

XEROX CORPORATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF XEROGRAPHY

Xerox Corporation, one of the parent companies of Rank Xerox, pioneered the commercial development of xerography, and in doing so has turned itself from a small company into one of the growth leaders of American business.

The process of xerography - dry, electrostatic copying - was invented by an American patent attorney, Chester Carlson, who succeeded in making the first xerographic print on 22 October, 1938. Whereas most modern research work is carried out by large organisations, Carlson worked in his spare time - in his wife's kitchen, and later in a room behind a beauty parlour!

Even when Carlson could demonstrate that his process worked, he found the world curiously unreceptive: none of the companies he approached was prepared to back his idea, and it was not until 1944 that the next step forward came, when the Battelle Memorial Institute (a non-profit industrial research organisation) agreed to develop the process. Another two years passed before they, in turn, found a company to develop it commercially. The company concerned was the Haloid Co. of Rochester, New York, producers of photocopying and photographic papers and equipment. As xerography gained in importance the company changed its name first to Haloid Xerox and then to Xerox Corporation.

But the success which brought those changes of name was not immediate: the first xerographic copier did not come on the market until 1950 and it proved to be too slow and too big for ordinary office copying work. However, it was later found that this equipment filled a big need in the making of masters for use on small offset litho duplicators.

A step of fundamental significance was taken in 1956, when Xerox Corporation and The Rank Organisation joined forces for the further development and marketing of xerographic machines. This agreement brought into existence Rank Xerox, a Division of The Rank Organisation jointly owned by the two Companies. Under the terms of the agreement, xerographic machines for all territories outside the Americas are manufactured and marketed by Rank Xerox. North and South America are served direct by Xerox Corporation.

On the part of Xerox Corporation this move was a recognition of the great advantages of partnership with an international Company, which, in addition to capital, could offer world-wide marketing experience. Xerox Corporation itself had never operated outside North America, and its hands were very full with development work and serving the domestic market. For Mr John Davis, Chairman of The Rank Organisation, the link-up was an expression of confidence in the ability of Mr Joseph C. Wilson (President of Xerox Corporation) and Mr Sol. Linowitz (now Chairman of Xerox) to make xerography work - and to apply the process to machines of unique value in the modern business world. Xerography was at that time still very much in the development stage - not the obvious "winner" it is today.

Describing his early contacts with Mr Wilson and Mr Linowitz, John Davis said in a recent address: "Their determination to succeed was all the more impressive because they made no attempt to minimise the problems which had to be overcome. I admired and respected these men from the start."

It was not until Xerox Corporation introduced the 914 Copier in the United States in 1960 that the Company's rise became truly meteoric. This desk-size, push-button machine revolutionised office copying and the demand for it exceeded its originators' most optimistic estimates.

Just as important as the technological advances was the marketing effort. The momentous decision was taken to rent the machine, rather than sell it outright. This meant that the customer did not have to make any capital outlay - or take any capital risk - and it ensured that the benefits of xerography could be made available to the widest possible market.

Now the 914 is being joined by the 813, only one seventh the size, but capable of producing copies of the same high quality which has established the xerographic process as the world leader in this vital field.

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