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From Milking Shed to Worldwide Security Ink

Founded: 16 July 1927 by Maurice Amon
CEO: Philippe Amon (2011–)
Number of employees: 3,000 from 50
nationalities in 35 offices globally (incl. NZ)
Headquarters: Prilly, Switzerland
Revenue: approx. 1 to 1.5 billion Francs
Products: security inks, track and trace
technology

SICPA is a Swiss company that is now the worldwide leader of security inks for currencies and sensitive documents, including identity documents, passports, transport and lottery tickets. However, it did not start out like this.

Founder Maurice A. Amon's grandfather and father built their family business reputation from humble origins in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 1927, the grandfather, Maurice Amon (1880–1959), invented a special grease used in the milking of cows. The "Société Industrielle et Commerciale de Produits Alimentaires", or SICPA, was born to create a bridge between the local agricultural producers and growing international demand for the quality of Swiss milk and cream.

A passion for technology, a grasp of modern chemistry and an instinct for enterprise later led his son, Albert Amon (1916–2010), to set up a small printing inks company in Lausanne at the outbreak of World War Two. Despite the horrors of the war and the threats to his business, Albert Amon prospered. He applied new technology to a printing business that had, in many ways, been unchanged for hundreds of years. In 1943 the company produced its first supplies of security inks for the Spanish peseta banknotes. Building key alliances with close friends in Italy and Germany in the aftermath of the war, Albert Amon, a gifted and charismatic communicator, succeeded in forging long-term partnerships with industry leaders and set in place the foundations of SICPA's global future as the leading supplier of security inks to the world's Central Banks.

In the 1950s and 1960s the company

expanded in Europe and overseas, almost exclusively focused on the production of printing inks. Its research into ink chemistry and formulation enabled SICPA to supply new intaglio security inks for currencies with the print quality and chemical and physical resistance of the inks making printed banknotes suitable for circulation in the most demanding climatic and cultural conditions. This work was endorsed by Interpol in 1969.

The 1970s saw expansion into North and South America and the 1980s and 1990s, saw further expansion in Europe and Asia when the company created OVI®, a colour-shifting ink and anti-copying security technology which has become a reference in the industry. From 1996 to 2002, SICPA participated in the development of the first and subsequent series of Euro notes.

SICPA Product Security Division was established in 2001 in response to the massive increase in the illicit trade of goods and industrial counterfeiting. The Division developed a strong position as creator of integrated product authentication and traceability solutions for governments and brand owners.

By 2005 SICPA had become one of the world's biggest producers of printing inks for the packaging industry, operating branches and production plants in 36 countries all around the globe.

SICPATRACE® was launched in 2007. These production-monitoring systems to secure products and support government legislation to successfully fight counterfeiting, illicit trade and tax evasion were implemented in various countries.

In 2008 the first dynamic colour-shifting ink, SPARK®, was applied on banknotes; first in China to celebrate the Olympic Games and then in Kazakhstan to mark the 15th anniversary of the national currency. In the 2010s, SICPATRACE® was implemented in numerous other

countries and industries, for example in Morocco (tobacco, alcohol and soft drink products), in Massachusetts (tobacco products), in Albania (tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical products), in Georgia (tobacco and alcohol products) and in Kenya (alcohol and tobacco products).

2013 saw the launch of the new Euro series "Europa" and SICPA was awarded "Best New Currency Feature" with its development of machine-readable ink technology. Then in 2014 SPARK® created new dynamics of optical security used in more than 40 countries for the protection of banknotes and ID documents.

Today, these inks and security features protect most of the world's currencies making national economies more efficient and more secure. SICPA has played a critical role in the birth of new nations by enabling freshly minted states to print their own money, the ultimate expression of independence.

Today, SICPA is owned and managed by the third generation of the Amon family, Philippe Amon, who embodies the Swiss company's values of excellence and entrepreneurship with the same pioneering spirit and sense of responsibility of his father and grandfather.

SICPA's Mission statement says: "Every day, governments, companies and millions of people rely on us to protect the integrity and value of their currency, personal identity, products and brands." Its website confirms the pioneering spirit – "We innovate continually to enable trust by developing reliable, secure and technologically advanced solutions and services for identification, traceability and authentication. Making the world more secure for its citizens is our business purpose and what motivates our people."

Sources: www.sicpa.com
<https://www.sicpa.com/news/2018-banknote-conference>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SICPA>

