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— Laura Bruck, Raymond Geddes

Company Profile

Raymond Geddes has made kids and “kids at heart” smile with the most unique stationery supplies and toys for almost 85 years. The company is known as the School Store Authority™ because over 50,000 schools and retail outlets in every state (and many countries) turn to Raymond Geddes when they want to know what kids want. This third generation family business founded by Raymond Geddes, Sr., and now run by Will Geddes, is located on The Yellow Brick Road in Baltimore MD, and has 80 happy associates that deliver fun and profitability to school stores and retail outlets. Raymond Geddes produces about 500 catalog pages per year promoting some 600 different products.

Business Opportunity

Laura Bruck, Geddes Vice President of Marketing, has a long background in working with content management solutions. After joining Raymond Geddes, Bruck had the opportunity to work within the organization to improve the management of its constantly growing volume of content and to seek ways to improve the catalog and web production processes. She says, “There was a lot of inefficiency in the catalog production process, and our content was not well organized. In addition, even though many of the elements between our print and web catalogs were the same, we had two entirely different production processes in place. Our goal was to eliminate all of the redundant steps, increase the accuracy of our catalogs, and to speed up the process for placing items on the web.”

Geddes was using Adobe InDesign to create catalog pages. According to Bruck, when a new catalog was in production, operators would retrieve the previous

InDesign page to locate the items for the new catalog. If an item had been changed or corrected in one catalog, but appeared in three other catalogs, operators could inadvertently pick up the older version, thus promulgating



errors. Alternatively, operators would need to make changes in multiple locations to make sure all pages were updated.

Additionally, images were stored within the company's hierarchical file system by item number without the ability to associate metadata with individual items, also contributing to the opportunity for error and increased time required to both locate the image and populate catalogs with proper metadata.

Bruck turned to WAVE Corp and B.Media to find a solution.

Results

With B.Media in place, all product images and catalog pages are now stored in one consolidated and easily accessible repository, eliminating the need to store items on desktops and multiple server locations, along with the associated redundancies. When a new item is added or an existing item is changed, they are added or changed once and the master item is available for easy retrieval during catalog or web production. "With B.Media, we not only store metadata about the product itself such as its name and item number, but we are able to store a wealth of other image attributes as well, including pricing, product safety warnings, and more, right in B.Media. We also have a lot of patented items, and we use B.Media to keep track of patents. This means that the information is available for use not only for catalog production and the web, but also internally as a resource by other departments, including legal."

She points out another important benefit of using B.Media. "Our past workflow was serial and depended heavily on the designers. For example, in the past, copywriters would write item descriptions and designers would then enter those descriptions into InDesign, along with pricing and other information. Now, copywriters enter information directly into B.Media, as do pricing specialists; images can be pulled directly from B.Media; and everything is formatted based on style sheets. This has been an incredible productivity booster for us."

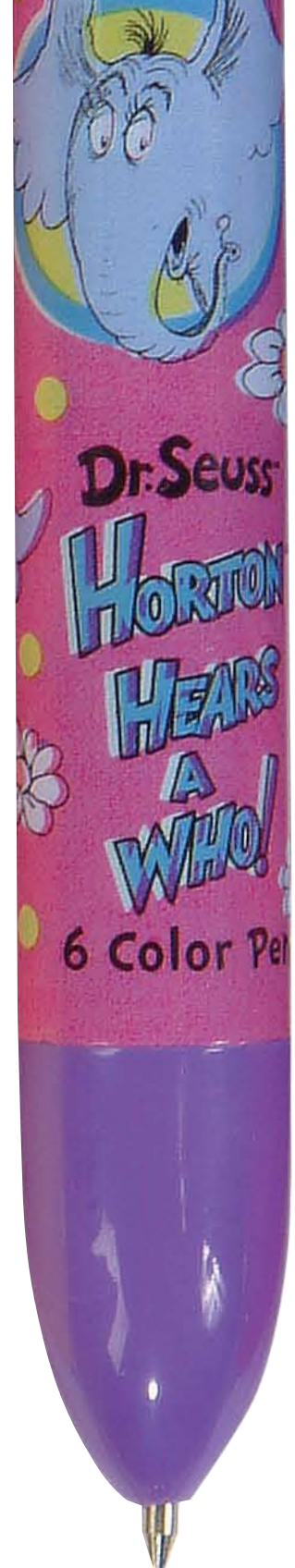
In another big time savings, B.Media has automated file conversions through its Transformations feature. According to Bruck, "In the previous process, our web designer would convert the catalog image to a full-sized JPEG and a thumbnail for the web, separately add copy to our business system, and also do the web site design work. We now export all text from B.Media directly into the business system which ensures alignment between catalog and web copy. B.Media automatically creates both JPEGs, and copy and images are immediately available for the web. For the first time, we are able to put products on the web that we haven't put in the catalog yet, and that wasn't even a thought prior implementing B.Media. Now our web designer can spend more time generating revenue by doing e-mail blasts about new products and specials, and less time doing repetitive, non productive tasks for the web."

