



AS FEATURED IN *BUSINESS IN FOCUS*
NOVEMBER 2014

Complete Office Supplies (COS) is the largest privately owned office products supplier in Australia, its success built upon 35+ years in the business. Providing upwards of 20 000 products, COS is a business-to-business (B2B) solutions provider, offering the best value and service for money and guaranteeing a next day delivery service to thousands of customers across Australia.

Written by Jessica Ferlaino

Founded by Dominique Lyone in 1976, COS began as a single branch and has since flourished into an award-winning office products supplier, with nine strategically located distribution centres to warehouse the company's expansive product offerings.

As an aggregator of products, COS is enabled to service any business need, a true one-stop shop, even for businesses with the most complex procurement issues. The company adds value and saves its customers time and money in the process.

Though Mr Lyone did not imagine experiencing this level of success when he founded COS in 1976, it is certain that his vision has been achieved, with COS being named the 2013 Winner of the ABA for Innovation – largest privately owned office products supplier in Australia, one of the company's many accolades. Dominique Lyone initially entered the workforce following his father's path into the typewriter repair business as a typewriter mechanic. His keen business sense and leadership capacities naturally helped him move through the ranks, eventually becoming the head of a stationery distribution business.

Mr Lyone began selling typewriter consumables and experienced a degree of success; however, he felt that



A ONE-STOP SHOP for Office Products & Services



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the business lacked diversity and saw potential for growth in the office supply product market. The potential must have been clear, as Mr Lyone sold his 1972 Mazda RX2 to source the capital to open his first COS branch. Today, COS has established itself as a trusted, local name in Australia, serving businesses with 20+ employees. Renowned for its online ordering capabilities and online solutions (COS was an early adopter of online services and e-procurement), COS’ next day service guarantee is only the beginning of why it has become a powerhouse in the office products and supplies market.

COS’ biggest competition is global, which forces the company to compete with large, big name corporations. There are a number of elements that set the firm apart from its competitors in a market where the products are largely the same, COS must be doing something right to have established and maintained the thousands of clients it serves each and every day in the face of global competition.

Though the team may not have the purchasing power capacity of some of its global competitors, COS is still able to control pricing, making smart sourcing decisions to remain competitive, gaining an edge with value added services and customer experience; the company does all of this while remaining proudly local.

With growing demand, ensuring investment in infrastructure to support its next day delivery guarantee, COS has nine distribution centres located across the country, strategically located, to ensure client needs are met. The business is also careful to operate according to its 10 Point Advantage (*please see sidebar for further details*), as a means of guiding operations to maintain standards of quality and service.

Indeed, COS’ focus is not only on the quality of the products and services it provides, but also on the individuals who are ►

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▶ an integral part of day-to-day operations. COS is a family run business and the sense of family is clear in operations and initiatives throughout the entire organisation. Mr Lyone fully acknowledges that COS cannot do what it does without the help of his employees. A number of initiatives, including a world-class performance management system and feedback channels, have been adopted to keep employees engaged, and the COS executive team holds monthly meetings to ensure every member of the team is informed about the state of the business and the market.



The company is also committed to the environment, an issue that has grown considerably over Mr Lyone’s time in the business. In the 1980s the team members were considered “Greenies” for adopting environmental initiatives and sourcing environmentally friendly products – today, a focus on sustainable environmental practices and products has become common business practice. Fully acknowledging the environment as a key stakeholder, COS makes environmental considerations in its product sourcing, reuses and recycles boxes and materials used in the shipping process, practices smarter resource usage in offices and warehouses, and reduces its carbon footprint wherever possible.



COS, under the leadership of the Lyone family, is also highly dedicated to the local community and its pride and commitment to Australia is unwavering. In 2013, this level of commitment was taken a step further with the establish-

ment of the Lyone Foundation, a charitable organisation that aims to donate \$1 million a year to Australian charities with a human welfare aspect. As an immigrant to Australia, arriving with his family from Egypt at age of 13, fleeing the 1967 Six Day War, Mr Lyone and his family were given an opportunity for a new start in Australia; just as Australia has been good to the family, the Lyone family wants to ensure they are giving back to the community that welcomed them.

For his part, Mr Lyone fully intends on working to further establish COS as a leader in provision of workplace supplies and services, enabling he and his family to continue to give back, whilst ensuring a future for his family, his workers and their families. Pleased with the level of



success experienced by COS, Mr Lyone has no plans of slowing down, with bold goals for COS in the future. He plans to take COS to the next level as an online player with a greater platform of categories targeted to the B2B market, alongside continual innovation delivering improved product and service capacities – and as always, doing so in a responsible and sustainable manner. ■

“COS is big enough to deliver but small enough to respond.”

THE COS 10 PT. ADVANTAGE

1. Completely Australian: proudly locally owned and operated for 35+ years, keeping jobs and profits in Australia.
2. Completely Flexible: COS is big enough to deliver but small enough to respond, providing smart, flexible ordering systems, multiple billing methods and always looking to innovate at every level of the organisation.
3. Focus on Customer Experience: staffed with knowledgeable industry specialists, COS is equipped to deliver solutions and provide a world-class customer experience, meeting and exceeding clients' needs.
4. Technology Leaders: with the belief that technology is the key to improving service delivery, COS works to maintain and improve its technological systems.
5. Completely Local: COS has 9 strategically located distribution centres, holding stock preference, with a local sales and delivery team ready to service any order. If the order is placed by close of the business day, COS will guarantee next day delivery.
6. Best Online Ordering: COSnet is designed with the client in mind, providing an innovative online ordering experience with faster, flexible, easy to use services.
7. Complete Product Range: saving clients time and money by providing an All-in-One Supply Solution for a variety of business needs.
8. Completely Responsible: COS maintains corporate social responsibility as a priority in day-to-day operations. COS is Environmentally Certified and invests in a number of programs and initiatives to uphold this commitment.
9. World Standard: quality and Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures ensure that output is consistent across each department, at every location, ensuring safety and wellbeing in the process.
10. Contemporary Service: beyond satisfaction with the ordering and delivery experiences with COS, its services can help clients increase efficiencies in their procurement processes through the wide range of services available.



Complete Office Supplies

SYDNEY HEAD OFFICE

25 Nyrang Street Lidcombe NSW 2141 Australia

P: 1300 88 22 44

F: 02 8832 6311

E: info@cos.net.au

www.cos.net.au

