

Innate INNOVATION

Konica Minolta is giving shape to ideas across its European operations as the company continues to grow under new leadership.

Images courtesy of Konica Minolta

Technology and innovation have always been the firm foundations that Konica Minolta has built its global business on. As a strong and successful arm of this internationally renowned business, Konica Minolta Business Solutions Europe is preparing to enter and explore new markets while building on its well-established base.

Ikuo Nakagawa, President of Konica Minolta Business Solutions Europe, started his career in 1982 at Minolta Company Limited in Osaka, Japan, and has enjoyed more than 30 years of success across the global company. Ikuo, or Indy as his colleagues call him, was appointed to the European office in April 2014 and says he's capitalised on his decades of experience at Konica Minolta.

"I have worked for Konica Minolta for 32 years, which included 15 years in the United States, four and a half years in Hong Kong, three years in Shanghai, and I've recently moved to their offices in

Germany. The majority of my experience with Konica Minolta has been focused on marketing, particularly when I was in the US. I was involved in buying other corporations in the US and I think that gave me a great grounding in acquisitions.

"In my three years in China, as President of Konica Minolta Business Solutions China, it was the fastest growing market. In a challenging market like China we have done very well and have continued to grow. Earlier this year, I was told that my next challenge was going to be in Europe—in Germany—and it's great to be here now."

The challenges of running the diverse and multilayered European arm of Konica Minolta are significant; however, Indy says he and his team are ready to overcome them. "I've found that there's no 'one' Europe, like there is with the United States or China. Europe consists of 30 or 40 countries and each country differs in culture, languages, and business practices.

"But despite these challenges, Konica Minolta's strongest market is the European market—with 40 per cent of the company's revenue being earned here. And the key to the success? We've been penetrating these European countries one by one and are verifiably very close to the market and the consumer in these countries."

That the strategy works is being shown by other impressive numbers: Konica Minolta's European sales have experienced a jump from €1.3 billion to €2.2 billion, an increase of 67 per cent, between 2003 and 2013. The company has also seen an increase in staff, with the European arm employing nearly 9,000 people across its operations, which is almost double the staff it employed in 2003. Indy attributes this success to strong strategy and strong people.

"When Konica Minolta merged in 2003 we had a clear and strong strategy to aim for. For example, our colour genre-top strategy and the decision to enter the production >



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
For more info visit
theceomagazine.com



print business: Konica Minolta has held the number one position in the colour segment (A3 and A4) in Europe in the field of office printing since Q3 calendar year 2013. Our accomplishment in office printing is the kind of success story that Konica Minolta is becoming more and more famous for. Another proof of this is what we have achieved in the field of production printing: 10 years ago, Konica Minolta was not even in the picture, and now we are number one."

"Our accomplishment in office printing is the kind of success story which Konica Minolta is becoming more and more famous for."

- Ikuo Nakagawa

In Europe, overcoming the issues associated with such a wide and diverse geographical area is not easy. However, Indy says his team has implemented several strategies to address these issues. "We divided Europe into four clusters and those clusters have some

"As a global player and the European leader in the tech space in general and office equipment arena in particular, BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions is proud to have Konica Minolta as one of its key partners." - Joseph Pulicano, Managing Director, International Business Line Technology, BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions

similarities in terms of culture and languages.

"Among those clusters, we always try to exchange or share best practices and ideas. For example, if we have one cluster, or region, with four countries in it then we can work with those other countries and make it a more standardised system for that region. I think we have been very successful in this."

Over the years, Konica Minolta Business Solutions Europe has worked hard to evolve into a more customer-centric provider of hardware-based managed services. It has clearly paid off, with nearly 3,500 of Konica Minolta customers in Europe opting to utilise the company's managed print services, known as Optimised Print Services, or OPS. Indy says OPS is all about creating value and convenience, as well as offering services beyond just print management, by having total business processes and their automation in scope.

"We start with a consultative approach to analyse our customers, how to implement these services, and how to integrate it into their work flow. We suggest how to streamline their work flow and documents and then after establishing it we manage it and ensure that we're providing the best solutions for them. Sometimes it's about finding their hidden needs and coming up with solutions to those needs.

"We have very good business analysts and consultants in our service organisation. Instead of selling our products, they go to the customer and consult on their business processes and document work flow and come up with the right solution for that customer. I think that's really the key. We don't just sell our products; we listen to the customer and come up with solutions that deal with their pain point. We find that specific pain point in their business and solve it."

This intensified focus on the customer has been a key point of difference for Konica Minolta Europe as it expands and evolves. Indy says the company has its eyes on the future and delivering better services to customers. "We're starting with OPS and the services around multifunctional devices and printers. We're also developing our services around IT, particularly for mid-size small to medium enterprises or mid-size customers, who may not have in-house IT departments. We become their IT department.

