

Beyond the bestsellers: best practices for keeping your backlist alive

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context – the new book trade

- **stock-holding brick & mortar superstores**
- **web bookstores & virtual superstores**
- **backlist & hard-to-find titles**
- **digital printing:**
 - **print-on-demand**
 - **ultra-short-run**



context – the Cambridge experience - then

- **13,500 academic SBNs - \$60m**
- **8,200 backlist SBNs with <100 sales - \$8m**
- **average sale 32 units & average stock 120**
- **1,500 new titles & 1,300 discontinued titles**
- **embalmed dues/backorders**
- **lost sales...**



context – the Cambridge experience - now

- **22,000 academic SBNs - \$75m**
- **plus 7,000 SBNs in ultra-short-run program**
- **1,500 new titles & very few discontinued**
- **\$30m revenue from 1998 to 2005**
- **1,700 titles added to program each year**
- **250k units printed in 2005**



criteria – title selection

- **annual sales < 250-300 copies**
- **HB or PB sbn – in stock – up for reprint – not viable conventionally – would go OP**
- **old HB – selling slowly – conventional PB could not be considered**
- **title is OP – still relevant – Lazarus approach**
- **exclude books with extent > 700 pages, color plates, or extensive halftones**



process – centrally-managed books (CM)

- **title responsibility passes from editor to CM**
- **physical suitability determined by CM group**
- **short in-house pre-production time**
- **digital file sent to offshore partner DPS (India)**
- **DPS prepares digital file for printer (LS)**
- **proof received from LS – checked for quality**
- **title status changed to ‘live’**
- **corrections.., quality.., pricing...**



operation – life in the fast lane...

- **CM stock monitoring and ordering system**
- **2-site approach – UK and USA**
- **Purchase Order, PO acknowledgement, and ASN sent by EDI**
- **stock ordered, printed, shipped and received within 7 days**
- **minimum reprint quantity of 1**



