

What our customers

say about us

ADOBE DREAMWEAVER
ASSOCIATE

ICB LEVEL 4
BASIC BOOKKEEPING

ACCA LEVEL 4 DIPLOMA IN
ACCOUNTING AND BUSINESS



Home Learning College is the leading provider for online professional qualifications in the UK. They specialise in online learning, and use the very latest online delivery and support techniques to help students meet their goals and pass their exams.

They offer industry accredited professional courses in subjects including Accounting, Bookkeeping, HR, Marketing, Business, Childcare and Web Design through partners such as Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA), Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB), Google and Adobe.

Home Learning College's approach to innovation in a changing market and response to customer feedback places them at the forefront of the online training industry. They are committed to continually providing their students with the very latest course content in the most usable format, delivered within 48hrs.

As a result of this, they needed to reduce the amount of admin incurred by automating the communication between themselves and the print partner. This was all to happen in conjunction with a branding update as well as a switch from wire-bound to perfect bound for their course guides.

The Challenge

Home Learning College has historically used the traditional fulfilment process whereby large volumes of stock were held in a warehouse and were picked as orders were received. This method meant that stocked items could go out of date if too many were printed or could become out of stock if too few were printed. The former leads to the tying-up of cash and often to the scrapping of extra books, while the latter proves costly as customers are left waiting for their course materials and may decide to cancel their order whilst waiting. As order volumes can fluctuate throughout the year from 175 to 780 per day, consisting of both mono and colour formats, achieving the ideal stock level using this method proves time consuming and costly. By changing provider at the end of an existing contract, Home Learning College had a very short time frame to implement the changes as customers could not be impacted.

The Solution

With the previous contract termination date set in stone it was crucial for the switch-over to happen exactly as planned; as such Home Learning College and PODW worked very closely in the approaching weeks, undertaking various proof of concepts and testing each process from

automated order placement and handling, through to the customer experience with the courier.

- **Data Communication:**

Fundamental to the project was the interchange of data between the two companies; PODW was able to provide Home Learning College with access to its BookVault system which enables them to check on the status of each title as well as view the progress of their orders at any time. In addition to this PODW built a bespoke translation module allowing Home Learning College to supply their order data in the format in which their system currently exports and to return data in a similar format. In time they are looking to move away from hourly CSV based ordering and begin taking advantage of one of PODW's other supported EDI methods - enabling true realtime ordering using XML.

- **Bespoke App Development:**

Whilst building the digital library of course books it was necessary to redesign the covers for the new perfect bound format that was chosen. Home Learning College was keen to use this opportunity to re-style their covers in order to give a more professional and unified message. As time was tight, having each cover laid-out manually wasn't an option, however PODW was able to develop an app that would create the cover automatically working out the correct spine width and placing relevant text through the cover and spine. This app also enables Home Learning College to use different cover images for courses and apply the relevant awarding body's logo. By creating this expandable app PODW has provided Home Learning College with the ability to quickly update the covers of their entire range in a matter of minutes - and thanks to the way in which print-on-demand works, these covers can be used for orders coming in that same day if necessary.

- **Complete Version Control:**

As new information is released, Home Learning College makes certain that their students receive it. In line with this, new versions of text files are periodically released containing all the latest information and on occasion, changes to legal information. Previously this has led to uncertainty around whether the latest version is actually in circulation - a problem alleviated by the BookVault which enables them to directly see and check the exact

file that is being actively used by PODW at any time, and if a replacement file is needed, it can be instantly replaced and be in circulation for all subsequent orders.

- **Same Day Turn-around:**

Getting course materials to students promptly was one of the principle reasons Home Learning College chose PODW as their print partner, as using innovative barcode tracking and no-fail cover to text matching, they could be confident that their books will be printed and finished to the highest standard in the minimum amount of time. Add swift production to the revolutionary, internally developed dispatch system and students ordering as late as 12 noon can still receive their freshly printed course material the following day.

- **Customer Experience:**

One key concern that was quickly addressed was the customers' experience after the books had left PODW's site. Working closely with their shipping partner DPD, PODW was able to pass the control for delivery of their parcel over to the student. When a parcel is sent out an e-mail alerts the student directly of this fact and provides them a way to change delivery times and date or even have it diverted to a work address. In addition, on the day of receipt an e-mail is sent with the hour long window in which they can expect delivery. This has drastically reduced the amount of administrative work needed by Home Learning College.

The Results

Home Learning College began working with PODW in early 2013. Since then they have experienced same day turn-around for all orders, with PODW printing and despatching hundreds of perfect bound books on-demand every day. PODW provides bespoke weekly reports for Home Learning College charting costs, returns and auto stock updates for non-PODW printed course materials such as CDs and DVDs. This reporting in conjunction with PODW's system provision and support has streamlined the Home Learning College ordering process and reduced administrative time immensely.

Home Learning College has experienced increased value in their product offering; from the provision of environmentally friendly printing through PODW, with FSC and PEFC accreditation on all course materials printed. They have achieved both a reduction in the number of returns (which PODW manage) and customer complaints due to delivery issues or faulty books.

"It was important for us to have a print partner that would allow us to promptly provide our students with the latest version of their course materials to ensure that they were not left waiting to start their studies. Right from our first meeting PODW was quick to understand our business and the requirements that we had. With their expertise they offered solutions that would meet these requirements and fit with our internal systems and processes. The transition happened exactly as planned, with no disruption to the business or to our students which was quite an achievement given the tight time frames we were working towards.

"Since our migration to PODW we have experienced improved stock control and provision of materials to our students. This has allowed us to reduce unnecessary costs and most importantly provide our students with good quality materials and a level of service that they would expect. I would recommend PODW to anyone who is looking for a print partner as they have met all of our expectations".

Matt Ayson

Project Delivery Manager

Looking to Find Out More?

Contact Us

More information on our services can be found by visiting our website www.printondemand-worldwide.com/publishers

Alternatively please contact a member of our sales team for more information by e-mailing us on publisher@printondemand-worldwide.com or call 01733 237867.

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