

CASE STUDY: Office Supplies

How a family-owned office supply company scaled up quickly on Amazon Business

Overview

Today, large enterprises are streamlining purchasing departments, consolidating buying, and looking for ways to meet diversity requirements through their spending. Pacific Northwest Business Office Products (PNWB), a veteran-owned small business, recognized an opportunity to reach these new customers through becoming a seller on Amazon Business. Since 2018, its revenues have skyrocketed.



Reach new customer segments



Receive expert support
from Amazon Business
customer advisors



Gain visibility
through certifications

A lot has changed in the 45 years since Jeff Cudworth, a veteran of the U.S. Army, founded PNWB Office Products, a small office supply company in Washington state. Technology has evolved, business models have transformed, and customer expectations have changed. But family is still the center of his world.

In the 1970s, PNWB sold mostly paper, printer toner and cartridges to small and mid-size businesses. Back then, the sales team would cold-call prospects, take phone orders and load supplies from a Seattle warehouse onto PNWB trucks for delivery to customers.



Today, as its CEO, Jeff beams with pride watching his son, Kelly Cudworth, take the reins of the business. As president of PNWB, it was Kelly Cudworth's decision to become a seller on Amazon Business. In the process, he positioned PNWB to meet the buying needs of large enterprises and government agencies and helped expand the company's original catalog of 2,000 items to over 75,000 items and counting.

"The Amazon business team was really helpful getting me off the ground."

KELLY CUDWORTH
President, PNWB

Taking a family business to the next level

Jeff Cudworth kept his business going into the twenty-first century, employing 10 people while supporting a growing family. In 2013, he was ready to hand over his business to a new generation.

Kelly Cudworth never thought he'd run his father's business. He was adventurous and independent, and wanted to set his own path. Eventually, he realized that his father's company offered him opportunities to grow as a businessman that he couldn't get elsewhere. He accepted his dad's offer.

As a long-time local business, PNWB is a well-respected supplier for small and mid-size businesses as well as the federal government. But Kelly Cudworth wanted to connect with larger enterprises and turn them into repeat customers while continuing to serve the company's long-time customer base.

Amazon Business offered an opportunity to bring PNWB's high level of service to a broader and exciting customer base.



Helping organizations streamline spend and meet diversity requirements

"Amazon Business has created a marketplace where the consumer feels really comfortable," Kelly Cudworth says. "For the large enterprise environments, it really makes sense. They have the ability to generate reports, review usage data, and centralize their procurement strategies."

Over the last decade, large enterprises and government agencies in particular have looked for ways to streamline purchasing and consolidate spend. Amazon Business helps them do that.

"Amazon Business provides a single-source channel so these large companies and government agencies can not only consolidate spend, but also meet diversity requirements that they may want to achieve with that spend," Kelly Cudworth says. And he adds that these are the types of customers that PNWB wanted to reach.

Since PNWB became an Amazon Business seller in 2018, revenue has grown over

43%

Becoming a seller on Amazon Business was a perfect fit for PNWB.

Once the decision was made, Amazon Business helped PNWB build its catalog online, guiding Kelly Cudworth every step of the way.

"The Amazon business team was really helpful getting me off the ground," explains Kelly Cudworth. "I had access to an individual who was dedicated to my account, who was responsive to my emails and calls, and who spent time helping me through the onboarding process."

Growing a second-generation business

In 2018, PNWB began selling on Amazon Business. In its first year as an Amazon Business seller, its revenue grew 43%. In 2019, PNWB is trending to add 20–30% in revenue over last year.

PNWB also gained greater visibility to customers through the Amazon Business certification program because it's a local and veteran-owned small business.

"Larger enterprises want to buy from a small business," says Kelly. "You can feel that when they're communicating with us, after the transaction or even before if there's a quantity discount request. With evolving tools on Amazon Business, such as expanded quoting features, we're increasingly able to connect with these accounts even more quickly. We also get insights into what potential customers are shopping for so we can provide direct proposals to them. While we're still evaluating these new features, we're optimistic about the value to our customers and us."

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KELLY CUDWORTH

President, PNWB

Two weeks after its certification as a King County–based business was posted, PNWB received its first order from a local government entity that the Cudworths had tried to work with for 45 years.

Today, PNWB sells office supplies, furniture, janitorial supplies, printers and copiers to a range of private and government customers, such as school districts and other entities in King County.

Over the past four decades, the Cudworths have seen their business evolve. They've learned that success means adapting to customer buying preferences and embracing new technology while staying focused on delivering high-quality customer service. Now, Amazon Business is helping them keep up with the pace of change and stay competitive without sacrificing the personal touch that makes their business unique.

So, maybe one day, Kelly Cudworth can hand over the reins of his father's business to the next generation.



NAME: PACIFIC NORTHWEST BUSINESS OFFICE PRODUCTS
INDUSTRY: OFFICE SUPPLIES
LOCATION: ISSAQUAH, WA
FOUNDED: 1974

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