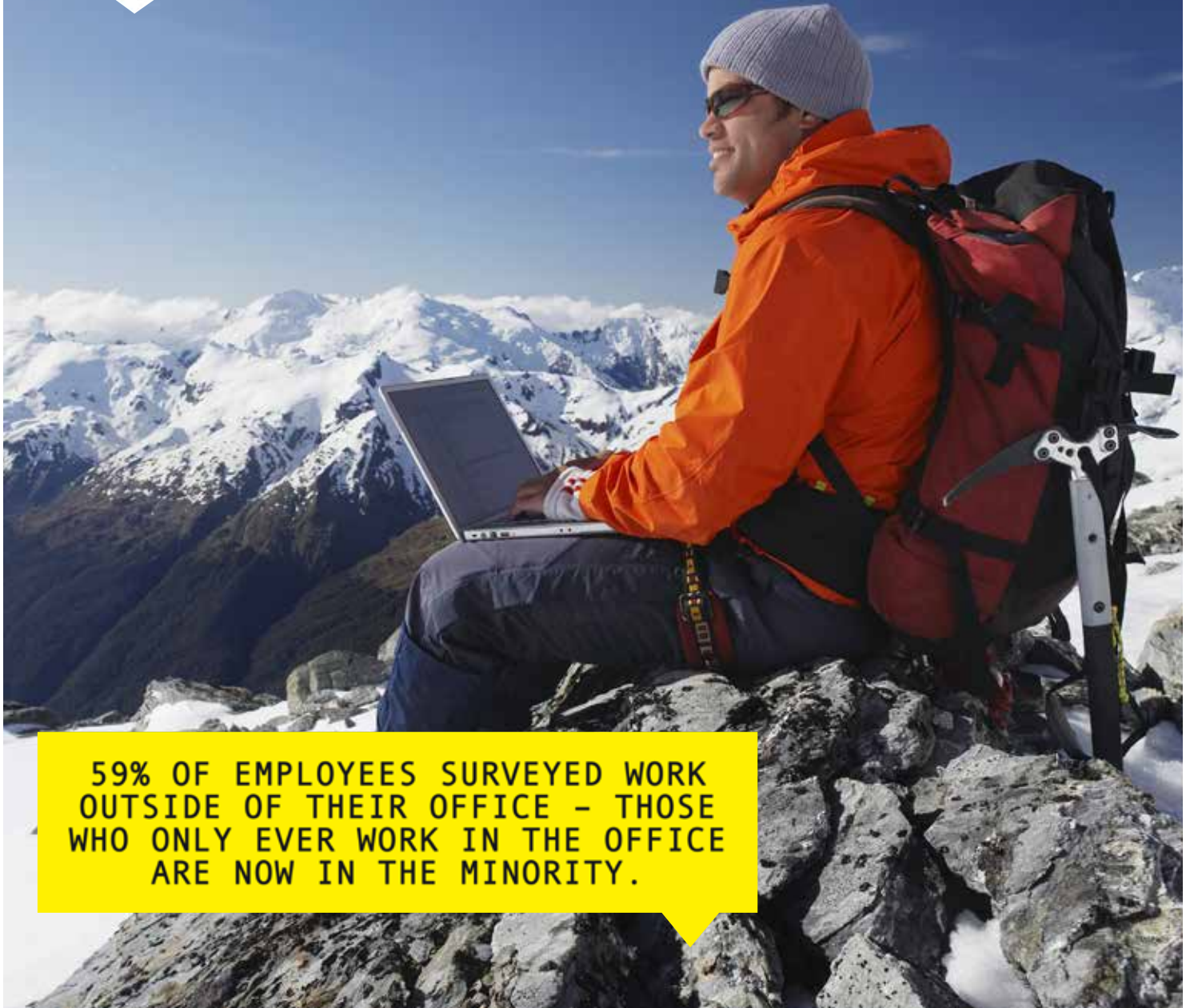


# PRINT RESELLER

www.printitreseller.uk

APRIL 2015

## SHARP



59% OF EMPLOYEES SURVEYED WORK OUTSIDE OF THEIR OFFICE – THOSE WHO ONLY EVER WORK IN THE OFFICE ARE NOW IN THE MINORITY.

