

Case study: Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency



“I have had a very positive experience in working with TSO. The quality of the site you have provided for us has been very high, the vast majority of schools have reported a high level of satisfaction when interacting with it”

Ian Skidmore, Systems Assurance Project Manager, National Assessment Agency

“I thought the service we received was outstanding, and is evidenced by timely delivery of an excellent solution, keep up the good work!”

Andrew Ryan, Head of Enterprises, Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) is responsible for developing and reviewing the national curriculum, accrediting qualifications at the appropriate level on the National Qualifications Framework, and funding occupational standards to support learners at work.

TSO has worked with QCDA since the late 1990s when it was awarded the contract to distribute paid-for copies of the National Curriculum. TSO is now responsible for the

distribution of all QCDA titles and provides additional services including print on demand, data management and print management.

Since its launch in April 2008, we have been offering similar services to the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual), which currently operates as part of QCDA, and which regulates qualifications, exams and tests. Ofqual regulates over 6,000 nationally accredited qualifications, offered by over 120 awarding bodies, and works with these bodies to encourage innovation. Its role includes approving syllabuses, monitoring standards between awarding bodies and assessing progress from year to year.

The challenge

QCDA and Ofqual provide a wide variety of publications for those working in education, including guidance and support documents, subject information, and optional and national curriculum tests. It is vital that customers are able to access the relevant publications quickly and easily to obtain the most up-to-date information to help them in their work.

The solution

When TSO was awarded the QCDA distribution contract in September 2004, there were just eight weeks to prepare before customers would start ordering the publications. The processes established during this period formed the foundation of our relationship with QCDA. Within this eight-week period, publications were moved to TSO's warehouse, staff were recruited and trained to work in dedicated customer service and finance teams dealing with orders and customer enquiries, and an online bookshop was created. The bookshop is located on the QCDA website and integrates seamlessly with the rest of the site, making it easy for customers to access and navigate. From this site, customers can purchase QCDA publications, or download many titles as free PDF files. Ofqual publications are currently distributed via the TSO bookshop.

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We also work with QCDA on its flagship optional tests. We are responsible for capturing orders, which schools place online through the National Assessment Agency. We store order data until required by QCDA to distribute the tests. We also manage the printing of optional tests and have set up a community of suppliers to ensure they are delivered to time and produced in the most cost effective way.

In addition, QCDA provides schools with national curriculum tests, which are also ordered through the National Assessment Agency. In 2008 QCDA saw an opportunity to use the functionality developed for optional tests for the ordering of national curriculum test materials. Based on TSO's proven record, QCDA chose to work with us to tailor and finalise this requirement. The resulting new site was delivered within QCDA's very tight timescales.

A comprehensive list of customer service targets has been put in place across the QCDA/Qfqual contracts, ensuring that everyone ordering online or through TSO's customer service team has a positive experience. These targets include measures

such as the time taken to answer calls, the speed at which orders are dispatched and the availability of the website. TSO also provides regular management information reports, enabling QCDA to manage stock, monitor orders and develop an understanding of their customers' needs.

Next steps

Monthly meetings are held with QCDA to identify new opportunities, technologies and ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service offered to their clients.

Service mix

- Warehousing and fulfillment
- Order-taking and customer service
- Print management
- Print on demand
- Bibliographics
- Web design
- Data capture

Results

- Growth in the services provided to the QCDA, which now include data and print management contracts for optional tests and the test orders website for 2009 optional and national curriculum tests.
- Customer service objectives are consistently met and TSO regularly exceeds requirements, for example dispatching 100% of orders within one working day.
- QCDA view TSO as a partner rather than just a supplier.

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