

► **How
They
Did It**

Paper to Profits

How Inscape Publishing tripled profitability over the past 10 years.

BY DANA SEVERSON



» Jeffrey Sugerman, CEO of Inscape Publishing, leading transformations.

COMPANY: Inscape Publishing

WHAT THEY DO: Develop and provide training solutions for the corporate market.

WEBSITE: inscapepublishing.com

SUCCESS: As Jeffrey Sugerman celebrates his 10th year as CEO of Inscape Publishing, the company also celebrates a decade of transformational growth. Sugerman has successfully led the training materials provider from a national paper-based product model to its current position as a global provider of digital-based corporate training programs. Since switching from a corporate division to an independent company in 2001, Inscape has grown its revenues to close to \$50 million.

HOW THEY DID IT: In 2001, Inscape Publishing was facing great adversity in an already challenging economic environment. The company had recently spun off from Carlson Companies and was producing an archaic paper product in a digitally evolving world.

Sugerman, a noted management expert, was brought in to lead the transformation into an independent company with a global reach. Then, only 10 percent of revenue was coming from outside the country.

"When I joined Inscape, the challenges were quite complex. We needed to re-imagine our product to meet the growing demands of the digital world yet still support important relationships with our distributors. This was on top of an effort to reposition our services for the global market," says Sugerman.

In addition to digital innovations in every facet of the business, Sugerman also had to transform the culture to get employees to think and act like entrepreneurs. In doing so, the staff was trained to make decisions quickly, under conditions of uncertainty. It was

understood and accepted that this new method would result in the wrong decisions being made at times. Culturally, the organization built an environment of openness and trust. As a result, collaboration increased significantly and the turnover was essentially zero.

While building the ideal working culture, the company focused on improving the product delivery system. They invented a web-based platform that allowed their 1,700 distributors to install training systems at clients' locations. Applying technological innovation, Inscape was able to dramatically change how they recruited and developed distribution partners. This, along with changes to their product development processes, have resulted in more effective training programs that generate a higher level of profitability.

Through all the changes, Sugerman has led Inscape Publishing to three-times-higher profitability, tripled growth in international sales and digital product sales, accounting for over 70 percent of total revenue. 