

Crown House outsources distribution to Grantham Book Services

Crown House is a rapidly growing publishing house specialising in the areas of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Hypnosis, Accelerated Learning, stress management, health and wellbeing and personal growth, located in Bancyfelin near Carmarthen in West Wales. The company and sister publishing company Anglo-American were both being asked to implement EDI with major retailers such as Waterstone's.

Managers from Waterstone's and Nielsen BookNet, the largest book trade supplier of e-commerce services, met with Crown House management to discuss the available options for Crown House:

Option 1 was to develop the Trilogy system used by Crown House and Anglo-American to enable it to do EDI and then set up the necessary EDI relationships. On the face of it this looked like an easy option because much work had already been done at Trilogy and Nielsen to enable EDI for Trilogy customers. The problem was that Crown House felt that the cost of the Trilogy EDI module was prohibitive so another solution was needed.

Option 2 was to move to a new computer system which was already capable of EDI and which would have enabled Crown House to go live on EDI almost as soon as the system was installed and configured. However, the cost of changing the system would have been high and the dislocation would have been a business risk. Another issue was that Trilogy's system already provided Crown House with excellent business information on sales and customers and Crown House did not want to lose this facility.

Option 3 was to outsource all trade distribution to a specialist distributor, thus avoiding the need to upgrade or switch back office systems. As it subsequently transpired this was already Crown House's favoured option as their rate of growth necessitated a step change in their distribution capability. They had undergone a complete review of the overall costs of carrying out the distribution function within a small publishing business. This review set in motion the idea of outsourcing the distribution function to a large and expert distributor, one with existing and proven e-commerce capability and excellent reporting systems.

Following their review, Crown House chose Grantham Book Services, part of the Random House Group and a sister company to TBS and Transworld. Grantham could provide the blend of expertise and additional services that Crown House needed.

Crown House could then focus all their energies on their publishing programme.