### INKJETS

Epson announces MPS dealer network for revolutionary RIPS devices

PAGE 14



### THE CLOUD

Adobe streamlines document workflow with Adobe Document Cloud

PAGE 20



### INTERVIEW

Danny Molhoek explains the vision behind Lexmark's new look

PAGE 29



The Fujitsu logo, featuring the word "FUJITSU" in a bold, red, serif font with a stylized infinity symbol above the letter "J".

Fujitsu  
Image  
Scanner  
fi-6400

## Cost Efficient High Volume Production Scanner

Storing and accessing  
information anywhere  
and at any time has never  
been easier...

Whether you're at home, in the office, visiting a customer or on the go, Fujitsu provide you with the ability to access your scanned documents in an instant.

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red letter  
DAYS

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# Think Green Think **MultiCopy**

## Multi and the Environment

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[www.paper.co.uk](http://www.paper.co.uk)

# PRINT IT RESELLER

printitreseller.uk

APRIL 2015



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No doubt about it; green is this season's colour for corporate re-brands. It is being used in the Hewlett Packard Enterprise logo – because 'I wanted us to stand apart' says Meg Whitman – and in Neopost's new branding, oh, and also in Lexmark's (see page 29). Aside from its environmental associations, green is popular as a symbol of growth and re-birth. This makes it an appropriate colour for all three companies. In Lexmark's case, the re-brand is particularly welcome as it unites all of its activities – print hardware & supplies, MPS and enterprise software – under a single brand for the first time since the company's acquisition of Perceptive Software in 2010. I wonder what colour logo Lexmark will choose when, 5, 10, 15 years down the line, it spins off its rump hardware business, HP-style, as a separate entity.

Re-brands are most successful when they are part of a clear narrative, as they are in the cases of Neopost and Lexmark. Both companies are positioning themselves as experts in business processes and document workflow (electronic and paper-based), whereas previously they had a much narrower focus. Until recently, Lexmark was still marketing itself as 'The Print Experts'. To do so today is probably a sackable offence.

Many in the channel are going through the same process, expanding their offering to include solutions and services, as well as hardware. As they make this transition, one of the big challenges they face is finding employees with the right skills to sell, deliver and support more complex solutions – a task made more difficult by the UK's much talked about skills crisis (see page 46). It is to the reseller community's great credit that they are not using this as an excuse to stagnate, but are instead devoting significant resources to training and re-training staff and making their companies attractive and inspiring places to work. Whatever the colour of their logo.

James Goulding, Editor

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# BULLETIN



Managed print services provider Balreed is the Official Print Partner of the Virgin Money London Marathon taking place on Sunday, April 26. Balreed will provide a fully managed fleet of print devices spread across multiple London locations in the build-up to the race, supported by Balreed engineers at every site. After the race, it will produce the official race results for distribution to the world's media. Balreed group marketing director Gary Downey said: "We have worked with the marathon organisers before, providing the technology for the Prudential RideLondon and I'm delighted that the quality of support we provided has been recognised."

## 130 million and counting

Brother UK registered 130 million prints on its iPrint&Scan app in 2014, up 97% on the previous year. The app enables iPhone, Android or Windows Phone users to scan to and print from a Brother printer connected to the same network. More than 4.4 million users have downloaded the app.

## Beta appointed Samsung authorised hardware distributor

Beta Distribution has become the UK's fourth authorised Tier 1 hardware distributor for the full range of Samsung printers and multifunction devices.

Beta managing director Steve Soper said: "We are clearly delighted with this appointment. Samsung have an enormous amount invested in their brand name and reputation. For us now to be associated with the Samsung name is a very significant milestone in our development and a very big vote of confidence from a global brand."

Nick Taylor, Business Manager at Samsung, said:

"Beta have a broad reach across a wide range of resellers. Many of them won't necessarily be familiar with the Samsung hardware

proposition and what it can do for their business. The partnership with Beta will ensure that this is no longer the case."

Last year, 2,500 resellers bought from Beta, including both traditional office products dealers and IT value added resellers. Beta is expected to achieve sales of £200 million in 2015.

Beta Business Manager Peter Knowlden said that as well as supplying Samsung's full A4 product range, Beta is offering marketing support; an online catalogue constantly updated with the latest product and pricing information; integrated EDI and online ordering; overnight deliveries; and fixed price deliveries to end users on behalf of resellers.

