

J. Westin Walch Publishing



Some people are entrepreneurs at heart even though they are working for someone else. Great ideas come to them from current circumstances, they see the door, and off they go. J. Westin Walch was one such entrepreneur. As a schoolteacher and the genius behind the Portland High School Debate Team, he continually led his team to victory in competition. When everyone wanted to know his secret for success, Walch decided to put his winning formula into books — listing possible debate questions and ways to tackle them — and sell the books to those who requested his secrets to success. By acting on a broader vision, J. Westin Walch inadvertently started his own publishing business.

More than 75 years later, J. Westin Walch Publishing still supports creative interests of school districts everywhere with supplemental textbooks on a variety of subjects. Today, with more than 750 titles and 7 employees, the business Mr. Walch started is thriving. And the guiding principle of looking for new ways to accomplish things continues.

A Textbook Case for Digital Technology

Just two years ago, J. Westin Walch Publishing was operating in a very traditional fashion. Selling their books nationwide, the 30 people employed in the

production area used offset presses to print, collate, and bind book signatures. This process was labor intensive and backorders were a constant problem.

“Since we were printing more than 10,000 books a week, we were dealing with things like having the right covers in inventory to complete a book and the cost of warehousing,” states Chuck Thomas, Vice President of Operations at Walch. Because challenges like these were causing inefficiencies in production, a Xerox Manual+Book Factory was implemented at Walch. The system is configured to automatically produce finished textbooks with minimal operator intervention. Quality is consistently high from textbook to textbook, throughout small or large production runs.

Graduating to Digital with Xerox Manual+Book Factory Makes all the Difference

Today, J. Westin Walch is an on demand production facility. Two DocuTech 6180 digital printers form the core of dual Xerox Manual+Book Factory production centers. “This configuration has virtually eliminated the backorder problem. If a book is not in our inventory, it can be on the shelf within four hours,” said Thomas. “Plus, we have cut our inventory in half. We’ve moved to being a ‘just-in-time’ publisher, and it had made all the difference in our operation.”

What other benefits have they seen? “We’ve reduced our labor pool from thirty people in production to five,” says Thomas. “We’ve also cut out warehousing overhead and actually eliminated two buildings that were used for paper, storage, and printing.”

Now that he has created a true digital operation, Thomas credits his success in part to the versatility of the Xerox Manual+Book Factory. The flexibility and speed of the solution has helped the efficiency of Walch’s day-to-day operation and has added dollars to the company’s bottom line.

