

## Fulfilment by Amazon means concentration on the essentials

He hasn't always sold T-shirts but today he sells more than ever—along with numerous other articles. Fulfilment by Amazon has played a key role in this welcome development. René Kräupziger runs the Mr. Marble Mail-Order retail business together with his partner. Buying, finishing, and selling textiles are his main activities. The company, which resides in Halle in the former East Germany, serves a niche segment. T-shirts and aprons for kitchen or barbecue use are printed in his own workshop in a variety of fashionable designs and sold direct to end customers.

This family business has placed its trust in Internet selling from the very beginning in 2005. It became an Amazon merchant in 2007. "Originally, it was no more than a trial. We were obviously familiar with Amazon as a reliable online retailer and platform operator. Amazon enjoys an excellent reputation with German consumers," says René Kräupziger. "Despite this, the success of the partnership took us completely by surprise. Our sales with Amazon rocketed. All in all, business transactions are far less complicated than with alternative channels." In the fall of 2008, he took the logical step of changing over to Amazon 100 percent. He even shelved the long-planned launch of his own web store—the Internet address [www.101shirts.com](http://www.101shirts.com) takes visitors straight to the Mr. Marble retail shop on Amazon.de.



*Thanks to Fulfilment by Amazon, René Kräupziger has more free resources to concentrate on his core business.*

### Fulfilment by Amazon – a logical step

After personally attending to shipping and customer service for all Amazon sales for two years, the small team decided in June 2009 to take advantage of Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA). "The arguments in favour of FBA seemed plausible. It was clear that the best way to improve our efficiency was to do away with mixed shipping," René Kräupziger reports. "Our policy was either fulfilment all the way or not at all, in other words, in addition to actually selling, we also use Amazon exclusively for shipping—what's more, at a very reasonable price." The merchant's customers likewise benefit in terms of shipping costs: thanks to the FBA programme, all products offered by Mr. Marble are marked "Get Free Super Saver Deliver" and are eligible for Amazon Prime. This automatically boosts sales even further.

# 101SHIRTS

René Kräupziger, Owner and Managing Director

### Products

T-shirts and aprons for kitchen or barbecue

### History

2005 – Company established, own web store

2007 – Amazon merchant

2009 – Joined FBA

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*René Kräupziger*



*101shirts.com: This web page directs visitors to Mr. Marble's retail shop on amazon.de*



*"Fulfilment by Amazon relieves us of several tasks that other people can get done better. Our model is still the same but the door has been opened to new business opportunities."*

*René Kräupziger*

Coincidentally with joining Fulfilment by Amazon, René Kräupziger slimmed down his product range. "Get rid of shelf warmers in favour of fast-moving items with high sales." With this objective in mind, the portfolio was reduced from, at times, over a hundred articles to, provisionally, a mere thirty (in a wide choice of colours and sizes). The same principle will apply when the range is extended again in the future.

Possible misgivings about complex procedures for delivering merchandise to Amazon and managing inventories were dispelled before they had a chance to develop. "The Fulfilment process is very straightforward. We also received expert assistance from Amazon. The support so far has been fantastic," a satisfied René Kräupziger continues.

The company additionally profits from the more flexible warehouse capacity created by Fulfilment by Amazon, which is a particular advantage for a business with seasonal articles. And the process from the arrival of shipments in the fulfilment centre to their appearance on the Amazon website is efficient. René's team dispatches one or two consignments to Amazon every day. In Kräupziger's experience, everything runs without a hitch. Most of his articles are available for sale within two or three hours of reaching Amazon and only a small 10 percent minority take up to 24 hours.

### **Less routine work, more security**

René Kräupziger is convinced that Fulfilment by Amazon offers enormous benefits, especially for smaller retailers. There are no extra labour costs, for instance, because no more auxiliary personnel are required to pack the individual shipments. Unpleasant—and usually expensive—surprises in the form of parcels returned by customers "freight collect"—are also a thing of the past. Since Amazon's Customer Service covers all inquiries about purchases and deliveries, the number of e-mails on these subjects that have to be dealt with in Halle has dropped to virtually zero.

Time is a crucial factor in FBA's favour, as Mr. Marble's owner confirms. "We used to spend about an hour and a half at the start of the day printing invoices and delivery notes, then sorting these notes as well as parcel labels. It then took us another two hours to pack the goods and process returns. We now save up to three and a half hours every day." However, it is not just the daily time saving that makes FBA such a godsend for this family owned business. "Sickness and vacation were always a problem; most of the time, we couldn't even afford to take a week off. Now that our storekeeping and product shipping are reliably taken care of by Amazon, finding an opportunity to relax is much easier."

"Fulfilment by Amazon relieves us of several tasks that other people can get done better. Our business model is still the same but the door has been opened to new business opportunities," says René Kräupziger. His brain is now clear much more often to come up with innovative and creative product ideas—ideally with the potential to become successful long-term sellers.