He added: "Perhaps most important of all, we have product specialists and experienced account managers to help resellers at every stage in pre- and post-sales of the Samsung range."

Resellers interested in finding out more should contact Peter Knowlden on 020 7531 2806 or by email at [peterk@betadistribution.com](mailto:peterk@betadistribution.com).



## Mobility and security combined

The new version (Version 7.4) of the Cortado Corporate Server enterprise mobility solution combines enterprise mobility with secure mobile iOS printing on any network printer.

It does this by marrying Personal Printer technology, already integrated into the solution, with Cortado's native iOS printing, which enables any printer to be used via AirPrint.

All the user has to do is select the Personal Printer from any iOS app, via the AirPrint print dialog box, and authenticate their identity by scanning the QR code fixed to the printer of their choice. Only then will the print be output.

Kristin Montag, chief product officer of Cortado Mobile Solutions, said: "With the implementation of secure native iOS printing, AirPrint becomes extremely easy. User-authenticated printing works from any app and with any printer. That saves money, increases productivity and guarantees security."

[www.corporateserver.cortado.com/FreeTrial](http://www.corporateserver.cortado.com/FreeTrial)



Beta is distributing Samsung's entire range of A4 printers and MFPs



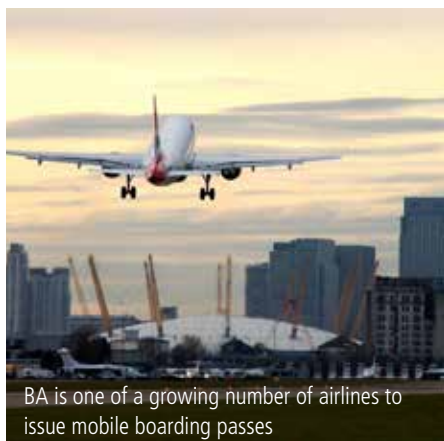
## Many happy returns

Canon Europe is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its toner cartridge recycling programme. Introduced in 1990, the free programme operates in 24 countries around the world, including 18 in Europe.

Cartridges returned by customers are sent to Canon Bretagne SAS in France where they undergo a zero-landfill closed loop recycling process involving a combination of parts re-use, materials recycling and energy recovery.

So far, Canon has collected approximately 344,000 tonnes of used toner cartridges, avoiding the need for around 232,000 tonnes of new raw materials and saving about 502,000 tonnes of CO2. [www.canon.com/environment/cartridge-sp/index.html](http://www.canon.com/environment/cartridge-sp/index.html)





BA is one of a growing number of airlines to issue mobile boarding passes

## Digital boarding passes take off

**The number of airline boarding passes delivered by mobile phone is expected to double over the next four years from 745 million this year to 1.5 billion – or one in three of all boarding passes issued by airlines – in 2019.**

In its report *Mobile & Online Ticketing: Transport, Events & NFC 2015-2019*, Juniper Research says that take-up is being driven by frequent flyers rather than leisure passengers, who are less likely to be familiar with the technology, and by the greater number of airlines offering this facility.

According to SITA, the airline IT specialist, 53% of airlines have already implemented mobile boarding passes via apps and it expects this figure to rise to 91% by 2017.

Juniper Research warns that greater adoption of barcode-based mobile boarding passes is likely to delay the transition to NFC.

Research author Nitin Bhas said: "The ultimate position that NFC can reach in the airline industry is 'the extinction of the boarding pass', as boarding pass, baggage tickets and identity information can be stored on the phone and simply accessed using NFC readers. However, this transition will not be delayed only by the success of barcode; there is the need to gain agreement and investment from airlines and airports around the world."

[www.juniperresearch.com](http://www.juniperresearch.com)

## Lexmark to acquire Kofax

**Lexmark and Kofax have entered into a merger agreement whereby Lexmark will acquire all of the outstanding shares of Kofax for \$11.00 per share in cash, producing a total enterprise value of approximately \$1 billion net of cash acquired.**

The acquisition is expected to close in the second quarter of 2015 and, on completion, will nearly double the size of Lexmark's enterprise software business to approximately \$700 million.

