

SILICON VALLEY / SAN JOSE

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BUSINESS PROFILE:

Copying success at new location

THE BUSINESS: CPO Ltd. is a document management company that provides hardware and software to help colleges, universities and companies manage printing, copying and faxing. Any activity that puts marks on paper. Company showrooms sell products from a variety of major manufacturers including Sharp Corp., Konica-Minolta Holdings Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

CPO LTD.

Headquarters: Santa Clara
Founder and president: Mike Arnold
Founded: 1981
Employees: 40
Revenue: \$7 million
Phone: 408.727.3310
Web site: www.cpolttd.com

CUSTOMERS: Clients are in both the public and private sector, including colleges and universities as well as companies in health care, technology and other industries.

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: The original location in Santa Clara and a new showroom that just opened in San Francisco. Another location is slated for the East Bay in January 2010.

SHORT-TERM GOAL: To stay local, stressing to clients that CPO's sales and service functions remain local. There has been a lot of consolidation in this industry and many smaller companies have been bought out by international conglomerates. CPO wants to avoid that destiny.

LONG-TERM GOAL: To further grow and expand, doubling or tripling the present business volume.

BIGGEST COMPETITOR: Canon USA Inc., which is an international company, with three to four offices in the Bay Area.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE BUSINESS THAT WOULD SURPRISE PEOPLE: Many people still have an old-fashioned image of the business from when it was a copier dealer. The business is now a consultative mixture of dealing with hardware and software, and developing solutions for a company's entire workflow.



VICKI THOMPSON

EXPANSION PLANS: CPO Ltd. President Mike Arnold has opened a new showroom in San Francisco after doing business in Santa Clara for 18 years. He is planning an East Bay expansion next year.

HOW BUSINESS WILL CHANGE IN FIVE YEARS: More color. In the next few years, everything will have color. Machines are becoming what is called MFPs, or multifunctional peripherals, that combine the functions of a copier, printer, scanner and fax machine.

BEST BUSINESS DECISION: Devising a "love it or leave it" campaign. The biggest concerns customers have is they will end up with a lemon and service will be terrible. CPO allows customers to cancel a lease on equipment if a machine turns out to be a lemon. It also promises to give customers a \$300 check if they miss a four- or eight-hour guaranteed service-call response window.

TOUGHEST BUSINESS DECISION: Letting go a sales person who brought the company a lot of money.

BIGGEST MISSED OPPORTUNITY: Getting into the print management aspect of the business about three years later than the company should have.

LIKE LEAST ABOUT BUSINESS: Finding appropriate sales people. Finding people who are not only persistent, but empathetic with customers. Sales people who can cultivate relationships with customers.

ONE THING THAT WOULD INTEREST PEOPLE: President Mike Arnold is also executive producer of independent films. His first project was "Lloyd: The Ugly Kid" that featured a number of recognizable actors, including Tom Arnold. It was mostly shot in Silicon Valley. The next project is titled "Q 15" and is about a quinceanera, the traditional celebration for a Latina's 15th birthday.