhouse capability of creating a comprehensive marketing plan?

- Yes, we have produced similar plans with measurements before.

- Maybe, I have ideas but need tools to help.

- No, this concept is foreign to me.

Is your firm willing to have competitive customer service, quality and pricing for the book market?

- Yes, I understand working with books is a long term play.

- Maybe, but we do not want to change our internal process in place.

- No, we must operate consistently across all lines of business.

When entering a new market, there can be a tendency to ignore the market while trying to develop it. Are you prepared to invest time and energy and some real dollars into a new market?

- Yes, I understand it is sustainable only with proper investment on the front end.

- Yes, butI prefer a pay-as-you go approach to new business.

- No, I will have a firm time and financial limit on the new market development.

4.   Identify "long tail" opportunities.

The "long tail" refers to a concept advanced by Chris Anderson showing that when all titles are discoverable more sales will often occur from older titles and the newer titles.

Can you identify customers who have had a large number of titles for sale over a long period of time?

- Yes, Our customers have large numbers of different titles for sale that do not become obsolete.

- Maybe, Our customer has discontinued products but could bring them back for sale with some help.

- No, Our customer only works with new and very recent titles.

Are their public or private libraries accessible?

- Yes, there are libraries that can be approached about selling books online.

- Yes, but they do not have a strategy for selling facsimile copies.

- No, the libraries have no such plans.

Are the titles and content are easily discoverable?

- Yes, online retailers and other search engines include all the titles.

- To a degree, but the content is available to a specialized group.

- No, this content is hard to find and is not online.

Are there other large collections of book length content that could be made available?

- Yes, trade associations, government and non-governmental agencies have extensive content.

- Yes, but the content may take a great deal of effort to prepare for printing.

- No, in my market there is a limited number of large repositories of book length content.

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