

Book Contract Suppliers Overview For Study Associations



Book Contract Committee 2021-2022
05-01-2022

WO4YOU

WO4YOU is a new book supplier that is only a few years old. It is a part of Intertaal, which is a book supplier that specializes in language study material. WO4YOU already supplies books for every study association in Eindhoven, 3 study associations in Delft and 3 study associations in Utrecht.

The website of WO4YOU is:

<https://wo4you.nl/>

This website is clearly very new and crashes sometimes, but WO4YOU says they are open for feedback and that the website will be undergoing some quality improvements. Ordering of the books does not go through this website. The ordering goes through leermiddelenshop (<https://www.leermiddelenshop.nl/>). There is no back end for commissioners of education, where they can turn in the book lists for that quarter. Instead you will have to email an excel-file containing all the books for that quarter. The deadline for this is earlier than the deadline Studystore has. For example the deadline of WO4YOU was 6 december for the third quarter of the academic year. There is however a service, called Sumatra, through which it is possible to track all the book sales each association makes.

According to WO4YOU their customer service is fluent in English. Their customer service will also contact the students as well as the study associations, when there are complications with a delivery.

The delivery of the books is done by WO4YOU itself. According to WO4YOU if you order a book before 3 p.m., it will be sent that day. The books can be ordered the whole year round with a discount, except for dutch books. WO4YOU says they can deliver almost every book just like Studystore.

The discount of WO4YOU is 20% for international books. A part of this discount can also be transferred into a commission for the study association or for OS.

It is possible to try out WO4YOU for a period of one year, so we do not have to sign a long-term contract. The study associations in Eindhoven had a half-year tryout period which they just extended. They stated there were some small difficulties due to the startup however a lot was resolved quite early. The co

Additional information can be found in the concept cooperation proposal (Dutch).

Advantages:

1. Good communication (based on Eindhoven)
2. Can deliver at home or pickup at study association
3. We can do a try-out of one year.

Disadvantages:

1. Lots of unknowns

Bol.com

Bol.com is a bit different than the other two possible suppliers. They do not want to close a contract with us, but rather use their standard affiliate programme for which we have to agree to their [terms and conditions](#). An advantage of not having a contract is that the affiliate programme can be terminated on a monthly basis.

The affiliate programme entails that we get a link that students can click on. When they do, they get a cookie attached to their shopping cart that connects them to us (being either the OS or the respective study association), this cookie will stay connected for five days or until the order is placed. When the students place an order, we will get a commission over the total order. The amount of commission depends on the order, as Bol.com charges different percentages for different product categories, an overview of which can be found [here](#). For us, the commission on books is raised to 8% (instead of 6%) and also holds for second hand books. Additionally, the students get a discount code that gives them a 5% discount on international study books (if the books are sold by Bol.com themselves). We have asked, but there is no possibility to change the commission rates so that more discounts can be given to the students.

Summarizing: the student pays 'normal' Bol.com prices except for international study books, the OS or study associations receives a commission on all products the student purchases (rate depends on the products). The commission only holds on Bol.com's products, and it also cannot be altered.

When books are not available through Bol.com, there is a contact person that can be notified and will then make sure that the book will be available, the same holds when it is expected that a book will be sold in large volumes. The period that the notification has to be done in advance has not been specified by Bol.com, although we have asked, but it is safe to assume it to be similar to the period we have currently with Study Store.

The customer service of Bol.com has sufficient language coverage, there is the possibility to get into contact in Dutch, English, and French. The transport is done by Bol.com themselves, so it is similar to what you might be used to as a consumer. Furthermore, it will be possible to receive sales data, which can be used for future analyses.

Advantages:

1. Good service and delivery performance (based on the BCC's consumer experiences).
2. The total offerings of Bol.com are large.
3. The total amount of commission can become quite large (around €40,000 for all associations together)
4. The affiliate programme can be terminated each month in case we do not like it.
5. Affiliate programme commission comes from other products than books as well.

Disadvantages:

1. Discount percentage on books for students is not very high.
2. The total commission is money that associations do not need in principle, yet designing a feasible way to let the money flow to the students is required (which is difficult in our view)
3. There might become an unwanted incentive for study associations to promote buying books, as it transforms from a service we offer to a source of income.
 - 3.1. Over time, study associations might budget based on commission as fixed income stream. Yet there is always a possibility that we stop the programme, meaning that associations have to revise their budgets.

