



DELIVERING AN 

TESTING EXPERIENCE

  
NPC<sup>®</sup>

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# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE



We don't have a one-size-fits-all mentality, so we're able to adapt to the needs of our customers, accommodate their unique and specific requests, and then make suggestions to help improve their processes.

*Kirk Kissell*  
*Director of Testing Solutions*



**NPC, Inc.** is your partner for exam delivery. Get the most out of your testing and assessment projects with a simple, no-hassle approach that combines exam production, data and document security, and versatile fulfillment services to deliver a positive on-time testing experience... every time.

### What do we produce?

The short answer... whatever our customers need to provide their test takers a seamless, positive test-taking experience. A tailored project management approach ensures your data and testing materials travel through the production process in a timely, secure manner. And you have a number of flexible options for personalized printing of tests and test booklets, versioning and sequencing, inkjetting and barcoding.

Test production also includes non-confidential supplemental materials such as teacher/instructor manuals, practice exam books, study guides, and score reports.

### Security Matters

Layered levels of physical, personnel, data, and document security are instituted and reviewed at every stage of production inside a government-certified secure facility. Security printing solutions — invisible or thermographic ink, pantographs for copy protection, and special paper — can be embedded into your printed tests to prevent your materials from being copied, altered or recreated.

### History

Working with an increasing number of testing customers since the early 2000s, we continue to expand our capabilities and grow with our customers by providing customized solutions and personalized service.

In 2016, NPC produced over 15 million tests and delivered to test takers all over North America.

Some of the types of exams we produce include:

- Elementary and secondary school assessments
- Advanced Placement Exams
- College entrance exams
- Multi-state professional readiness tests for different industries
- Professional certification and license exams (and the course completion certificates)



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# CAUGHT OFF GUARD

*What do you do when you're not quite ready to change the way you do things?*



... we sought a new vendor for test production and delivery that needed to have a convenient location, good pricing, and the ability to accommodate non-standard size (printed) test materials.

— *Director of Examination Development and Operations* 

An independent non-profit certification organization relies heavily on a printed exam format. Why? Because its certification process evaluates candidates on a variety of visual design competencies that requires hand-drawn responses.

### THE TEST:

The organization was forced to be proactively reactive when its previous vendor changed strategic direction and converted its entire test production operation to provide ONLY computer-based exam services.

### 3 KEY POINTS

- Testing administration had to stay on schedule
- Quality, accuracy, and security requirements were essential to test production
- Complex test booklet construction and package assembly

### THE ANSWER SHEET:

The certification organization was able to leverage NPC's strategic location in the northeastern U.S. to reduce shipping costs, and accomplish timely delivery and receipt of materials to 60 percent of the country in 1-2 days. All materials are sent to test center locations across the U.S. and Canada, then collected and returned to NPC for complete reconciliation. A system of checks and balances ensures that no testing materials have been lost or stolen.

### MAKING THE GRADE:

Accommodate unique and specific customer requests, all while providing a quicker turnaround time from test completion to results delivery — this can only enhance the test taker experience.



... they help make the delivery and receiving of our exams to and from test sites a smooth process for our contract test supervisors and staff.

— *Director of Examination Development and Operations* 



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# SIGNATURE APPROACH

*Innovative suggestion is the glue that holds this solution together*



We want to be able to focus on our customers' current needs, but also learn and understand where they're heading so we can anticipate future needs and offer suggestions and solutions throughout the process.

— Greg Ritchey, NPC Business Development/Strategic Sourcing Specialist



A test publisher with high-volume printing needs — quantities in the hundreds of thousands — and a (printing) signature problem needed to work with a vendor it could trust.

**Sig-na-ture.** *noun.* In printing, a large sheet of paper that, when printed, is folded at least once, but most likely multiple times, to become part of a book, magazine, or in this case, a test booklet.

### THE TEST:

Security was a top priority. Understanding the value of this test publisher's information and having safeguards in place to answer all of the test publisher's data, document, personnel and facility security questions was a must.

