

Franklin Creative grows customer base through sales on Amazon Business

HOW THIS STARTUP CREATED GREATER EFFICIENCY WITH AMAZON BUSINESS

Overview

Franklin Creative Solutions, a quickly growing office supply company, expanded online sales of its private-label brand Blue Summit Supplies using Amazon Business, boosting revenue and gaining new domestic and global customers.

Big impact from small packages

Owen Franklin has an analytical mind and an ambitious spirit.

As a thermal engineer, Franklin was trained to tinker with systems until they became as efficient as possible. He saw a need for an office supply business that operated more effectively than what the market was currently delivering, so he took a leap and started Franklin Creative as a side business in 2016.

"I wanted a little more control of my own destiny, and to know that my output has a direct impact on my customers by providing outstanding products and services," says Franklin.

Based in Huntsville, Alabama, Franklin Creative provides its customers with a wide range of Blue Summit Supplies branded products, such as folders and envelopes, at the lowest possible price. It sells online through its own website, through other consumer marketplaces, on Amazon.com and now on Amazon Business.



Customer profile

Industry: Retail

Location: Huntsville, Alabama

Founded: 2016

Website: <http://www.franklincreativesolutions.com>

Highlights

- Expanded online customer base
- Used Amazon fulfillment centers effectively
- Accessed international markets
- Dramatically increased revenue and headcount

Expanding to serve more business customers

Owen Franklin made a deliberate decision to sell to both retail and business customers, but realized that his company had greater revenue potential with business customers. When he learned about Amazon Business in late 2016, he signed up immediately.

“Order volumes are certainly higher for business customers, and I suspect conversion rates are, too,” says Franklin. “I saw selling on Amazon Business as a huge opportunity to access new customers and grow within its marketplace, so of course I utilized it.”

Since Franklin Creative was already a Professional Seller on Amazon, creating an Amazon Business Seller account was seamless.

445%

month-over-month growth in 2017

“Even though Amazon Business is designed for B2B customers, it’s very similar to using Amazon.com,” he says. “They both have similar interfaces, so it was easy to make the switch.”

“It was access to that enormous business customer base and a scalable fulfillment network that allowed our growth to happen.”

OWEN FRANKLIN
CEO, Franklin Creative

Sales continued to increase, and by 2017, Franklin’s new company was successful enough that he was able to quit his engineering job and run Franklin Creative full time.

Access to a world-class fulfillment network

Franklin had done his research; he knew that fulfillment was an enormous undertaking for a company of any size.

As a startup, Franklin Creative wasn’t in a position to invest in the significant financial and operational resources needed to develop its own fulfillment infrastructure. Instead, Franklin leveraged Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA), Amazon’s advanced fulfillment network.

When the company began selling on Amazon Business, it continued to use FBA to meet the needs of

its business customers. “For our company, it’s more efficient to get products to our customers in the most affordable manner possible by using Fulfillment by Amazon,” says Franklin.

With FBA, Franklin Creative’s products were stored, picked, packed and shipped directly to customers from Amazon fulfillment centers, which also provided customer service for the products as needed.

“With FBA, we have access to one of the best fulfillment networks on the planet,” says Franklin.

Increased domestic and global customer base

Franklin Creative found that selling on Amazon Business meant access to the millions of business customers already shopping on the B2B marketplace.

“The Amazon customer base is absolutely enormous, and accessing

those customers is extremely powerful," says Franklin.

Selling on Amazon Business helped the company expand its customer base in the United States, but it also enabled them to reach new international buyers. In just a few short years, Franklin Creative has grown from US-only sales to five new markets in Europe: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

Says Franklin, "With Amazon Business, we saw an opportunity to expand into international markets, and the account management team supported us with that transition. All the growth that we've had globally has been solely through Amazon."

Competitive pricing

In the office products industry, products have such little differentiation that sharp pricing and quality service make all the difference. "There's not a lot of competitive advantage in an envelope," says Franklin.

But by selling on Amazon Business, Franklin Creative is able to control

its own pricing to make its products as competitive as possible, and can offer bulk discounts to Amazon Business customers.

"What we offer is efficient, outstanding service and cost-effective products to add value for customers," Franklin says. "And we have the operational efficiency and flexibility to provide discounts to Amazon Business customers."

Revenue growth in a competitive market

With industry-leading fulfillment options and access to more domestic and international customers, Franklin Creative has grown its revenue significantly. Today Amazon Business makes up 28% of the company's total Amazon revenue. To sustain its B2B growth, Franklin Creative increased headcount from one employee to nine within the last year.

"We've been able to grow as a business much, much faster than we would have without Amazon Business," says Franklin.

Franklin notes that for a company that is barely two years old, it's important to look at month-over-month growth since business changes so rapidly. The company's line of Blue Summit Supplies branded goods experienced a month-over-month average growth from 2017 to 2018 of 445%.

28%
of Amazon
revenue from
Amazon Business

"The tremendous growth of Franklin Creative wouldn't have been possible without Amazon and Amazon Business," he says. "It was access to that enormous business customer base and a scalable fulfillment network that allowed our growth to happen."

What does Owen Franklin see in his growing company's future on Amazon Business? He says, "We anticipate even more growth from Amazon Business as more companies join the marketplace — and we're excited to be a part of that growth."

Expand your business customer base with Amazon Business

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