

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****COMPANY:**

*Steps To Literacy*  
*www.stepstoliteracy.com*  
*Bridgewater, New Jersey*

**PRESIDENT:**

*Elaine Thompson*

**INDUSTRY:**

*Education*

**BUSINESS CHALLENGE:**

- *Reduce inventory costs and run more efficiently*
- *Speed up production and deliveries to keep up with rising demand*
- *Find an ERP system that could keep track of thousands of products*

**SOLUTION:**

- *Fishbowl Enterprise*

**RESULTS:**

- *Steps To Literacy cut their inventory levels by 25-30 percent and increased their cash flow*
- *Now they are able to ship orders to customers up to two weeks faster*
- *They reduced their warehouse staff, but they can still add more production capacity*

## Steps To Literacy dramatically increases efficiency with Fishbowl Enterprise

Established in 1996, Steps To Literacy is an educational resource catalog company that provides an array of both exclusively developed and vendor cooperative educational products. Steps To Literacy's nationally recognized literacy consultants handpick custom solutions to meet the needs of classrooms in hundreds of school districts. They pride themselves on offering 26,000 products to a wide range of school districts, from small ones to the largest school district in the country, the New York City Board of Education. Their educational materials are designed to help teachers instill a passion for learning in students of all ages.

### Business Challenge

In 2009, Steps To Literacy faced many logistical challenges. They serve schools and teachers across the country, but their inventory management system couldn't ship or order products fast enough to keep up with demand.

With warehouses and offices located in Bridgewater, New Jersey, Steps To Literacy manufactures exclusive products and creates specialty book and classroom resource collections for elementary schools. They offer custom products and solutions to their customers to meet specific classroom and school district needs. Because of their focus on customization, Steps To Literacy uses more than 7,000 bill of material configurations. The continued growth of this company required an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that could handle such a vast inventory.

### The Solution

They found the right solution in Fishbowl Enterprise, a combination of inventory management and accounting software. Fish-

fishbowl's affordable ERP system allowed Steps To Literacy to get all the inventory management features they needed without having to purchase a high-end solution that would have unnecessary features and be more expensive to set up and maintain.

The inventory management system Steps To Literacy used prior to Fishbowl did not allow for an easily managed way to verify if they had enough parts in stock to complete work orders. **"With Fishbowl, our inventory demands are known as soon as we issue a sales order,"** said Michael R. Lloyd, the Operations Manager who is in charge of running Steps To Literacy's inventory management system. **"This alone allows us to see what parts need to be ordered 3-4 days earlier than with [our previous system]."**

### The Results

**T**hanks to Fishbowl Enterprise's advanced features, Steps To Literacy streamlined processes and found many ways to cut costs. The ERP system quickly paid for itself and kept saving the company more money month after month. **"After implementation, we have reduced our workforce (and subsequently payroll costs) by 20 percent while maintaining the same amount of business, and we would still be able to take on more,"** Lloyd said.

Lloyd also noted that his company has been doing a better job managing its inventory with the help of automatic reorder points and purchase orders. Because of these and other changes, the company has:

- **Reduced the amount of inventory it has in stock by 25-30 percent.**
- **Been able to ship orders out five days earlier on average and almost two weeks earlier during their busy season.**
- **Increased cash flow, which has allowed them to do more creative things in their business instead of being tied up managing inventory.**

**S**teps To Literacy works with many of the largest school districts in the United States, including the New York City Board of Education, Houston Independent School District, Loudoun County Public Schools in Virginia, and Wake County, North Carolina. As they continue to grow, their inventory needs will also increase. And Fishbowl Enterprise will be up to the task, making sure orders are filled, products are restocked and accounting books are balanced.

For more information about Steps To Literacy, visit:

[www.stepstoliteracy.com](http://www.stepstoliteracy.com).

**About Fishbowl**

Fishbowl is a private company based in Orem, Utah. As small-to-midsize businesses grow and face increasing competition, Fishbowl's cost-effective ERP/MRP system (Fishbowl Enterprise) can grow alongside them. Fishbowl Enterprise makes it possible for every company to have the level of flexible accounting and inventory management features that large organizations enjoy. Plus, it offers advanced

manufacturing, barcoding, asset tracking, warehouse management and point of sale tools that integrate with each other.

For more information about Fishbowl Enterprise, visit

[www.fishbowlinventory.com/products/fishbowl-enterprise](http://www.fishbowlinventory.com/products/fishbowl-enterprise).

