

4MC UK

Who's next?

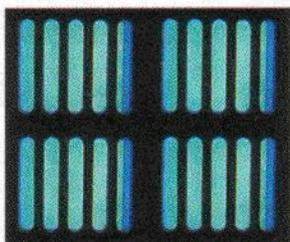
Top US post group 4 Media is busy compacting its new UK branches into Wardour Street's Film House. Rob Buckley sees how SVC, TVP-Postbox, TVi et al are bearing up in the squeeze

There was a tangible smell of fear - and hope - in Soho last spring when American post leviathan 4MC acquired TVi, TVP-Postbox, Stream and Digital Media. The thought on most mds' minds was either "will we be next?" or "can we please be next?" But 4MC contented itself with its existing companies until it added SVC in March.

Among the new owners' first changes are rationalising the various offices down to three locations, the main branch being Film House on Wardour Street. So how are the latest additions faring under the new regime?

Md Nick Pannaman, the former head of TVP and now md of 4MC UK, seems to be enjoying it at least. "I like change. Sharks mostly have to keep moving or die - I see business as the same."

A dramatic investment in equipment has already included two C-Realities, something of which head of telecine and sound Simon Wilkinson approves, naturally. "Since 4MC has been here, the pace has moved much quicker. I think they



Editing suites in St Anne's Court are just one of the changes introduced by 4MC to its new UK branch

have a lot more trust in the people than Carlton did."

Pannaman asserts that since TVP and TVi didn't encroach on each others' markets, there haven't been many disputes over territory. That doesn't mean everyone is pleased by the take-over, notable departures including Stream's head of DVD production Andy Evans. Pannaman says tactfully "change unsettles some people," but maintains that it's been easy to replace staff losses and "key creatives" are still in place.

Stream Digital Media (as

it's now known) has received nearly as much investment as telecine, particularly in DVD authoring. Head Paul Kind, a former TVP employee, returned after the acquisition and is pleased by the changes it means for his division. "People within the company want to join because it's going to expand, and they want to learn new things."

SVC, still trading separately, has yet to experience any changes, but Pannaman says there won't be many conflicts to iron out. Postbox, now in St Anne's Court, is also ben-

efiting, according to editing division heads Johnny Whitehead and Jo Boddington. "We can offer a whole service now, including telecine and audio. We're getting deals we never could before."

Ironically, 4MC in America is being bought up by the owner of Tele-Cine and Todd AO, Liberty Media. "I don't see much of an effect, yet," says Pannaman. But 4MC's acquisition phase may not be over. With a smile, he continues, "4MC is interested in buying good businesses. I can't add anything more than that."

KIT SPEC

4MC UK consists of five units: telecine, sound, editing, broadcast video services and Stream Digital Media.

Editing suites include four digital linear suites with Abekas Dveous and Collage caption generators, version 3.0 Software DS, Avid Symphony version 2.0, three Avid offlines, an Avid Online 9000 and an Editbox Magnum.

Telecines include two C-Realities.

IN BRIEF



MPC has poached ILM's technical director and cg supervisor Sean Schur to head up its 3D animation studio. Schur says he now has the opportunity

to work on a range of projects including commercials. MPC md David Jeffers is jubilant at the appointment of the firm's first "real-live west coast creative."



Rushes is taking on board Soho 601 producer Angela Lucantoni to add to its team. Based at 601 for three years, Lucantoni has handled accounts for both Europe and the US. Says Lucantoni, "I'm looking forward to being part of a bigger team and working on high-profile productions."



Freelance Stefan Stuckert, one of the top video editors in February's *Televsual* survey, has signed up with Soho Editors. First job lined up for him is a Digital Cellphones ad for Peake & Donaghue/Mediacam TMB, with post work at M2. Stuckert says he hopes to concentrate on commercials and promos while at Soho Editors.

MARK TYNAN