When Bruck joined the company, Geddes was producing an 88-page catalog twice a year. With the new system in place, Bruck was able to increase the catalogs to 120 pages as well as add new monthly catalogs of 16 or 32 pages. She says, "This allows us to have a more complete base catalog. And it also allows us to more effectively and frequently introduce new products and promote sale items, which is a huge competitive advantage in our business."

In addition to its catalog business for the school market, Raymond Geddes also serves the retail market through manufacturer's reps who generally do not use the catalogs. "Often a manufacturer's rep will need to show images to a customer. Collecting and disseminating those images in response to requests from the field was a huge drag on our designers' time." Now sales coordinators are able to log into B.Media to retrieve required images, adding to design team productivity. "We were creating 200 pages a year and now we are creating 500 without the need for additional staff."

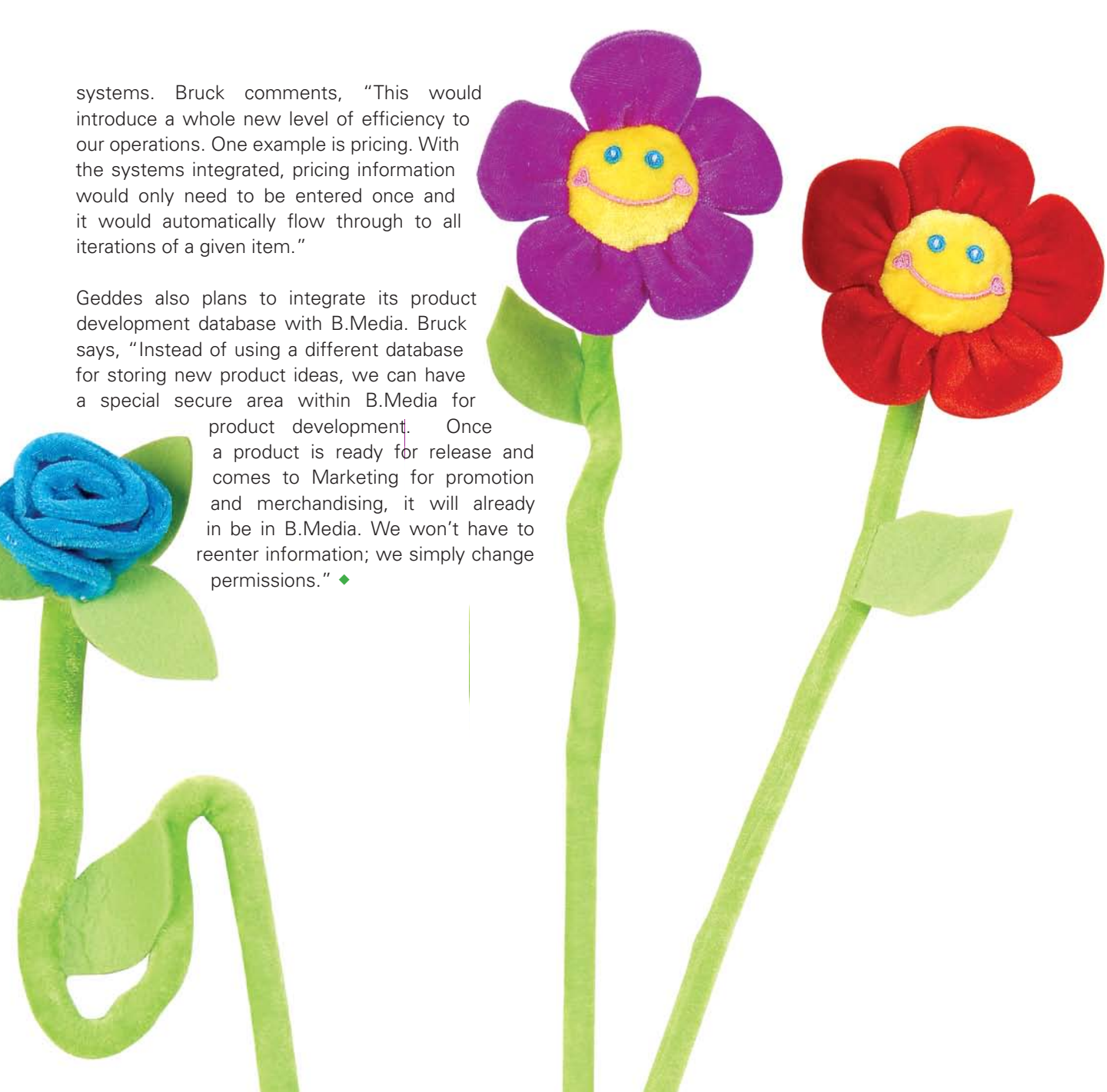
What's Next?

Bruck plans to continue to enhance Geddes' B.Media installation. Among other things, the company is investigating integrating B.Media with its business



systems. Bruck comments, "This would introduce a whole new level of efficiency to our operations. One example is pricing. With the systems integrated, pricing information would only need to be entered once and it would automatically flow through to all iterations of a given item."

Geddes also plans to integrate its product development database with B.Media. Bruck says, "Instead of using a different database for storing new product ideas, we can have a special secure area within B.Media for product development. Once a product is ready for release and comes to Marketing for promotion and merchandising, it will already be in B.Media. We won't have to reenter information; we simply change permissions." ♦



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