

//wifag Services is an independent company again

Growth due to a second mainstay to secure the printing machines segment in a long term



//wifag Services, the Swiss newspaperprinting technology specialist, is once again an independent company. With retroactive effect from April 1, 2018, the WIFAG-Polytype Group (based in Fribourg, Switzerland) sold the existing “//wifag Services” Division to a group of entrepreneurs from the Canton of Bern. Andres Kernén, one of the new owners, is also a member of the new Board of Directors of the newly created WIFAG Services AG (www.wifag-services.com). Pascal Cléménçon, the long-standing //wifag Services sales expert, was appointed the company’s Chief Executive Officer. The fact that //wifag Services will be attending the IFRA Expo in Berlin in October is also sending out a clear signal to the market.

//wifagservices

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//wifag Services, based in Fribourg, is continuing all the global customer service operations as well as the spare parts, retrofit and project businesses for //wifag Services customers, with a long-term focus. This is why all of the 25 existing staff members of the //wifag Services Division were taken on by the new company. It can also rely on a further 15 employees from WIFAG-Polytype.

//wifag Services huge potential

The owners of WIFAG Services AG are well-funded entrepreneurs who are from Switzerland's Bern region and own a variety of companies. CEO Pascal Cléménçon explains: "The new owners saw the huge potential in the know-how of //wifag Services, which has been well anchored worldwide, in Switzerland and particularly in Bern and Fribourg with a name that has stood the test of time for many years." //wifag Services had always been based in Switzerland's capital ever since it was founded in 1904, up until its production operations in Bern were shut down and moved to Fribourg where Polytype, its sister company, is based.

The President of the new company's Board of Directors is Martin Kindler, a lawyer and notary from Bern. Alongside Andres Kernén, who also owns Hovelit AG and Archimedes Industrial AG, CEO Pascal Cléménçon is also part of the three-man Board of Directors.

The Members of the Executive Board are the long-standing //wifag Services executives Hugo Haymoz (Head of the Customer Service / Spare Parts Division), Martin Santschi (Head of Sales and Projects) and Thomas Balsiger (Head of Administration and Logistics).



Pascal Cléménçon
CEO



Hugo Haymoz
Head of Customer
Service



Martin Santschi
Head of Sales & Projects



Thomas Balsiger
Head of Administration
& Logistics

QUOTE

What was the reasoning behind the purchase of //wifag Services?

Andres Kernen, entrepreneur:

“It would have been a downright shame to discontinue such a well-positioned company with so many highly qualified specialists.”

//wifag Services: the printing machines segment is a top priority

//wifag Services aims to ensure the existing activities relating to the installed printing machine base in a sustainable manner with the familiar level of quality. To secure this core business in a long term, the company has to grow and become attractive for new specialists. To achieve this aim, //wifag Services will set up a second mainstay in a similar industry. From this summer onward, it intends to increase its staffing levels so that its main activities in the printing machines segment (automation, engineering and service) are secured in a long term. Customer requests are dealt with in a more flexible manner and that the “second mainstay” can be built up. It wants to launch this initiative no later than 2020.

//wifag users from several European countries received first-hand information about the changes during a two-day meeting in Münchenwiler held in the middle of June. The fact that //wifag Services can now take its future into its own hands once more, with complete independence and sound financing, was unanimously welcomed by users.



//wifag User Meeting 2018 participants

The planned “second mainstay” naturally generated considerable interest. CEO Pascal Cléménçon assured everyone present, that relevant information would be provided as soon as details could be verified. He also stated that this extra division for //wifag Services would be completely unrelated to the construction of printing machines or printing machine components.

//wifag Services is extremely active

The in-depth insights into the projects and services given to the //wifag users by Martin Santschi and Hugo Haymoz clearly demonstrated that //wifag Services is extremely active. Over the last two years since the 2016 user meeting, highly challenging projects have been taking place, including the conversion of a complete 4-high tower to a modified cylinder circumference and its move to France, and the reconfiguration of a complete rotation system in India to enable new production methods and UV printing.

//wifag Services is reliably implementing wide-ranging retrofit projects and machine relocations at low cost - something illustrated by current projects in Switzerland and the US, where a complete machine control was retrofitted in Naples (Florida), for example. Many //wifag operators are being confronted with the need to modernize controls and drives because components are being discontinued by the respective suppliers or are no longer being supported. The //wifag Services specialists have therefore designed conversion solutions which are consistently based on marketable standard components. Some examples, such as the replacement of operating panels with touchscreens, were discussed at length during the user meeting.

Hugo Haymoz, Head of Customer Service / Spare Parts, presented meaningful figures on the scope of recent service assignments. Most of these assignments were due to intervention credits from service contracts. Particularly the "evaluation of condition" service product for the folder, the printing units and other installation components is very often requested by the printing plants maintenance specialists. Printing plants are increasingly no longer only budgeting the maintenance costs for the coming year; instead, they want to be able to assess the repair and maintenance costs of the installation over the next four to eight years. With the help of these assessments and the resulting reports and recommended measures, these costs can therefore be planned and preventative maintenance can be optimized. This, in turn, contributes to a high level of installation availability.

To close, Pascal Cléménçon assured the guests in Münchenwiler: "You can continue to rely on our services, in the quality you have come to expect and with the same contacts." Cléménçon believes that planned growth of //wifag Services will have a positive impact on flexibility in all areas.

But he also emphasized the fact that the necessary specialist knowledge relating to //wifag technology could only be secured in the long term and, therefore, that the operating equipment in the printing shops could only be kept running together with the customers and the relevant orders.

//wifag Services at the IFRA Expo

//wifag Services is also returning to the IFRA World Publishing Expo trade show from October 9 to 11, 2018. The newspaper technology specialist will be represented in Berlin with its very own 30m² exhibition stand (**stand number D.16 in Hall 21a**).