Studystore

For the last years we have cooperated with studystore for the book delivery. Things will remain very similar compared to previous years. This means that there will be a contact regarding the supply of books and a separate contract about all webservices delivered to the associations.

Studystore has promised to improve on some points that were (some) associations were dissatisfied with. This includes a better helpdesk, being more pro-active in contacting students/associations in case of late deliveries. Currently, it is possible to order books with a discount before the start of the module. This can be extended until 2 weeks into the module to make sure more students get their discount.

In general, the total supply of books is considered to be complete. Almost all books can be bought, others can be added on request by associations. Throughout the years there have been little to no complaints about books not being available through studystore.

Throughout the years there have been some problems with studystore, especially regarding the delivery of books or books not being available. Studystore has promised to do better this year.

Currently, the associations have 2 contracts with studystore, one about the supply/delivery of books and another about the use of webservices. These webservices contain the lml service, the reports service and the website where students can order their books.

Studystore will keep their current discount, 10% discount on dutch books during collective, else 5% and 19% discount on international books.

In comparison to the previous contract studystore has offered to retain the sponsoring of €3,000.

Advantages:

1. Good webservices.
2. The total supply is complete.
3. We know what to expect.

Disadvantages:

1. Some delivery problems
2. Little commission to associations

Data

We asked all the study associations to share with us their book sales data over the years 2018, 2019 and 2020. Based on that data we did an analysis on the current contract, this gave the following insights: how much books are sold, when they are sold, how long does shipment take, are they send in time. Furthermore, using a web scraper script, we managed to gather a lot of (base) sales prices of books from the three suppliers above, which help to give an indication of how expensive each supplier is and how much discount we can give to our students.

Current performance

Based on the available data, we found that over the course of 3 years, 332 unique titles that resulted in a total of 29635 books were sold, having a value of approximately €1,653,000.-.

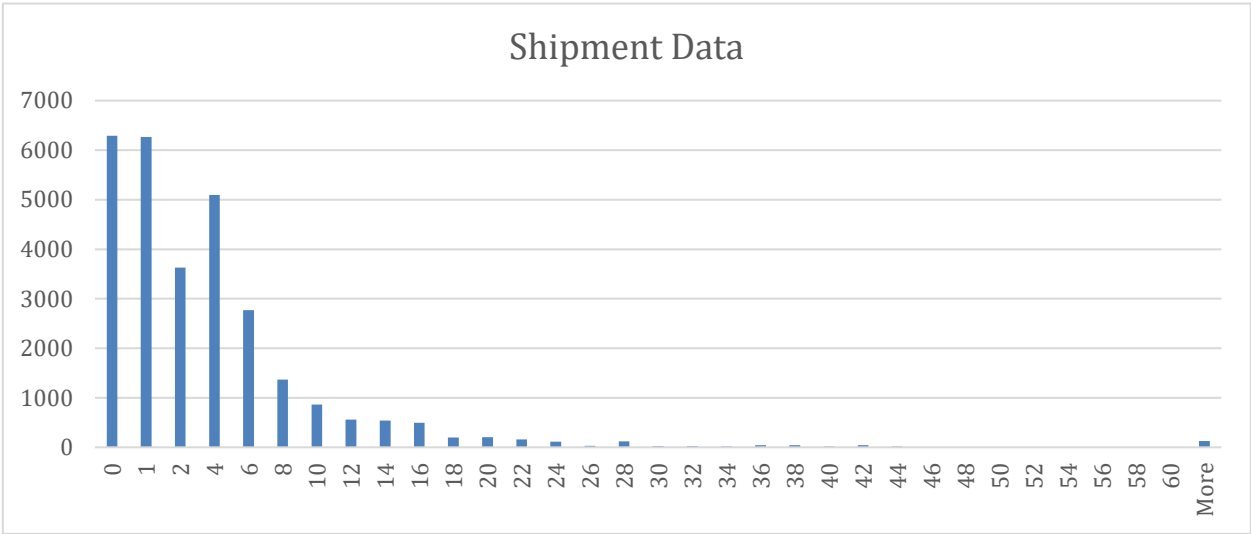


Figure 1 Histogram of the number of days between order and shipment

We calculated the difference between the order date and the shipment date (Figure 1). Assuming the postal carrier takes between 1 and 3 days, we find that 21281 out of 29635 books (72%) are delivered within one week (disregarding weekends). The average time between ordering and shipment is found to be 5.35 days.