"We service their network and develop their customer relationship management software. We can serve any of the IT needs for those mid-size customers in the office. We are serving our customers better and they are satisfied. We are expanding our services in the IT area, and while it's an activity that we're still undertaking, I think we've been successful so far."

These ideas and services will shape the strategic path for Konica



Minolta Europe. According to Indy, the innovation and thinking behind these ideas is carefully encouraged and cultivated through the company's focus on research and development and continuous improvement. "Our brand proposition is, 'giving shape to >

"Konica Minolta is one of Fujitsu's most important strategic accounts worldwide. In Europe, we have been providing products, services, and platform solutions for Konica Minolta's mission-critical systems for many years. We remain committed to contributing Fujitsu's cutting-edge technologies to Konica Minolta's business." - Jürgen Walter, Executive Vice President Fujitsu and Head of Central Europe, Fujitsu

BNP PARIBAS LEASING SOLUTIONS
FAR MORE THAN FINANCE

With over €27.8 billion of outstandings under management and 3,600 employees in 22 countries, BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions is one of the European leaders of leasing and financing solutions for professional equipment.

BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions is the European leader in office equipment and software financing and won 'Finance Services Provider of the Year' category at the IT Europa Awards, 2014.

www.leaseingsolutions.bnpparibas.com

BNP PARIBAS LEASING SOLUTIONS

We're providing cloud solutions that mirror your business needs, large or small

Visit us: www.fujitsu.com/together

shaping tomorrow with you





“We want to give shape to people’s ideas and that’s why it’s our mantra. It’s about not only understanding our customers’ business technology needs, but also enabling them to run their business in the best possible way, now and in the future.”

- Ikuo Nakagawa

ideas? This is our promise to our customers—that we will provide value and ideas on how to transform their business. Also, internally, we have a slogan, which is, ‘simply bold,’ and even our president of Konica Minolta’s global operations said that we are allowed to make some mistakes but we should undertake broad challenges to tackle it and then we can be the most innovative.”

Konica Minolta’s philosophy provides a certain creative freedom for employees within the company values. This is also reflected within the group’s global operations and into its supply relationships and partnerships. Indy says that his team works closely with suppliers and partners. “We are especially strong in what we do because of our technology and our capability. Besides our sales force and our product and own brand name, we have a reliable partner network of suppliers, distributors, and system integrators.

“We have one of the largest global networks in the industry and we’re continuously striving to develop this further in our daily efforts for our partners’ success. We have

suppliers across the chain and we’re using different partners to serve our customers. We are always thinking about our stakeholders, not only shareholders but also those partners. We always try to make sure that those partnerships are reciprocal.”

Consistent and targeted improvement in its operations, partnerships, and products will be a clear aim for Konica Minolta Europe as it grows in years to come. Indy states, “It is our goal to anticipate our customers’ needs and turn ideas and strategies into reality by delivering innovative and meaningful solutions that contribute to a better future.

“It’s not only important for us to find the best customer solutions for today but also to involve our clients in the development of products and solutions that will impact the market and their enterprise. Our management philosophy is focused on the new values we created, which will lead us to provide our customers with tailor-made and end-to-end solutions through a diverse services portfolio.

“We want to provide the entire business technology spectrum with consulting, implementation and management services. We want to give shape to people’s ideas and that’s why it’s our mantra. It’s about not only understanding our customers’ business technology needs, but also enabling them to run their business in the best possible way, now and in the future.”

To meet these goals, Konica Minolta has undertaken a radical transformation process to become a global service-orientated business with an emphasis on providing added value to the customer. This transformation is set to continue to roll out and develop over the next few years with the program finishing in 2016.

However, this program is only another step on the global giant’s journey to continually evolve and adapt to market shifts. With the rapid pace of technological change, Konica Minolta, in Europe with Indy and his team and internationally across its vast network, is focusing on innovation and invention to ensure it continues to lead the global marketplace. ●

COMPLETE Communication

As many European companies cultivate a social-media presence, experts are urging senior executives to develop and deliver a holistic social-media message.

By Sarah Linney

Communicating and engaging consumers across social-media platforms can be a minefield or a goldmine depending on your company’s strategy. Savvy senior executives understand the importance of this often under-utilised resource and ensure that their social-media marketing is holistic and widespread.

Kate vanderVoort, Founder and CEO of Social Mediology, says that

many companies leave the social-media strategy decisions to executives who may not have a thorough understanding of the psychology of social media and how it works.

“The first step for any business undertaking social-media marketing or social customer service is to ensure that those involved, at every level, understand why and how it works. This often involves a culture change process as the approach is very different to

traditional marketing and customer-service models.

“Secondly, social media must be seen as part of the whole and not a standalone communication platform. For social to be successful it must be embedded into the business, blended with offline communications and processes and integrated into the overall business strategy. A holistic social-media strategy involves exploring how social can support other systems, processes, and >

