

swissQprint Japan KK

In February 2017, swissQprint AG, a Swiss company that manufactures and sells large-sized business-purpose flatbed inkjet printers, founded a Japanese subsidiary called swissQprint Japan KK in Yokohama for technical support and expanding business in Japan. In January 2018, swissQprint opened a showroom that also functions as a training facility for engineers in Asia, which it also intends to use to further develop the Asian market. Recently an interview was conducted with Adriano Gut, Product Manager of the company’s headquarters, and Toru Ono, Managing Director of the Japanese subsidiary.

swissQprint AG’s headquarters is located in the heart of Eastern Switzerland, the canton of St. Gallen, which is known as a center of precision and ICT industries. Three engineers working in the printer division of a high-performance digital cutter manufacturer in Artstetten, St. Gallen had the ambition to develop high-end large-scale printers independently and founded swissQprint AG in the canton in 2007. The three founders, including the CEO, Reto Eicher, are still involved in business operations.

Sales have increased as a result of taking advantage of high-performance UV flatbed printers that are capable of high speeds and highly precise printing despite their large size. Today, the company operates in approximately 40 countries through its three subsidiaries (in Japan, Germany, and the United States) and sales partners, and has a total of 120 employees worldwide. The company has grown into one of the region’s most renowned corporations.




Mr. Gut, Product Manager of the headquarters (right) and Mr. Ono, Managing Director of the Japanese subsidiary (left)

Rolls-Royce of the printer industry

Printers made by swissQprint are referred to as the “Rolls-Royces of the printer industry” by virtue of their high speed, high precision, expandability and reliability. swissQprint offers the following three product lines:

	Print bed size (meters)	Maximum productivity (square meters per hour)
Entry model: “Oryx”	2.5x2	65
High-performance model: “Impala”	2.5x2	317
Model offering various features: “Nyala”	3.2x2	370

The “Nyala” model accounts for approximately half the number of product units sold by swissQprint. In the three consecutive years between 2015 and 2017, the number of Nyala units sold was greater than that of any other large-sized flatbed hybrid printers in Europe in the price range of 130,000 - 500,000 euros.

As the unitized devices are modular and can be freely combined, it is possible to adjust settings and create functional expansions according to individual client needs. They can print on a variety of materials, such as paper, film, acrylic plates, wood, metal and glass. Ink colors can also be freely combined and ink applied in thick layers. The majority of clients are in the signs and displays industries, and printing industries, but the company seeks to capture clients in the construction material and furniture manufacturing industries in the future.

Establishment of Japanese subsidiary only two months after occurrence of problem

swissQprint started selling its products in the Japanese market in 2012 through a local distributor, and steadily increased sales with a track record of approximately 30 units. However, in December 2016, swissQprint was informed that a problem occurred with the local distributor and that its business was suddenly terminated. In the same month, the Product Manager, Adriano Gut, consulted with JETRO Geneva. JETRO advised swissQprint to visit its existing clients in Japan and explain the situation to mitigate their concern. In view of this advice, Mr. Gut went to Japan shortly thereafter and visited each Japanese client to dispel their anxieties. As a result of his visit, and in consideration of the need for maintenance and support for the many existing Japanese clients and the potential future market size, swissQprint determined that it would be more beneficial to directly enter the market through a Japanese

subsidiary than to find a new local distributor. The company received consultation on opening an office, introductions to service providers and incentive information from JETRO, Kanagawa Prefecture and Yokohama City. Mr. Gut said, “Everything went very quickly.”

In February 2017, swissQprint AG established swissQprint Japan KK as a 100% subsidiary in Yokohama, Kanagawa, for full-fledged commencement of technical support, sales and service activities and sales of expendables in the Japanese market. In January 2018, swissQprint Japan KK relocated to a new office that also functions as a showroom and a warehouse in an area near Shin Yokohama Station, where the transportation access is more convenient.

Pursuit of market development in the Asia-Pacific in addition to Japan

The Managing Director of swissQprint Japan KK, Toru Ono, says that the company will commence full-fledged sales activities in Japan using the new office and expand sales promotion and services relating to printers throughout the country. The objective of the first year is to gain a market share of 20%. Thus far, swissQprint has been steadily receiving orders. At the new office, training for Asian engineers who are also swissQprint sales partners is being planned, and swissQprint is seeking to further explore the Asia-Pacific market.



Managing Director Ono puts his hand on a “Nyala” product sample in the new showroom.

Mr. Gut said, “We considered development of the Japanese market precisely because many Japanese manufacturers are known worldwide as manufacturers of business-purpose printers. If we can succeed here, we can further explore the Asian market. Japan is a flagship market for printer manufacturers. While Japanese clients have strict requirements, once you gain a client’s trust, it is possible to build a long-term business relationship.”

By taking JETRO Geneva’s advice and acting quickly after problems occurred with its local Japanese distributor, swissQprint managed to not only preserve the trust of its clients, but also successfully build the foundation for smooth operations in Japan toward the future.

Mr. Gut said, “We appreciate the support of JETRO, from the initial advice, to the support in establishing our subsidiary

Interviewed in May 2018

JETRO’s support

When swissQprint founded its Japanese subsidiary, JETRO’s Invest Japan Business Support Center (IBSC) offered assistance by providing temporary office space in Kanagawa, consultations on registration, tax, and labor matters and made referral to the government of Yokohama City.

History of swissQprint Japan KKK

2007	Founding of swissQprint in the canton of St. Gallen, Switzerland
February 2017	Founding of the company’s first office in Asia, swissQprint Japan KK in Yokohama, Kanagawa
January 2018	Opening of new office which also functions as a showroom and a warehouse near Shin Yokohama Station

swissQprint Japan KKK

Established in:	February 2017
Business overview:	Importation, sale, and provision of services and support relating to inkjet printers, inks, and expendables.
Capital:	10,000,000 yen (as of August 2017)
Parent company:	swissQprint AG (Switzerland)
Address:	3-2-6 Shin Yokohama, Kohoku-Ku, Yokohama 222-0033 Japan
URL:	https://www.swissqprint.com/ja/

Support from JETRO

- Provision of a temporary office (IBSC Kanagawa)
- Provision of consultation services regarding foundation of a subsidiary in Japan
- Arrangement of a meeting with a local government (Yokohama City)