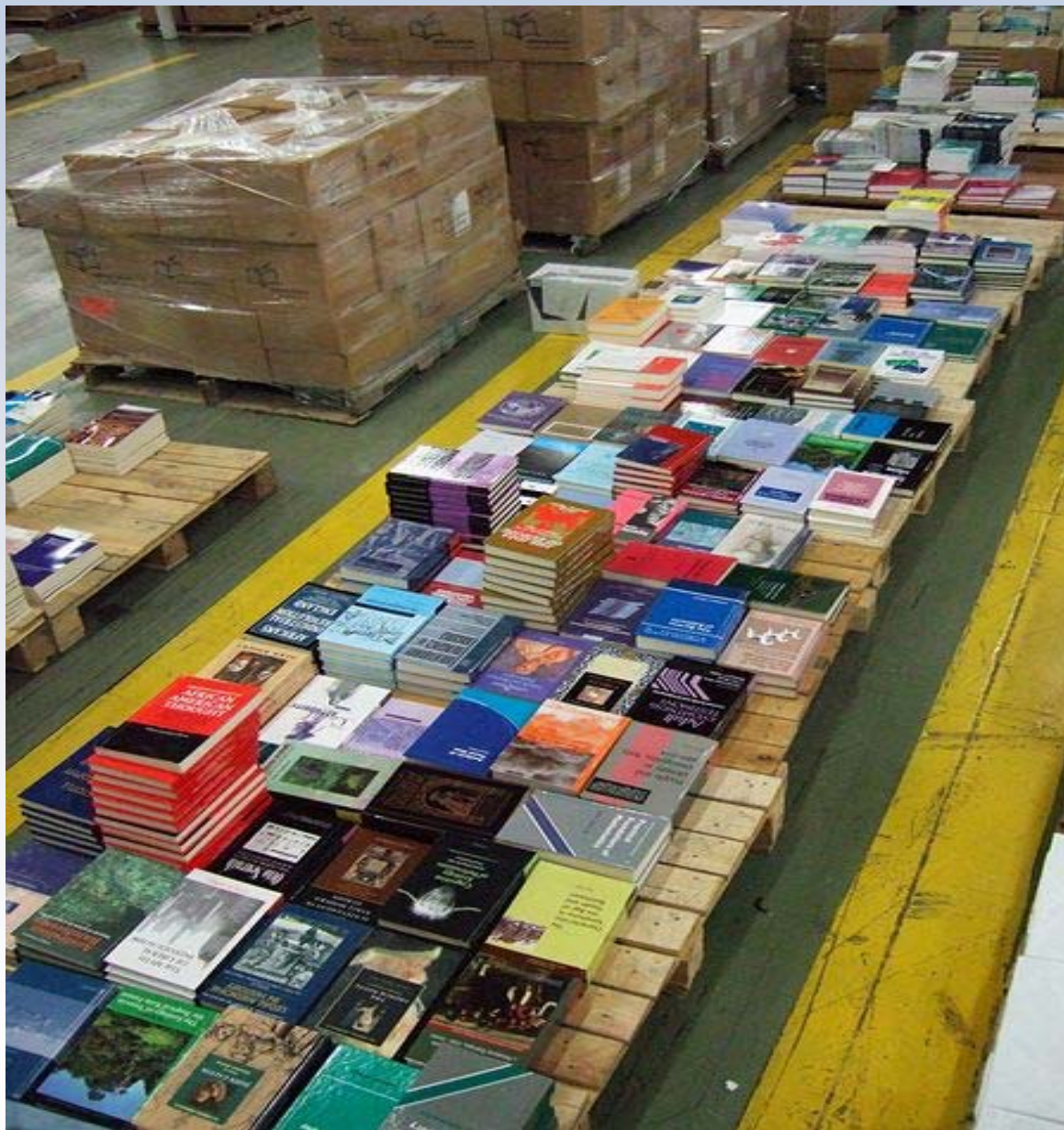
operational challenges

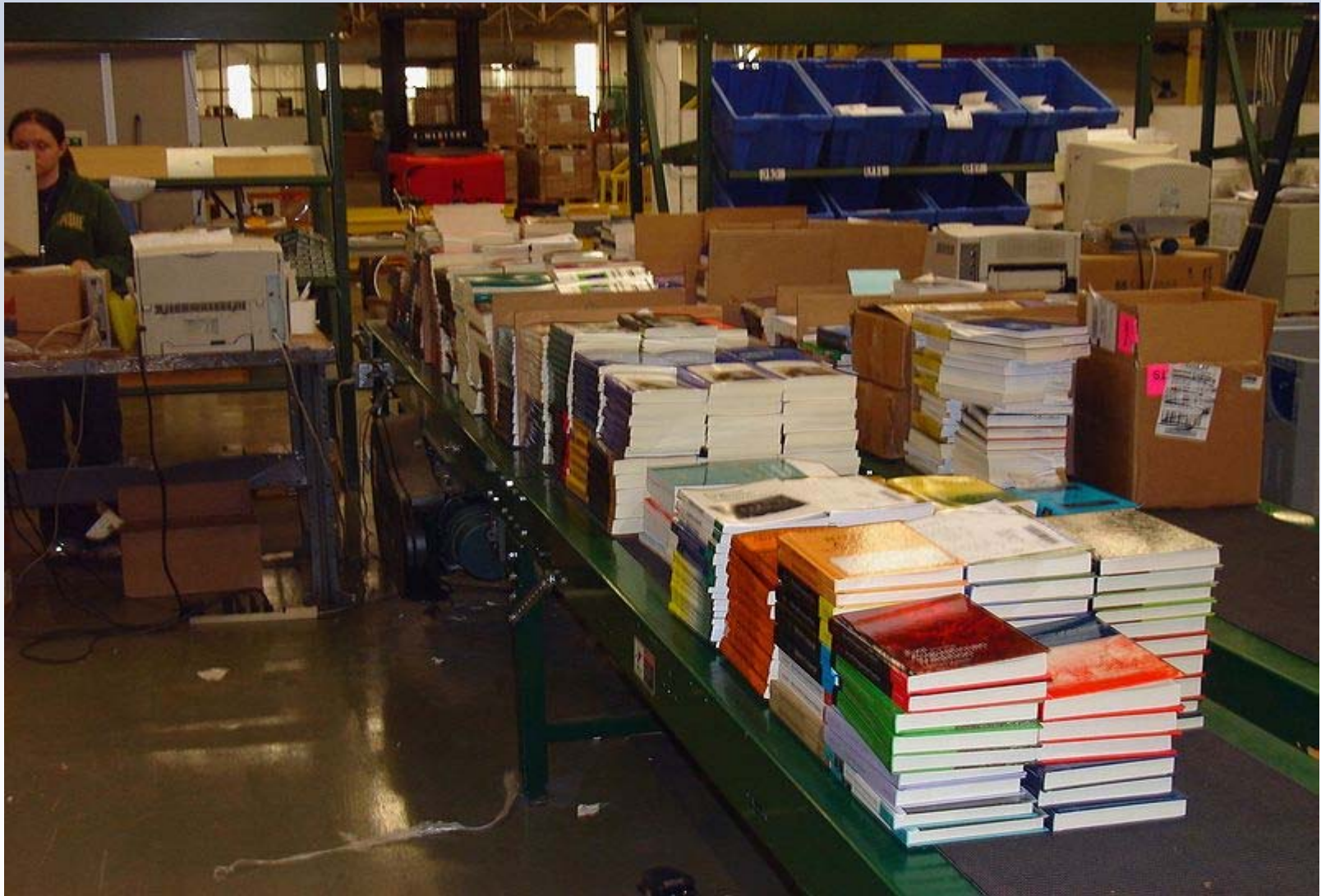
- **the receiving nightmare..?**















operational challenges

- **the receiving nightmare..?**
- **new types of storage requirement**









operational challenges

- **the receiving nightmare..?**
- **new types of storage requirement**
- **dropship option:**
 - true print-on-demand, but...
 - it's not as easy as it looks...
- **some customer service issues**



in conclusion...

- **new income stream achieved by using digital printing allied to innovative production, publication, & stock management procedures**
- **further mining of 'dead' backlist will provide substantial new income with a healthy and durable bottom-line profit**
- **overall digital business model is different (not better or worse) from norm: lower overheads, lower risk, with minimal inventory held**
- **but there are integration challenges...**



best practices for keeping your backlist alive

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