

There has been a flurry of activities at Parragon – major happenings at Parragon global; new management acquisition of two US publishers and creation of master stockist for India. Here's more on the same.



Parragon has been a leading global publisher of visual books for over 25 years now. It is one of the largest publishers of children's books in the world, including top licenses such as Disney, Mattel and Nickelodeon.

Apart from that, non-fiction visual books on a wide number of topics ranging from lifestyle, cookery and art to business are also offered by Parragon at unbelievable value. Parragon India has also been carrying on this illustrious tradition of being a leading visual books publisher in a profitable and successful manner in the Indian subcontinent for the last 10 years and in MENA (Middle East and North Africa) for the last 6 years.

“Over the years, Parragon India has established itself firmly as a trailblazer and a force to reckon with in the thriving publishing scenario of the Indian subcontinent. When it was first set up in 2006, Parragon Publishing India revolutionized the way books are sold in the country by introducing the concept of selling through conventional book trade channels followed by modern retail outlets and non-book stores,” says Vineet Sharma, managing director & publisher, Parragon Publishing India. There have been a lot of developments at Parragon, some of which include:

Parragon enters into an agreement to represent rights of two US Publisher's Publishing Asset Lists in International Markets; Brings in New Management



Over the past year, Parragon has been successful in representing the rights of renowned Publishing Asset Lists in international markets worldwide. In that space, it has entered into an agreement to internationally represent rights of publishing assets of two US-based businesses namely, Thunder Bay Press, a well-known publisher of illustrated non-fiction books, adult crafts and leisure activities, and Silver Dolphin Books, a leading publisher of novelty and educational nonfiction books for preschoolers to 12-year-olds. Hereafter, all their content will now be available under Parragon imprints globally. This move implies a major endorsement of Parragon's plans to strengthen its asset base and grow its business by meeting the changing needs of its global customer base. This representation arrangement will also include the asset marketing for Studio Fun (formerly known as Reader's Digest) outside of the US.

Studio Fun assets focus on generic and licensed products under novelty and henceforth, other than Readerlink for the US markets, the rest of the world would be covered by Parragon. “We welcome these new brands and its assets into the Parragon content offering and believe that

their expertise in their niche areas will improve our business growth adding to our existing customers and greatly contribute towards expanding our product offerings,” adds Vineet.

In addition, Parragon has also acquired Wild & Wolf, a company which specializes in gifting for premium retail chains and independent gifting & specialty stores. Their focus is on higher end design-led gifts using their own brands as well as licensed brands. They also create white label gift ranges for chains such as Tesco and Marshalls. Both Parragon and Wild & Wolf together form the DC Thomson Consumer Product Division while remaining owned by the DC Thomson Group. Vineet welcomes the change and is of the opinion that, “As this merger is not restricted to just books but novelty products, toys, books with related toys and so on, it means more innovation in terms of overall product range.”

Restructuring in Parragon Global Management Team

April 2017 saw some major role changes in the Parragon Global Top Management, with an objective to take Parragon and the DC Thomson Consumer Product Division to the next level. Paul Taylor, who has led Parragon globally as CEO for many years, moves on to head Wild & Wolf, which is a new and growing business that Paul will help consolidate. While, Mike Symons is the newly appointed CEO of Parragon and he comes with a very rich publishing & management experience from Penguin Random House. Also, John Duhigg, former CEO of Dorling Kindersley now joins Parragon as its Chairman to support Mike in his new role. The publishing knowledge and experience that both Mike and John bring, alongside their dedicated focus, will enable the entire group to further accelerate the change needed to succeed for the future.

Parragon–Shree Alliance: as publisher & master stockist



Another important development is that Parragon Publishing India has recently announced their recent alliance with their long-term distributor Shree Book Centre which is one of the largest importers, publishers & distributors of children's illustrated books in India. “Shree has been a key contributor since Parragon Publishing India's inception 10 years ago and is well known for its distribution strength throughout the length and breadth of India and their immense knowledge of the existing children's books market. Shree is also planning an enhanced backend operating system and a very modern warehouse high on technology which will help both Shree and Parragon build customer satisfaction on the delivery and services front.

Parragon, therefore, feels that appointing them as the Master Stockist for India would enable better range creation and better services for existing & new customers,” tells Vineet. Paresh Baua, the cofounder & director of Shree Book Centre says, “Shree will be expanding their warehouse capacity and updating their technology to sharpen dispatches, analytics and customer service for Parragon and its customer base. With this partnership, Shree's

distribution network would connect with the existing distributor base of Parragon and reach out to markets in top cities and also penetrate into the B&C towns and spread out to the vast retail base in the country.”Anuj Agarwal, the COO of Shree brings in a lot of operational management capabilities with his experience in IT, warehousing & printing facilities and, as mentioned earlier, plans to build a much larger, fully automated, SAP- implemented warehouse which will further add to the distribution strength of Shree Book Centre.

As far as Parragon’s current distributors & retailers are concerned it would be business as usual. The current terms that Parragon offers to its distributors including discounts and credit terms would continue to remain as is. Also, the current accounts of Parragon would remain the same with Parragon’s team continuing to sell in the market along with the Shree sales team. However, the books and the invoicing would come directly to the customers from Shree’s warehouse in Mumbai. To which, Vineet adds, “This is the beginning of a successful and upgraded alliance. The strengthened association of the two companies will focus on enhancing market creditability and providing better service to our customers.”

Other Parragon’s initiatives



According to Sanjiv Beckaya, COO of Parragon Publishing India, “Parragon with the help of its key distributors like Shree Book Centre, India Book Distributors, Variety Book Depot, Prakash Books, and Jaico has managed to ensure widespread availability of its books at retail level in metro cities. However, now while entering into a product expansion phase, Parragon India will be aiming to expand its reach further by entering the B & C category markets and also look at developing books that can reach out to the right audience with the right product and penetrate right to the grassroots level.”

Vineet additionally mentions, “Parragon India would like to partner with someone who is ready to take initiatives and is focused on providing better customer service and quick replenishment through the latest technology. SAP Technology will especially give us more understanding of secondary sales, help in identifying trends & consumer behaviour, and use analytics to enhance customer service. With this upgradation, we are bound to create a better range of Parragon books for marketing within India & that is another important dimension to the Parragon- Shree Alliance. This alliance will change the face of children’s book publishing quite effectively.”

“We believe in creating bestsellers and hold a long working partnership with Shree. Hitting the right price points, reaching out to the right audience are our next steps. Parragon is adopting a threedimensional approach before venturing into the B&C category markets: relevant content, relevant formats & affordable Prices. Together, our aim would be new product innovation beyond what we already do,” concludes Vineet.