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Profile-Sheri E. Dean

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copies.” We don’t need to worry about loss or damage in quite the same way. We can reduce the number of copies to match anticipated demand (which will be low, since this work will initially involve the least-used titles). We can focus on distribution, speed of delivery, and convenience.

Regional service centers might look radically different than existing storage facilities. Whereas regional *archive* facilities would be optimized for long-term curation, regional *service* centers would be optimized for long-tail inventory management and rapid delivery directly to homes, offices, and desktops. Because we know that no content is at risk, we can experiment with different techniques.

In some respects, a regional service center might resemble a library crossed with a vendor. Servicing of shared print collections could benefit from the expertise of large-scale book distributors like **Ingram, Follett, or Baker & Taylor**, to automate, improve “turns,” and reduce transaction costs. The library world in general could learn from logistics experts at **UPS or Amazon**, and locate service centers near airport hubs and highways. Service from regional library centers should be built to include 24-hour delivery direct-to-user, email order confirmation and tracking capability, real-time display of availability, and perhaps even the option to purchase via partner relationships. It might be worthwhile to consider outsourcing these long-tail inventory management functions to vendors, enabling libraries to specialize in archiving, selection, and discovery.

Within the regional service centers, use can be monitored, and inventory adjusted. For titles with no use, service copy levels could be drawn down to one or even zero, in the knowledge that archive copies exist, or that other avenues are available for re-acquisition if necessary. A title may be available as a commercial eBook, either to rent or to buy. Inexpensive copies may be available on the used book market. Print-on-demand may be available. Scanning and electronic delivery of chapters might be supported. These all become viable options for service copies, because the content is otherwise secured. In many cases, re-purchase of a service copy when needed may be more cost-effective than storing low-use titles over time. In short, service copies can be managed based on demand, using techniques drawn from other industries.

Admittedly, this level of specialization is quite different than the profession’s current approach. Not everyone will agree with this, and it will be costly to set up initially. Other avenues are certainly possible. A widely-distributed light archive, which is essentially our current approach, shares risk and inventory reasonably well. But light archives require broader and deeper retention of low-use materials, and involve their own significant cost. The conflation of archiving and service functions (especially at larger scale) does confuse the issue, as these are very different functions. Trying to serve two masters can lead to sub-optimized service and at-risk content. Wherever we may end up, it’s worth thinking through the advantages of specialization.⁹ 🐾

against the grain people profile

Sheri E. Dean

Sales & Marketing Director
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BORN AND LIVED: I was born in Philadelphia, raised in North Carolina. Lived in various cities for work and college including Washington, DC, Houston, TX, and San Francisco, CA.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I’ve been in publishing for nearly 20 years. Began my career as an unpaid intern and worked my way up from there. Incredibly lucky to have been with some of the best publishers, including **Morgan Kaufmann, Elsevier, Business Expert Press, and Momentum Press.**

FAMILY: My family are three amazing dogs — Daisy, Happy, and Mojo!

IN MY SPARE TIME: In my spare time, I’m hiking, camping, and drinking wine. I often visit my parents, now in their mid-eighties, married 62 years. I have a very close family of sisters, brother, and dozens of nephews, nieces, and now great nephews and nieces. I’m a vegetarian and am always trying new recipes!

FAVORITE BOOKS: A few of my favorite books include **Ken Follett’s Pillars of the Earth** and **World Without End**, as well as **Atlas Shrugged** and **Cold Mountain.**

PET PEEVES: Animal abusers, litterbugs, and dumb politicians.

PHILOSOPHY: My philosophy is — When life sucks, sit on a screen porch with some dogs and great wine while it’s raining — that fixes everything.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Going from an unpaid internship at Barrett-Koehler to Director of Sales & Marketing now — I just knew publishing was for me.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Five years from now I hope to be able to say — I was in on the ground floor of two unique and hardworking publishers, **Momentum Press and Business Expert Press**, and I was a part of their success today.

HOW/WHERE I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Five years from now, I’d like to see third world countries have more access to free textbooks, online resources, and better discoverability. Shutting out any audience that wants to learn is unforgivable. 🐾



Endnotes

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