

How Emix brought face masks to Europe

With the spread of Covid-19 in early 2020, the need for face masks increased tremendously. Emix Trading was able to supply masks to Europe in large quantities.

Below is an overview of the events during that time.

Establishment of a procurement and supply chain: Thanks to its trading contacts in China, Emix recognized earlier than others, at the end of January 2020, the foreseeable need for protective masks in Europe following the outbreak of Covid-19. Emix thus began to establish a procurement and supply chain for masks from China to Europe. This involved not only collaboration with mask manufacturers, but also the early securing of storage, logistics and, in particular, transportation capacities, which later became extremely scarce. Emix pre-financed most of the associated costs at its own risk; later, current earnings generated by the business were used for this purpose. Emix also assumed the considerable risk of export restrictions.

Entrepreneurial foresight and risk-taking: Due to its early and decisive action as well as its strong trading expertise, Emix was one of the few suppliers in a position to source newly manufactured face masks in China at the beginning of the pandemic and bring them to Europe in large quantities. The rest of the market, especially for FFP2 masks that met European standards, had largely dried up at that time, with the exception of a few existing lots. As a result, Emix was able to secure large orders during this period, especially from German and Swiss authorities.

Customer-oriented execution and service: Eventually, Emix started to stand out for its competent and reliable execution, which led to large follow-up orders. Emix constantly strived to further improve its offering and service. For example, when mask production stalled due to a lack of raw materials, Emix procured filter material on its own initiative and provided it to the mask manufacturers it cooperated with.

Focus on quality and fair dealing: Quality fluctuations were a well-known fact throughout the industry during the period of enormously high demand for face masks. In order to actively tackle this issue, Emix installed its own testing line in China from 2020 onwards, although final testing was arranged by government customers as testing capacities for corporate trading houses were unavailable. Emix replaced all rejected batches of face masks with new masks at any given time and without delay.

Network of partners: For the brokerage and handling of activities outside Switzerland, Emix assigned, in addition to its own team, external local project staff working on a commission basis, as is custom in the trading business.

Competitive pricing in line with market: Emix's pricing for the sale of masks was always based on current bottom-up calculations reflecting the purchase price of the masks as well as costs for the services provided in connection with the procurement, such as transport, storage and logistics. Costs were generally extremely high during the period of increased demand, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, and were also very volatile, sometimes changing several times a day. Emix's pricing was always in line with the market price.

Trading expertise

Emix Trading was founded in 2016 by young entrepreneurs Jascha Rudolphi and Luca Steffen, together with business lawyer Peter Ackermann.

Specialized in the import of branded goods to Switzerland, in Europe and in China, they have built a reputation for sourcing hard-to-find goods on the global market at fair prices and establishing the necessary supply chains.

In numbers

In total, Emix sold around 300 million surgical and respirator masks in Europe in 2020.

In Switzerland, Emix sold roughly 1.5 million respirator and roughly 10.5 million surgical masks to federal buyers.

Customer statement

Public statements by Germany's Federal Ministry of Health:

"The reason for contracting Emix was that at the beginning of the pandemic, Emix was one of the few suppliers that was able to deliver large quantities of PPE reliably, at short notice, on time and in the required quality. In addition, Emix was one of the few suppliers willing to pre-finance the face masks on a 'rolling' basis."

"The prices for these products were within the market range at the time the contracts were entered into."

Emix's mask-rejection rate was "one of the lowest among direct Federal Government procurements".

"The company Emix Trading AG proved to be professional and fast in its cooperation, which was of great importance, especially during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020."