In addition to a significant increase in scale, the merger with Kofax will help accelerate growth and significantly increase the operating margins of Lexmark's software business, helping it compete in a market that is expected to have a compound annual growth rate of 10%.

Paul Rooke, Lexmark Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, said: "Kofax accelerates Lexmark's development of industry-specific solutions while also immediately expanding our reach into the mid-market, where there is increasing demand for technology to better manage the growing amount of unstructured information and improve customer engagement." [www.lexmark.com](http://www.lexmark.com)

Turn to page 29 to read our interview with Danny Molhoek, Lexmark Managing Director & Country General Manager UK/Ireland.

## Software robots to improve business processes

**Software 'robots' that utilise machine learning and artificial intelligence are expected to bring significant value to business processes in the next three to five years as they help automate middle-office functions.**

A poll of 537 senior decision-makers conducted by Cognizant, a provider of information technology, consulting, and business process outsourcing services, highlights how intelligent process automation (IPA) and more effective use of big data can speed up processes, reduce errors, cut costs and improve decision-making.

Respondents are currently automating 25-40%

of their workflows, typically those that follow rote procedures and manual inputs. Next generation IPA technologies are likely to extend automation to more complex workflows.

Charles Sutherland, executive vice president of research at HfS Research, said: "By implementing software robots, service providers can ensure that work is done around the clock, eliminate human error and ensure scalability as they save costs and drive revenue. Process automation also allows clients and service providers to share benefits including enhanced compliance, reduced risk and improved job satisfaction of staff."

[www.cognizant.com](http://www.cognizant.com)

## Paper reporting systems not fit for purpose

**Reliance on paper forms and filing means that two thirds of days taken off due to sickness or holiday entitlement go unregistered.**

So claims online absence management specialist aCloud TeamSeer, part of Access Group. It surveyed 127 UK businesses and found that 81% still rely on paper-based reporting systems, even though two thirds (66%) don't consider such systems to be accurate.

Joshua Gilbertson, head of aCloud at Access, said: "It is staggering to see that over four million businesses are still using paper documents to monitor sickness and holiday. We are calling for UK businesses to abandon their paper systems in favour of digital software."

He added: "Digital HR systems become invaluable when they allow organisations to make smart decisions about resourcing and productivity. It is these decisions that will improve the bottom line and give businesses a competitive edge."

[www.teamseer.com](http://www.teamseer.com)



Getting up to retrieve prints could have health benefits (photo courtesy of Kyocera).

## Printing can be good for you

**Amid growing concern about office workers' sedentary lifestyles, Guy Osmond, a vendor of sit-stand desks and other ergonomic products, is urging businesses to place printers further away from users to encourage employees to move around more.**

In his blog, the managing director of Osmond Ergonomics writes: "More walking meetings, taking and making telephone calls on the move, locating printers and water coolers away from desks, drinking lots of water (to create natural breaks) and many other simple, effective (and often free) techniques can be applied to the workplace to increase movement and reduce cardiovascular risks."

[www.ergonomics.co.uk](http://www.ergonomics.co.uk)



## Vision to offer office supplies

Vision is to launch a nationwide office supplies division to complement its existing offering in the managed print, document and telecommunications sectors. Vision Office Supplies will provide existing and new clients with printer consumables, media and entry-level office products.

[www.visionplc.co.uk](http://www.visionplc.co.uk)

## OKI Europe restructures

OKI Europe has restructured its regional operations and senior leadership team as part of its growth strategy.

Taka Nakano, previously Vice President, Eastern Region and Iberia at OKI Europe Ltd, is now Deputy Managing Director, taking over from Phil Scrase who retires after more than two decades with OKI.

Massimiliano Tedeschi, previously Managing Director and Country General Manager at Lexmark International Italy, has been made Director of Business Development at OKI Europe.

In addition, OKI has consolidated its nine existing OKI Europe international regions into just four. These include a new Northern and Western Region comprising the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, which will be headed up by Takaaki Hagiwara, previously Managing Director of OKI Systems UK and now Regional Vice President for the Western and Northern Region.

[www.okieurope.com](http://www.okieurope.com)



Retiring: Phil Scrase

UTAX UK's Area Sales Manager, Phil Colley (r) with AFP Digital's Director Andrew Bennell



## UTAX targets legal sector with regional partners

UTAX (UK) Ltd kicked off its new Partnership Support programme by co-sponsoring the Leeds segment of the UK's largest roadshow for legal professionals, LAW2015, with its partner AFP Digital.

