

Swissphoto Leads the Way with SmartStation



Summary

Investment in SmartStation – the first TPS with built in GPS

Customer

Swissphoto Group AG

A strong management team

The CEO and President of this leading Swiss survey company, Thomas Grünenfelder, comes from a family of surveyors and does not believe in complex management structures. Rather, he sees the staff as a team of committed players that are dedicated to customer satisfaction. This is borne out by the COO, Roland Stengele, a German national who is also a surveyor and has been with the company since 1995. During this time he has seen many projects come to successful fruition and says, "I am proud to work for Swissphoto and to meet the challenges our ever-changing environment presents us with"

(Above): Swissphoto runs trials with SmartStation

(Below): Roland Stengele, Swissphoto and Hans-Ulrich Müller, Leica Geosystems



"We are particularly excited about having a total station with GPS capabilities because we will be able to set up in the best possible place for the job without having to worry about missing reference points"

Roland Stengele
COO
Swissphoto

Technology leader

Swissphoto continues its tradition of leading the technology field by being one of the first to invest in SmartStation in Europe.

Swissphoto is no stranger to being a leader. Founded in the 1930s, by the pioneering Walter Mittelholzer, the company now has a notable turnover of CHF22 million, earned by its 130 members of staff. It has grown from being primarily a provider of aerial photography and mapping services to become the number one precision measurement company in Switzerland. Its offerings cover the whole gamut of surveying disciplines and include photogrammetry, cadastral/ building surveying, engineering surveying and services for planning and land reallocation.

Their portfolio of successful projects is impressive and although 80% of them are Swiss based they are also asked to work on overseas projects.

Helping countries to develop

Switzerland supports the development of a land cadastre system in Kyrgyzstan (Central Asia) partly because an efficient land cadastre is an important success factor for countries like Kyrgyzstan who are undergoing transition to becoming a free market economy. A major function of the land cadastre is to secure the legal rights of immovable property, which sub-

sequently leads to an ordered land market. Swissphoto was charged with managing the GIS/Cadastre project in Kyrgyzstan on behalf of **SECO** (Swiss State Secretariat of Economic Affairs), where it was responsible for both the project design and implementation. The project focuses on the modernisation of the State Service of Geodesy and Cartography of the Kyrgyz Republic (GosCartography) and the strengthening of its role in cadastral mapping. A production line for cadastre data was built-up based on the most modern photogrammetric and geodetic technology. The success of the project provided a sound basis for the development of the land cadastre of this fledgling country.

Similar projects have been successfully completed in Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova, Guatemala and Lithuania.

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Compared with 30 years ago **more** time is now spent in the office processing data. The use of the actual sensors is no longer the most challenging aspect of the job but it is hard to have a competitive advantage if you only do the measuring part. The processing and final data output is critical and that is why Swissphoto relies on Leica's software solutions as well.



Familiarity with instruments

Swissphoto was also an early adopter of System 1200 total stations and GPS system 500. The decision to purchase a SmartStation was influenced by the positive feedback of the staff that use System 1200 and was summed up by Roland Stengele

"We are especially pleased that SmartStation is built on the same platform as system 1200. Our surveyors and engineers are all highly skilled so their time is far too precious to spend it learning complex instruments. The interface on GPS1200, TPS1200 and SmartStation is the same so I can be confident that my staff will become familiar with using all these instruments in the shortest possible time. The common data card that can be transferred between instruments is great too. In the past we did not have complete integration, but now we see it as a basic requirement."

Value added leads to long-term relationships

Swissphoto adds value to a client's project via data management. Adding value for its customers is very important to Swissphoto. It aims to provide the best service it possibly can. Because of this, it expects a similar service from its suppliers and looks for a complete package including finance, training, support and service. Leica Geosystems satisfies those needs. *"Mind you, providing our customers with the best service does not mean that we replace our instruments every year. In fact, our equipment is a long-term investment and that*

is why we need a partner that we can rely on to provide us with robust and lasting solutions." asserted Stengele

Swissphoto has relied on the expertise of Leica Geosystems for decades and today Leica is the preferred supplier of the solutions used by Swissphoto.

A total station with GPS capabilities

Surveyors often arrive at job sites only to find that there are no usable reference points and it is especially challenging when working overseas. Now with SmartStation this will no longer be a problem. As an experienced project manager Stengele declared, *"Since SmartStation is so easy to use we can be confident that even local engineers that are unfamiliar with this particular instrument will soon become able to operate it effectively and efficiently."*

Cutting edge yet affordable

Ever the shrewd businessman, Stengele knows a good deal when he sees one and exclaimed, *"Despite the fact that this is real cutting edge technology we were pleasantly surprised at how affordable SmartStation is"*. Owning a SmartStation is like having two instruments but without having to pay anywhere near the cost of two instruments. *"For us, it means that the payback period is much shorter than we anticipated and that will really help us to remain competitive."*

www.leica-geosystems.com
www.swissphoto.ch