

COLOP opens US subsidiary

From left:
Franz
Ratzenberger
and Christoph
Skopek



Stamp manufacturer COLOP has upped its presence in the all-important US market. The Austria-based firm has confirmed the establishment of its own sales subsidiary near Chicago, Illinois, "in order to be able to offer the entire product range under one umbrella brand and to develop long-term strategies for the US".

COLOP has had a presence in the country since 1987, but the need to set up a fully-fledged subsidiary came about following the decision by partner Cosco last year to exit the stamp distribution business. COLOP has turned to stamping industry veteran Brian Schwab to head the new organisation.

The US is already COLOP's largest market, representing around 15% of total sales. But, as joint Managing Directors Franz Ratzenberger and Christoph Skopak said: "We see good chances to increase the American business to 20% of our revenue and achieve sales in the double-digit million-euro range with COLOP USA."

Bol.com to cut jobs

Bol.com has announced a major workforce reduction, it has been reported. The Dutch e-commerce reseller – the country's largest online retailer – is to axe 300 jobs as it looks to make cost savings of about €225 million (\$235 million) in the next three years. The cuts represent approximately 10% of its staff.

Q3 2022 sales at Bol.com were up by around 5% year on year, including growth of 11% from some 50,000 third-party resellers that make up 59% of sales on the firm's marketplace platform.

Nevertheless, full-year sales are expected to be relatively flat versus 2021 and the outlook for 2023 is the same, with Bol.com owner Ahold Delhaize admitting the non-food e-commerce channel in the Benelux region remains "soft".



Amazon agrees data deal with the EU

Amazon's EU HQ
in Luxembourg



Amazon has agreed to change its business practices in Europe in order to end a legal battle with EU lawmakers.

The European Commission has accepted commitments by the e-commerce giant that it will no longer use third-party seller data to inform its own retail decisions and that it will grant sellers equal access to its Buy Box and Prime programme.

The Commission opened a formal investigation into Amazon's use of non-public data in 2019, following this up with a second probe in 2020 (*for more details on the commitments Amazon made in three areas of concern – data, Buy Box and Prime – see [opi.net](https://www.opi.net)*).

The offered commitments cover all of Amazon's current and future marketplaces in the European Economic Area. They exclude Italy for those relating to Buy Box and Prime in view of an earlier decision by the Italian competition authority to impose its own remedies on Amazon.

Meanwhile, the German competition authority (Bundeskartellamt) has announced an extension of two investigations into Amazon competing unfairly with its third-party resellers.

The organisation is looking at whether marketplace sellers on Amazon.de are being unfairly treated by the internet giant's price control mechanisms and its policy on branded products.

Citing changes to Germany's laws governing large digital companies, Bundeskartellamt President Andreas Mundt commented: "We are examining in both proceedings whether and how Amazon impedes the business opportunities of sellers which are active on the Amazon marketplace and compete with Amazon's own retail business."

He added: "Amazon operates the most important marketplace in e-commerce and thus has a key position in this area, which allows the company to set far-reaching rules for competition on its platform. Our new competencies, which are precisely intended to restrict such power to set rules, allow us to intervene more efficiently against Amazon's anti-competitive practices."

Amazon has challenged the Bundeskartellamt's right to extend its investigations, but the watchdog can continue its proceedings until a decision is reached in the courts.