Also, with a past vendor, the test publisher experienced problems with missing signatures or double signatures in their test production process.

### 3 KEY POINTS

- Eliminate missing or double signatures in the test production process to uphold test integrity & security
- Maintain 100 percent accuracy throughout the entire process
- Understand how critical it was to protect the intellectual property of testing materials

### THE ANSWER SHEET:

Security stayed at the forefront of the test production process, and every exam reached its destination in compliance with the delivery schedule.

To solve the old issue of missing or double signatures, NPC's engineering team suggested a paste on fold method of binding each test booklet. With this new solution, a thin layer of cold glue is applied to the spine of each booklet as it comes off the printing press. The result — no more signature issues.

### MAKING the GRADE:

Trust and peace of mind... it sounds simple, but the reassurance of knowing that exams are printed in a secure location — all accurately — and then delivered to the correct locations on time, every time, is exactly what this test publisher needed.



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# A PERFECT WORLD

*Bridging the gap between print & digital testing*



Now that we have developed a relationship with our customer, they understand what we mean by ‘if we don’t do it today doesn’t mean that we can’t do it tomorrow.’

— Kirk Kissell, Director of Testing Solutions 

Computer-based exams can provide a number of benefits, but a full transition isn't right for everyone. That's why a large nationwide non-profit licensure organization faced a very real challenge when considering a change from paper-based to computer-based exams.

### THE TEST:

Due to the visual, hands-on nature of its testing materials — which included drawings, schematics and the importance of accurate measurements — the organization had an underlying need to keep a portion of its exams in a paper and pencil format.

### 3 KEY POINTS

- Complete customized end-to-end solution
- Produce personalized tests and answer sheets based on test center & test taker
- All test materials need returned, reconciled and warehoused

### THE ANSWER SHEET:

A flexible, customized workflow. NPC's software engineers tailored a print application that used digital barcode technology to overlay the test taker's information onto the exam and accompanying answer sheets. A print-on-demand approach was then used to produce only the necessary number of tests, reducing waste and cost by not printing any extra exams.

### MAKING the GRADE:

Staying relevant — for over 60 years — by displaying a desire to diversify, adapt and develop solutions to make customers' lives better.



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# PASSING THE TEST

*North Carolina school district makes grade with new print vendor*



I was concerned that (our new vendor) was in another state, we had not worked with them before and I wondered if their quality would be what we were used to.

— *Deborah Hartman, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools* 

The majority of standardized achievement tests in both elementary and secondary schools are still given in a paper-and-pencil format. Not surprisingly, the production, organization and distribution of these tests pose an annual challenge for school districts all over the United States.

### THE TEST:

The sheer volume of students in a district with over 80 schools adds another layer of complexity to an already-challenging task. Throw in a new, unproven print and distribution vendor, and that just raises the pre-test anxiety levels of getting all those tests and answer sheets to the correct locations... in a timely manner.

### 3 KEY POINTS

- Establish a solid, working trust level with vendor
- Large number of forms, test booklets and answer sheets need produced
- All of these print materials need delivered to multiple locations

### THE ANSWER SHEET:

Working with a new print vendor in the Northeast — over 400 miles away in central Pennsylvania — was an initial concern for this North Carolina School district, but that concern was quickly erased. All test materials were produced and delivered to one centralized warehouse location within the school district. NPC's software engineers developed a custom program to automate data transfer of both testing specifications and delivery information. Boxes were clearly labeled on multiple sides and stacked in the most logical order based on delivery routes, making the distribution of testing materials within the district as efficient as possible.

### MAKING THE GRADE:

Simply put, the best way to ease customer concerns is to make their lives a little easier.



NPC is right on time, every time. They accommodate us even when we have not planned as well as we should... and their customer reps call us when they find enhancements that could make the product better for our students.

— Deborah Hartman, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools 



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*Your Paper and Pencil Exam  
Solutions Partner*