Furthermore, we looked at when books are ordered, which can be seen in Figure 2. We see that most books are ordered in the week before and the first week of a quartile. We have asked all suppliers if they were able to handle such peak demands, which they all said they could.

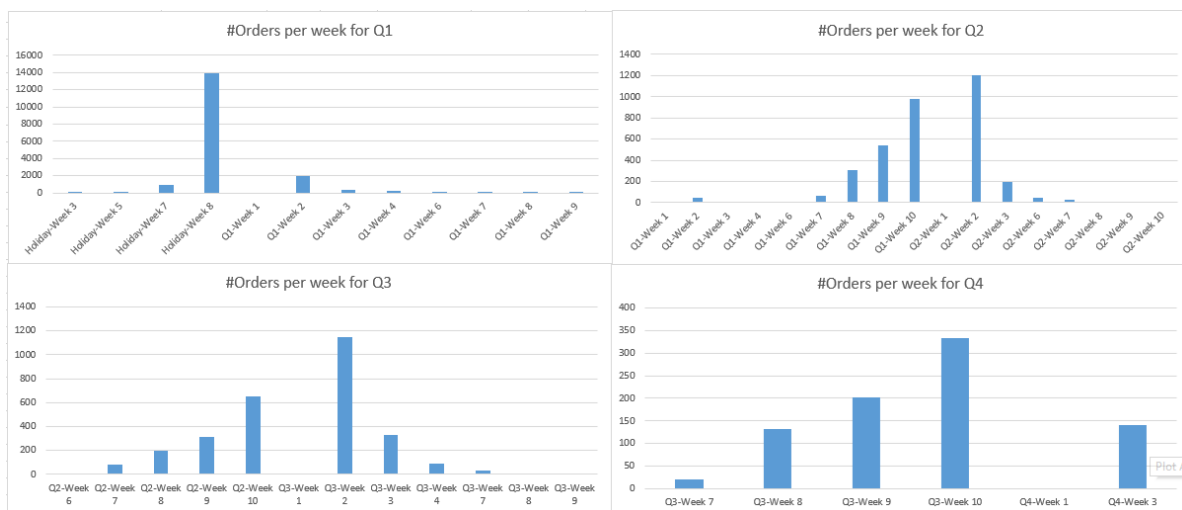


Figure 2 Book ordering behavior per quartile

Choosing a new supplier

Based on discount percentages only, it is hard to determine the cheaper supplier. Therefore, using a web scraper script, we were able to retrieve quite some data on the base prices that the different suppliers take into account. Unfortunately, the dataset is not completely reliable as we could find prices of 327, 307, 19 books for StudyStore, Bol.com, and WO4YOU respectively that overlap with our book sales data. Because the price lists are not complete, we display both average prices of the overlapping data as well as the complete dataset. The total datasets consist of 495, 464, and 278 bookprices for StudyStore, Bol.com, and WO4YOU respectively.

Table 1 Data per provider

Supplier	Nr of overlapping books	Average base price overlapping books	Max Discount	Average Max Disc. Bookprice	Total bookprice dataset size	Average base price complete data set	Discounted average base price	Shipment or Service costs
StudyStore	327	€ 81.32	19%	€ 65.87	495	€ 78.87	€ 63.89	€1.95
Bol.com	307	€ 66.39	5%	€ 63.07	464	€ 64.76	€ 61.53	€0 ¹
WO4YOU	19	€ 87.66	20%	€ 70.13	278	€ 79.90	€ 63.92	€0.95

As explained, Bol.com will yield a commission of around €44,000 each year (based on the last three years of sales) which can be used by study associations and/or the OS. StudyStore will give the OS a lumpsum of €3000 each year. Lastly, the amount of money study associations or the OS will get is determined by the chosen discount percentage. To get an amount of €3000 per year, a discount of approximately 0.5% should be awarded to the OS, while the students get 19.5% discount.

¹ For orders of size larger than €20. Since books are almost always more expensive, it is practically €0.