



BIC Task & Finish Working Groups

Best Practice for Print on Demand and Short Run
Printing Workflows
Project Brief

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Document History

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0.1	Draft Project brief.	Draft – for committee approval	29 th Sep 2014
1.0	Final version – Acceptance Criteria added	FINAL	8 th Dec 2014

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to agree, document and promote best practice with regards short run printing workflows, including Auto Stock Replenishment (ASR), and Print on Demand (POD), for Publishers, Printers, Distributors and any other stakeholders that may be identified by the Task and Finish Working Group.

2. BACKGROUND

Until fairly recently it was probably fair to say that the printing processes and best practices within the book industry were generally well defined and understood between the key stakeholders. The relatively recent introduction of digital printing, competition from online retailers, pressure on publishers to keep as many titles available as possible, and the demand for faster turn-around times, smaller print runs, has given rise to new, and essential business practices in this area, namely POD, ASR and short runs.

These new workflows have been in place for some time now, albeit not with all publishers, but with sufficient to warrant the need for best practices to be defined and agreed in this area.

Following a comprehensive Physical Supply Chain Review, BIC's Physical Supply Chain Committee has agreed that establishing Best Practices in these areas is a priority for the industry and for BIC.

It has also been highlighted that availability metadata currently reflects the way that the industry used to print and not the way that it prints now. The findings from this project may and should feed into the existing Price and Availability Task and Finish Working Group, and vice versa.

3. PROJECT DEFINITION

3.1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key stakeholders for short run printing workflows
- To clearly identify the current short run pain points across these stakeholders' current workflows.
- With these pain point in mind, to define and document what the best practices (including timelines) should be for each type of stakeholder for short run printing generally, and to then understand and document how POD and ASR workflows may vary in this context. These variances to be incorporated and made clear in the best practices documentation.
- To maintain a dialogue with and input into the Price and Availability Task and Finish Working Group as there will be metadata items within that group's scope that are relevant to this project.
- To promote and communicate these best practices to the BIC membership specifically, and wider book industry community generally.

PROJECT SCOPE

The major deliverables of the project are a set of best practice guidelines with accompanying documentation if considered necessary, to contextualise all types of short run (including ASR and POD) practices and encourage publishers, printers, distributors and retailers to review their current systems and workflows and adopt a more standardized approach. There is the possibility of incorporating some or all of these best practices into the Supply Chain Accreditation scheme in the future and this will be considered further once the documentation has been published and this project has been closed.

Although this work will focus on the physical book product and associated workflows with regards all forms of short run printing, metadata and data communication in general will also play a key part.

The main dependency is that the interested parties will have to commit to carving out time to work on this project among many competing claims.

As already mentioned there is an interdependency with the BIC Price and Availability Working Group and possibly the Product Data Accreditation Review Group.

3.2. OUTLINE PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND/OR DESIRED OUTCOMES

Documentation quantifying the improvements in workflow consistency and best practice in terms of this project. This will help reveal some tangible and intangible benefits which can be set against the costs of any changes to processes and potentially to systems.

A complete set of Best Practice Guidelines documented for all short run (including POD and ASR) stakeholders and these to include:

- Documentation of what the processes are both up and down stream of each type of stakeholder organisation. This will help each stakeholder better understand their position and impact within the workflow.
- A clear indication of workflow timings, triggers and required actions.
- Clarity of best practices with regards the different types of short run printing workflows and explanation of the differences.
- Metadata (price and availability) and data/information communication best practice.
- Clear definitions of ASR, POD and Short run.

Stakeholders may include:

- Self-distributing publishers
- Publishers distributed by a third party
- Distributors and their clients
- Data recipients
- Retailers
- Printers

3.3. CONSTRAINTS

As above, we are all very busy and time is at a premium.

3.4. INTERFACES

The main project interface is likely to be with BIC's Price and Availability Task and Finish Working Group.

4. OUTLINE BUSINESS/INDUSTRY CASE

Agreed best practice in this area will make the short run printing side of the supply chain more efficient and ultimately more cost effective for all stakeholders. Not addressing the need (that has been clearly identified and prioritized by BIC's Physical Supply Chain Committee) for agreeing, documenting and communicating best practices for short run printing workflows will only serve to hinder the book industry in this area. It is exactly what BIC should be working on for the future benefit of the book industry supply chain.

5. CUSTOMERS QUALITY EXPECTATIONS

The Best Practice Guidelines must be agreed by representatives of all sectors of the industry and must be thoroughly tested to demonstrate their suitability.

Any crossover in work with any other Task and Finish Working Groups must be acknowledged and communicated to avoid duplication/errors.

The importance of this work will be in the following order of priority: 1. Quality. 2. Cost, 3, Timeline.

Quality is most important because BIC's work has to be to the highest standards. Cost is the second priority because BIC's budget is important and BIC's resources must be managed. Timeline is the least important because if overrunning slightly was still within budget and delivered optimum quality then this would be acceptable. The timeline is only estimated. The crucial point is that delay should not lead to increased costs, or have an adverse effect on the working group, since this working group will be made of volunteers.

6. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

1. Practicality – it must be possible for interested parties to see a measurable benefit from adopting the Best practice guidelines.
2. Clarity – the guidelines must be easily understood, and relevant and meaningful to each workflow stakeholder.

7. RISKS

The risk of doing nothing is that short run printing stakeholders may either continue to operate less efficiently than they could and/or that these same stakeholders may try to create and implement their own, bespoke, disparate best practices that are not industry recognized. There needs to be one adopted version of best practice agreement in this area in order for efficiencies to be realized. Also, this is an area of the physical supply chain that is highly likely to grow, and agreeing what the best practices should be at this stage is prudent and puts the industry in a good position for efficient expansion in this area in the future.

The main risk to the actual project itself is time with regards the workload of Project members. Should the Project members be unable to commit their time as required the project will stall.

8. OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

Activity	Deadline
First draft Project Brief distributed to BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee	30 th September 2014
Feedback from Physical Supply Chain committee to Karina Luke	21 st October 2014
Amended Project Brief re-circulated to Committee	24 th October 2014
Final sign off from Committee	31 st October 2014
BIC call for Working Group volunteers from its membership	3 rd – 17 th December 2014
First Working Group meeting	Before end-Jan 2015
Documentation to quantify the improvements (value, reliability) in workflow and in order to reveal tangible and intangible benefits	Before end-March 2015
Draft Best practice guidelines documented	August 2015
Test/pilot of guidelines	September 2015 – November 2015
Final Best Practice Guidelines launched, incorporating feedback from pilot (as appropriate)	December 2015
Marketing of Best Practice Guidelines	Ongoing from December 2015 onwards
Post project review of Guidelines	January 2016
Working Group and Project closes	February 2016 – on publication of guidelines review.

9. AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE

Executive Director of BIC

10. PROPOSED TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP LEADER/PROJECT MANAGER

To be decided in the first meeting of the Working Group.

11. CUSTOMERS AND USERS

PRINTERS

DISTRIBUTORS

PUBLISHERS

RETAILERS

BISG (FOR INFORMATION)

BOOKNET CANADA (FOR INFORMATION)

IPG (FOR INFORMATION)

PUBLISHERS ASSOCAITON (FOR INFORMATION)

12. REPORTING

- i) Progress of deliverables against agreed timeline to be reported monthly by the Project Lead, to the Executive Director of BIC and the Physical Supply Chain Committee Chair using the Project Progress Form.