

Call Me Betty!

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ABC News, About Us, Promotions, The ABC Espresso Book Machine, Writing

An Interview with Betty the Book Machine

You might have heard of a [book making machine](#) situated in both our stores. We have always secretly referred to her as “Betty”. María and her colleagues Lília and Steven get up close to her and her sister BettyToo in The Hague all the time, but we never actually let her talk for herself! Please meet Betty, the core member of our book-making team.



Betty in ABC Amsterdam (with human helper Jilles).

What are your responsibilities at ABC?

I am a book-making machine. I can produce a perfect bound softcover book within minutes. Together with my colleagues who are responsible for providing me with the appropriate files, I help customers turn their personal project into a book. Let's say you have written short stories, a family cookbook, a dissertation, a journal, whatever you can imagine: my team and I will assist you so that you can hold the first copy of your own book in your hands.

How long have you worked at ABC?

I was constructed and trained at [On Demand Books](#) in the USA and from there I was sent to the Netherlands – what an exciting journey! I started working at ABC in 2010 and have been printing and producing books for customers ever since.

Do you sometimes feel homesick?

No. My little sister, BettyToo, works in The Hague and even if we don't get to see each other very often, we communicate on the network. Plus, our mechanic María travels back and forth between the stores and keeps us up on the latest gossip.



María and Betty, done gossiping.

What is the best part of your job?

It is the moment when I drop the first copy of someone's lifetime project into the book chute. The author can finally take the book in his hands – feel it, smell it, caress it – after so many hours of writing. This is a moment when an abstract idea suddenly becomes physical and very real. It makes me happy to see the customer happy and that's what I look forward to each and every single day of work.

How would you describe your customer service?

I am consistent and dependable. Once my colleagues figure out what the customer wants and I have the files I need, I do an outstanding job. Well, it might happen that I get a little glitchy now and then, but María gets me back online in no time.

What do you think people should know about ABC?

That I exist! To many customers, ABC is a wonderful, English-language bookstore but it is only when they see me that they realize that we actually *make* books, too. That's how the store becomes relevant not only to readers but also to authors who may use my services to print the first copy of their book; be that in Dutch, English, Arabic, Hebrew, Chinese, Portuguese etc. The American Book Center in Amsterdam and The Hague are the only bookstores in the Netherlands that have a machine like me and BettyToo.

Interview by Charlotte Lacroix.