

A bit of history

The name CopyQuick refers to the company Pierre-Alain Mouttet's father in law started. He founded a photocopying firm in Bern in 1968 (!) and went on to expand into a company with multiple outlets. He derived his business concept from the United States. At some point he employed some 450 people in 38 outlets.

However, ill-guided real-estate investments steered the company into

trouble in the early 1990s, forcing Martin Hostettler, Gabriele Mouttet's father, to sell up. The company was sold off in parts. Eventually Pierre-Alain Mouttet and his wife Gabriele took over the outlets in the French speaking part of Switzerland in 1993, the one in Neuchâtel excluded. Mouttet was previously employed in banking and, together with his wife, decided to take on these outlets, which then employed 24 people. Later, in 1999, they decided to also take over her father's offset printing establishment in Flamatt, 15 minutes from Bern. CopyQuick's 10 outlets currently employ some 90 people.

Virtual Switzerland

With a populace of 7 million Switzerland seems a fairly straightforward country; however, the fact that its people speak several different languages tends to make things a little more complex. Managing-director Nourhan Börek of the CopyQuick Printing Center in Renens says that he maintains excellent and frequent contact with his colleagues in other outlets and that they occasionally exchange jobs in order to be able to print and deliver closer to the customer. "The future is definitely virtual," he says, "but digital printing is

much more suited to these developments than copying or printing in offset. We have taken the lead in procuring the most advanced equipment and software. Now we are witnessing a major revolution from black and white to colour."



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CopyQuick Gruppe conquers Switzerland with Printing on Demand

Although the name CopyQuick contains a reference to photocopying, this does not tally with the reality at this Swiss company. "Particularly in Renens, near Lausanne, the majority of our customers hardly ever visit our shop in person anymore. Although they still do in Lausanne, Bern and Geneva. Almost everything is done digitally, from delivery via FTP and the Internet to the processing of digital files into print," says owner Pierre-Alain Mouttet.



Pedestrians

"We are located in areas with easy access for pedestrians, i.e. not on industrial estates, but in the centre of town. And quite a few of our customers pay in cash, which is a pleasant

fringe benefit. We pride ourselves in our delivery on time service – prints ready the same day. Our clientele further consists of several famous Swiss public schools, some small and mid-sized companies and a number of very large corporations. A branch of one of our major clients, a private bank based in Geneva, engaged in world-wide merchandising, is located right across from us here in Renens," Pierre-Alain Mouttet explains.

Over the past few years offset has been replaced by digital production printers; Renens still features a two-colour press and Flamatt a number of computer-to-press offset presses. Renens and Flamatt both had DocuColor 70 machines (really useful to learn the process for fully digital printing, unfortunately with few resonance and lot of software not being able to calculate the full personalization), whereas DocuColor 2045 and 2060 machines take care of colour printing in Bern, Renens en Geneva. Renens, Flamatt, Lausanne and Geneva all feature black and white DocuTech models 135 and 180.

**"Customers are our life's blood.
We are not here to exacerbate problems, but
to solve them."**

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Digital delivery

“Customer contact nowadays is largely digital,” Pierre-Alain Mouttet confirms. “We send a hard copy proof or a PDF containing a profile and deliver jobs with an invoice attached. Usually we do visit a client beforehand to discuss the best way to place their orders. With smaller customers and large corporate clients this does not pose problems; professional advertising agencies and designers have much more difficulties delivering in PDF, for example. The reason being that they prefer open files drawn up in QuarkXPress or Adobe InDesign, as this offers them more freedom and flexibility. Furthermore, they don’t like being lumbered with the extra responsibility. We try to assist them where we can. We offer on-the-spot advice and we provide new customers with an extensive manual. This greatly contributes to solving the problem. We find this strengthens our relationship with our customers. We have managed to reach an excellent understanding with, for example, the ICT departments of corporate organisations about delivery formats and conversion of their files and data bases to our printing equipment.”

Tough competition

According to Pierre-Alain Mouttet the Swiss print market bears no comparison to other countries, based on his information about the situation abroad and the state of affairs at home. “Here, the government is a powerful factor,” he explains. “Several cantons have ventured out onto the commercial market with their in-house printing facilities. Their know-how is not as wide as the know-how of commercial printers. Besides, they have restricted openings.”

“Naturally we also partake in internet printing auctions, but these are purely price-oriented. Once everyone has made their best offer, they pick out the cheapest two and let them bid against each other. Notwithstanding the large volumes, this makes for very narrow margins. But we find that this all too often returns sub-standard results. Mere price competition is generally not the best starting point. It is not very advantageous to successful customer relations. We have to offer more than a price!”



Focus on solutions

He proceeds: “In general, we work with fixed prices for common print jobs, which offers transparency and saves our clients unpleasant surprises. We focus on speed of delivery and accuracy. When it comes to bulk jobs, we use our expertise to develop the right solution. A solution to relieve clients’ of their daily worries regarding communication and information processes. However, we steer clear of document facility management like XBS offers. We focus on customers who prefer the freedom our flexible and reliable approach to their printing jobs provides them with. We do not compete with other companies on quality in printing and offset, but on the advantages printing-on-demand has to offer our customers: limited editions, up to date, on time, no need to lay in stock and accurate. We offer our clients a fully sized solution.”

According to Pierre-Alain Mouttet new ideas don’t always live up to expectations: “At CopyQuick we have six people working in scripting and data base development. They regularly test ideas which crop up in the market. For example, in Flamatt we came up with facilities to digitally store files for our customers, but they preferred to keep charge of their

photo’s and other images themselves. This has led us to conclude that one should not start new things until one can be reasonably sure they will be a success. The trade journals often feature frenzied ideas, which in practice frequently fall short because there isn’t a market for them. We would do well to focus more on what it is customers really want and where their own communications are at.”

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