



Printing cycle time: Approx. 350 ms
Number of columns: 21
Number of characters: 16
Printing method: Line printing
Colors: Black-and-red ribbon
Spacing: 3.5 mm between columns &
5.1 mm between lines
Character size: 1.8 mm x 2.9 mm (width x height)
Voltage: 17 volts dc
Media: Plain paper (paper width: 89 mm)
Size: (W)163.5 x (D)135 x (H)102 mm
Weight: 2.5 kg

Product Features

The EP-101 was the world's first compact, lightweight digital printer — and the namesake of Epson. The first commercial product of Epson's nascent printer business, the palm-sized EP-101 boasted a simplicity of structure that made it both durable and easy to use. This archetypal printer conquered the electronic desktop calculator market and went on to gain use in a wide variety of applications. The printer was powered by a highly efficient, long-lived miniature motor that was based on a motor originally developed by Suwa Seikosha for quartz watches. The motor was designed to be sufficiently energy efficient to run off a battery and, in fact, it consumed a mere one-twentieth the power required by any previous electric printer: 17 volts DC and from 150 mA (in standby) to 410 mA (when engaged in full-load printing). In addition to the motor, Epson* engineers made skillful use of the material selection know-how, manufacturing technologies and other precision processing technologies honed by decades in watch manufacturing to create a printer that was vaunted around the world for its reliability.

Background

The history of Epson's printer business is traceable back to the time around the Tokyo Olympic Games. Epson**, as one of the companies in the Seiko Group, was selected to serve as the official timekeeper of the 1964 Olympic Games. Thus began a collaborative effort with Seikosha (now part of Seiko Corporation) to develop a printing timer. Success in this venture was the impetus behind the development of the EP-101, which went on sale in September 1968. The electronic desktop calculator was just starting to make inroads into the office, where it was replacing the abacus. Recognizing the future potential of miniature printers, Epson marshaled together the printer manufacturing technologies that it had accumulated during the development of the printing timer. After four and a half years in the lab, the EP-101 was released to the world.

Impact

From the moment of its release, the EP-101 drew attention from various quarters because it dovetailed particularly with the printing needs of the electronic desktop calculator manufacturers of the day. The EP-101 was shown at the 38th Business Show in Tokyo, in May 1969. Then, several months later, in August, it was exhibited at the WESCON show in San Francisco. The public response around the world was astounding. The follow-up demand was very robust, and the EP-101 became a sensational hit. This miniature printer was the key that opened the door to the world market, and once through the door, Epson would unfold its business across the information industry.

The EP-101 created a sensation around the world. In June of 1975 the Epson brand was launched with the hope that the company would continue to produce the "sons" of the EP-101.

The EP-101 became a hugely successful long-seller, with cumulative unit sales reaching nearly 1.5 million units.

*Then known as Shinshu Seiki Co., Ltd. (a subsidiary of Suwa Seikosha Co., Ltd., whose name was changed Epson Corporation in 1982)

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