

Morris Ballen joined the family manufacturing business, Disc Makers, in 1960 after graduation from University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. He worked after school during high school and college and enjoyed the business environment. He wanted to grow up and be just like his dad, who started the company in 1946. Disc Makers was a "pressing plant" manufacturing 45 RPM records for small independent record companies nationwide. As the record business evolved, the company evolved. Morris morphed the company from a low margin commodity manufacturer to the national leader in serving independent musicians, allowing them to manufacture and release their own CD's for sale at their gigs. Disc Makers pioneered the "product as a service" niche in the music industry; producing a catalog that offered a variety of manufacturing options for the independent musician. In 2005 sales were \$65 million with all sales paid for in advance. The average sale was \$1200 and annual catalog circulation was 4 million catalogs. The unique model was that all manufacturing was done in-house, and delivery of finished CD's from supplied master was 5-10 days, with the bulk of the orders being 5 day-turnaround at a premium price. Intimate understanding of BOTH the manufacturing process and the marketing process was the key to the company's success. "Anyone can make stuff, but it has to be sold." (anonymous)

In 2005 the majority of the company was sold to a private equity firm in NYC and Ballen retired, holding a substantial minority position. Since then, the company added digital music services and the company was sold twice more creating three substantial paydays for Morris Ballen. The company fundamentals of successful business practices kept the company growing after Morris Ballen left the company.