

The sharp end of offshoring

Hedgehog Publishing offers prepress services at reduced costs and faster turnaround times through offshoring, but with the advantage of being managed in the UK

The idea of offshoring prepress often turns heads, as fast turnaround times and reduced costs are an attractive lure, but the realities of managing a relationship with a company abroad have not always matched the promise. However, businesses can obtain the benefits of offshoring without the hassle, through a UK company that understands prepress issues: Hedgehog Publishing.

Hedgehog was formed in May 2007, having evolved from paper management provider Publishing Paper Solutions. It has the capabilities to take designs, images and text through to a printed or electronic product, due to its partnership with TexTech, a content solutions provider based in India.

Between Hedgehog and TexTech, there is a team of over 150 staff, working 24 hours a day, six days a week, ensuring extremely fast turnaround times for customers at a low price. Files sent across to TexTech can be returned within hours, and a file sent across at the end of the UK working day can in some cases be completed by the following morning.

Unlike many previous offshoring methods, all client management and project scheduling are handled in the UK by Hedgehog, making it the first point of contact for customers. However, Hedgehog is far more than just an intermediary company for the client and vendor.

It provides a number of additional benefits as part of its service, such as overseeing quality control of the work supplied by the vendor and providing feedback and advice on how to make the most of the published product.

One such client utilising Hedgehog's services is leading catalogue brand Express Gifts. Hedgehog is used to provide design and prepress for Express Gifts' three main catalogues a year, along with many booklets. Paul Venediger, founder of Hedgehog, estimates this to total around 50 catalogues a year, some



handled simultaneously, adding up to 3,500 pages annually.

For the three main catalogues, Hedgehog is supplied templates from Express Gifts, but for the smaller booklets, it is simply informed what product to put on which page. For both types of catalogue though, Hedgehog will liaise with TexTech and the publishing manager of Express Gifts with suggestions for how best to design the catalogue pages.

To produce each spread, the client uploads images, stylesheet or templates plus text to Hedgehog's FTP at the initial build. Once PDF's are ready they go through a quality control check by Hedgehog before being uploaded to the client. This process is repeated through subsequent amends stages until client approval after which collected files or printer ready PDF's are uploaded. During the process Hedgehog controls the flow of files. Cut-outs are managed in much the same way.

Along with catalogue spreads, Hedgehog also produces a directory for the Guild of Registered Tourist Guides. Hedgehog is responsible for the entire production process of the directory, from typesetting to design and printing.

According to Venediger, offshoring works best for more formulaic products, making it suitable for mail order, book publishing, directory and B2B magazine work. As TexTech's own customer base already features a number of US book publishers, including Random House, Penguin and Pearson, Venediger is keen to utilise this expertise and enter Hedgehog

into the book publishing sector.

It was due to the calibre of its work and its clients that Hedgehog first selected TexTech as its vendor. Although working with a vendor in a different country may be seen as a challenge, Hedgehog and TexTech have a "fantastic relationship" with daily contact and face to face meetings every two to three months.

Hedgehog's relationship with TexTech has eliminated some of the difficulties of offshoring. Venediger explains: "Often with offshoring, the customer speaks to the company abroad directly and gets frustrated with the cultural differences and possible misinterpretation of instructions. We are able to handle the offshoring for them and with us in the UK the client is reassured that they are always in control."

- www.hedgehogpublishing.com

Hedgehog provides offshored prepress services for Express Gift's range of catalogues

The Guides' Guide



THE GUILD OF REGISTERED TOURIST GUIDES

2009

Customer testimonials

Hedgehog's prepress offshoring service has provided many benefits for clients. Here's what two of them have to say:

San Kapil, head of publications for Express Gifts Ltd: "Using Hedgehog has enabled us to save on costs such as overtime, increased head count and freelance operators. The quality of work from Hedgehog is exceptional and gives us extra capacity, whenever we need it."

David Thompson, Chair of the Guild for Registered Tour Guides: "As our annual membership directory is a major promotional tool in obtaining work for our members its essential we take delivery of a top-quality product. With Hedgehog that is never in doubt: competitive, highly professional and objective, with an acute awareness for detail."