

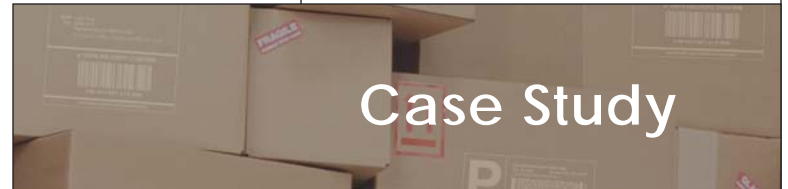
The Chess House

Serving the Chess Community
Since 1972



www.endicia.com
800-576-3279.140

Both chess and shipping involve the efficient movement of pieces to a desired end. For the former, The Chess House needs no help; for the latter, it relies on Endicia.



Established in 1972, The Chess House markets chess sets, equipment, and educational supplies to individuals and schools worldwide. It promotes chess in education and provides resources to help schools and chess clubs as chess instruction becomes a part of their school programs. The Chess House even caters to non-chess players, selling decorative and/or unique chess sets, which make for beautiful display pieces.

Background. From its humble beginnings as a small mail-order business located at 39th and Main in Kansas City, Kansas, The Chess House has become an internationally recognized mail-order and Internet supplier of chess-related goods. Founded by Jack B. Winters, who was once the highest rated chess player (by the United States Chess Federation) in Missouri and played world chess champion, Bobby Fisher, to a draw, The Chess House became a worldwide mail-order and chess-related supply and retail store under the 15-year direction of its second owner, Donald Lynn Oswald. Since being sold to the Neff brothers in 1994, The Chess House has soared to new heights, expanding sales to the Internet and, since 2003, achieving a strong Web presence and domestic and international vibrancy. Despite the rapid growth and entrepreneurial approach, the Neff brothers have preserved the welcoming atmosphere and exceptional service for which The Chess House has been known since its inception.

The Chess House sells a large variety of chess sets: traditional, travel, electronic, fine wood, giant outdoor, and hundreds of types of themed chess sets, from sports to war. Additionally, it sells equipment such as timers and other accessories, plus an array of books, software (e.g., for playing chess against a computer, for learning how to play chess, or for improving one's chess skills), and DVDs. Of all of its merchandise, chess sets sell best. The Chess House sells primarily online, via its Web site, as well as via a free catalog that reaches thousands of customers yearly. Though many customers learn of The Chess House simply



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through Google searches of their chess interests, The Chess House also markets through eBay and other online channels; plus, it has a strong presence in national and state chess magazines. Sales range from \$1,000 to \$4,500 a day, averaging \$2,500, with orders placed from most everywhere. (The sole exception is Africa, with South Africa being the only sales source of note.)

Endicia's Role. An Endicia customer since May 2003 and currently using Endicia Premium, The Chess House ships about 30 packages per day during its slow season and from 60 to 100 packages per day during the holiday season. About 40% of the packages ship via the Postal Service. Of those 40%, just over half goes Priority Mail, one-fifth First-Class Mail, one-sixth Media Mail, and one-eighth international mail, of which Global Express Mail, Global Priority Mail (flat and variable rate), Airmail (Letter and Parcel Post), and Economy (Letter and Parcel) are used on a regular basis. Customers choose the method of shipment.

Endicia integrates so smoothly into The Chess House's workflow that it can take a mere 40 to 50 seconds from the time a new customer places an order until it is in the outgoing bin. Even orders shipping internationally take no more than two minutes to fulfill, including the customs forms. Such efficiency arises from several factors: the ability of customers to easily choose their preferred shipping service level based upon where they live and the specifications of the shipment; the use of Postal Service resources and The Chess House's own packing techniques; address verification and correction through Endicia; and not having to wait in line at the Post Office, as everything has been done already through Endicia.

The Endicia features most often used by The Chess House are the completion and printing of customs forms, Stealth Indicia, and label customization. The generation of completed customs forms streamlines The Chess House's international shipping, making it easy. By concealing the postage amount, Stealth Indicia enables The Chess House to charge a fair shipping and handling fee without upsetting customers. Label customization affords a professional look and helps brand the business, with The Chess House customizing Zebra 4" by 6" labels with its logo, return address, and sometimes even a rubber stamp (e.g., a message such as "Happy Birthday"). It employs laser printers for document printing (customs forms, packing slips, and invoices) and a Zebra thermal printer for label printing.



Remarks Raphael Neff of The Chess House:

"Endicia has created greater efficiency for us and our customers, saving us several hours per week, which equates to thousands of dollars per year; moreover, the effectiveness of address validation has practically eliminated returned packages, and the ease of processing international orders has truly made us global."

The Future. The Chess House will continue to provide a full range of chess offerings, from electronic chess sets to wood chess sets, software, clocks, books, and supplies. It will remain an innovative, consumer-friendly, world-wide chess store and chess interest site. In keeping with its key goal of helping people learn chess, recognize its benefits in education, and of equipping them with the tools needed to play and enjoy the game, The Chess House will continue to support schools and chess education programs, helping them get started and affordably sourcing their materials.

To learn more about The Chess House, visit www.chesshouse.com.