

Astrid deRidder

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Publishing and content transformation leader with 20+ years' experience modernising editorial operations across edtech, higher education, and international publishing. Combines deep expertise in content strategy, quality frameworks, and AI-driven workflow design with a grounding in evidence-based pedagogy — consistently translating research-backed principles into content that drives measurable learner outcomes.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE

Save My Exams

London, UK

VP Content

July 2023–present

- Owned a £2.5m content budget and a £2m+ annual Publishing Plan, delivering all courses on time and on budget while directing £200k+ in incremental investment for growth and innovation.
- Reengineered the Content team into high-performing subject-specialist and delivery squads, increasing output per content creator by 144% and reducing total cost per content project by 2.41×, verified against real cost data.
- Pioneered AI-assisted content authoring workflows, achieving a 6.9× increase in Exam Question production speed and an 84% cost-per-question reduction (£72 to £11), while establishing governance frameworks for quality assurance of AI-generated content at scale.
- Developed the Content Quality Index (CQI) — a bespoke 10-point quality framework covering accuracy, pitch, sensitivity, and exam-specificity, now the embedded quality standard across all content types and for QA of AI-generated content at scale.
- Applied content IP expertise to identify a £2.6m VAT classification risk, delivering direct commercial value and contributing to company-level legal and financial strategy.
- Delivered a 15% uplift in 7-day returning user retention through content quality optimisation.
- Drove an 18% increase in organic traffic—across both branded and unbranded search—by aligning SEO tactics with high-impact content production.
- Grew the live course catalogue from 190 to 886 courses since joining in July 2023 (up 366%), while maintaining full exam-board specificity across every course.
- Led the launch and scale-up of Advanced Placement content (launching into a new geographic market) by growing live AP course coverage to 12 courses including the four highest-candidate exams, and driving 165% year-on-year growth in AP traffic.
- Developed and executed a content strategy achieving 80%+ coverage of exam candidates across key subjects and levels, driving relevance and reach.

FutureLearn

London, UK

VP Content & Learning / Director of Content

February 2021–June 2023

- Led a transformational Content Strategy that streamlined creation and delivery workflows, cutting overhead costs by 18% YoY while boosting course quality.
- Directed a global, cross-functional team of 31 across the UK, South Africa, and Australia, spanning portfolio, design, media, editorial, and project delivery.
- Scaled content output by 200%+ YoY (from 482 to 1,286 published courses) by embedding data-driven decision-making across the end-to-end pipeline.
- Coordinated cross-institutional publishing operations across 50+ university and industry partners, managing quality standards, editorial workflows, and release schedules at scale.

- Introduced workflow management tooling to unlock production efficiency, reducing end-to-end course development time by 25%.
- Achieved best-in-industry learner engagement, with an >11% increase in engagement rates
- Owned a £2m course investment budget, evaluating new opportunities and optimising spend to drive sustainable, high-ROI content development.
- Fast-tracked to VP after 12 months in recognition of strategic impact and operational delivery.

World Bank

London, UK

Consultant, International Expert on Textbook Development

December 2020–June 2022

- Appointed as a specialist consultant for the Armenia Education Improvement Project, advising on national curriculum and textbook reform.
- Delivered expert training and strategic guidance to Ministry of Education officials and local publishers—elevating standards in curriculum design and instructional publishing.
- Shaped national policy and practice on textbook planning, development, and pedagogy, addressing systemic challenges in teaching and learning quality.

Macmillan Education Ltd, SpringerNature

London, UK

Head of Custom Publishing / Head of Planning

May 2018–February 2021

- Led the international Custom Publishing division to deliver 16% YoY revenue growth, building a high-value project pipeline worth €10m+ in lifetime value.
- Managed global editorial and project teams across London, Madrid, Warsaw, and Hong Kong, aligning closely with regional leaders in LATAM and EMEA to drive integrated publishing strategy.
- Spearheaded major business initiatives—overseeing legal restructures, workflow redesigns, and time-to-market reductions to improve operational agility.
- Expanded the business into high-growth markets including Vietnam, Myanmar, Peru, and China—launching new partnerships and business models to meet local and global demand.
- Led localisation programmes for culturally complex and fragile markets — ensuring educational content was contextually appropriate, pedagogically sound, and aligned to local curriculum requirements across LATAM, EMEA, and Southeast Asia.
- Selected to represent Springer Nature in the Financial Times 125 Women in Business forum, recognising leadership and industry impact.

Cambridge University Press, Education

Cambridge, UK

Head of Business Development, Education Reform

May 2016–May 2018

- Led global business development efforts, securing £3.27m in contracts in FY16 and over £4.5m in FY17 across emerging education markets.
- Appointed as Publishing Expert on the International Advisory Board for Vietnam's World Bank-funded Renovation of General Education Project (2017).
- Directed complex, high-stakes negotiations with senior government clients—crafting successful bids, securing contracts, and aligning delivery teams for flawless execution.

Head of Content, International and UK Education

April 2015–May 2016

- Built a new team of pedagogical content experts within the newly formed Cambridge Learning for Schools division, shaping strategy on content hierarchy, endorsement, and teaching practice.
- Oversaw development and production of 350+ ISBNs annually, ensuring delivery to Cambridge's exacting quality standards with a multidisciplinary team (editors, designers, permissions, digital).
- Increased editorial and production team scalability by 154% in just 18 months through targeted workflow redesign and team structure optimisation.

Content Development Manager, International Education

October 2013–April 2015

- Led the Content Development (5 editors) and Product Design (2 designers) teams through a period of significant organisational change—providing clear leadership, structured development plans, and hands-on pastoral support.
- Introduced and embedded a rigorous, transparent quality assurance programme to raise editorial standards and reduce rework.
- Promoted to Head of Content in recognition of leadership impact and operational excellence.

London, UK

Insight Guides, APA Publications Ltd.

*Commissioning Editor, promoted to Publishing Technology
& eBook Manager*

October 2010–October 2013

- Led digital transformation by designing and implementing an XML-first workflow and automated page layout system (Typefi) across multiple print and digital products.
- Launched a full eBook programme (.epub2 and .mobi) for four legacy print series, managing digital production for 137 ISBNs in the first year.
- Delivered cross-functional training to editorial, cartographic, design, and production teams, embedding digital-first practices and tools.

EDUCATION

Open University

Master of Business Administration (Merit)

London, UK

May 2020–Oct 2023

Carnegie Mellon University

Master of Arts, Literary & Cultural Studies

Pittsburgh, USA

December 2004

University of Denver

Bachelor's in Music Performance (harp)

Denver, USA

May 2002

New York University

Certificate in Book Publishing

New York City, USA

2008–2009

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Stagetext — Board of Trustees (April 2026–present)

A UK charity providing live captions and subtitles to make events, theatre, and public life accessible to deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing people.

Publishing Training Centre — 2015–2023

The UK's leading independent provider of professional development for the publishing industry. Advisory panel member (2015), Board of Trustees (2017), Vice Chair (2019–2023).

Springer Nature Disabled Employee Network — Co-founder and Chair (2019–2020)

Established and led the company's first employee resource group for disabled staff and allies, building peer support structures and advocating for workplace accessibility.

Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition — Senior Judge (2015, 2016, 2017)

Anglia Ruskin University — Mentor, Publishing MA programme (2016–2017)