The first in a series of events that UTAX plans to co-sponsor with partners, the two-day event held in March and organised by the SOLICITORS group is one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the north, and this year attracted over 300 legal professionals.

Andrew Bennell, Director of AFP Digital, said: "We met a lot of key decision-makers over the two days who were really interested in hearing how print overheads could be dramatically reduced by combining our range of relevant software solutions with a reliable and well managed print fleet."

He added: "We also used the event to raise funds for our local Air Ambulance by pledging £100 for every new client we met at LAW2015."

[www.utax.co.uk](http://www.utax.co.uk)

## Xerotec named Xerox partner of the year for fourth time

For the second year running, and the fourth time in total, Xerotec has been named Xerox Partner of the Year.

At the annual Xerox Partner Ceremony, hosted in London on 27th February, it also won the Production Partner of the Year award in recognition of its production sales and wide range of value-add support services. These include Break Fix and IT services, the Xerotec Xcel web-to-print offering, flexible lease financing options and the Xerotec Training Academy.

In 2014, Xerotec merged with ROI Digital and acquired Bytes Document Solutions to become Xerox's largest reseller in Western Europe with an annual turnover of £60 million.

## MBM Omega holds open day

Surrey-based MBM Omega showcased its wide range of business services and office products at an Open Day in London on March 12, 2015.

Visitors were treated to a tour of the company's office interiors showroom, a buffet from the company's business catering menu and demonstrations of some of its products, including 3D printers. Managed print services, office supplies and archiving and shredding services were also represented.

Managing director James Morton said: "We wanted to show our clients that we provide far more than the standard range of office products and services. We offer our clients an opportunity to consolidate their supply chains, removing cost from their procurement activities across a wide range of business services."

[www.mbm-omega.co.uk](http://www.mbm-omega.co.uk)



## MSE to offer PrintReleaf

MSE Technologies, a provider of after-market toner cartridges and printing solutions, has introduced a new suite of dealer solutions. These include MPS Engineered Solutions, a comprehensive ATF and TCO platform, and Marketing Platform 2.0, a selection of tools including the cloud-based marketing portal Empower.

In addition, it has entered into a partnership to offer the PrintReleaf sustainability program in conjunction with MPS Engineered Solutions. PrintReleaf is a cloud-based program that calculates the environmental impact of users' paper consumption, expressed as the number of trees that need to be planted in global reforestation projects in order to offset the damage.

To date, PrintReleaf has contracted the planting of more than 112 million trees to help revitalise forests and offset paper consumption.

[www.mse.com](http://www.mse.com)



## Partnering for success

Xerox Global Platinum Partner RDT Office Solutions Group has enhanced its ability to transform Xerox hardware into electronic business processing hubs by partnering with business solutions provider ProcessFlows.

As part of the Xerox Global Network, which focuses on the use of technology to drive growth and customer service, RDT Office Solutions Group has successfully established an international customer base in over 25 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

RDT CEO Derek Russell said: "In order to meet our customers' needs to further improve their processes within their Xerox infrastructure, we are introducing more advanced business processing solutions to our portfolio. Partnering with ProcessFlows is enabling us to offer so much more to our customers."

Crucially, it enables RDT to expand its offering with minimal infrastructure investment and without the usual costs of on-boarding new software.

[www.processflows.co.uk](http://www.processflows.co.uk)  
[www.rdt-osg.com](http://www.rdt-osg.com)



## Purpose Software automates toner request process

Purpose Software has released a new Toner Integration Module to streamline the process of replacing toner in print devices located at customer premises.

Working in conjunction with the company's Capture-IT automated meter reading application, it links notification emails generated by print devices monitored by Capture-IT to toner requests on 2serv without requiring manual intervention.

Michael Burke, Managing Director of Purpose Software, said: "This new module minimises the administrative resource required to manage and process toner replacements and highlights when agreed coverage percentages are exceeded or toner replaced prematurely. Developed as part of our ongoing programme of product enhancement, it also helps customers combat toner hoarding, reduce the cost of consumables and ensure 100% availability of print devices across the organisation."

[www.purposesoftware.co.uk](http://www.purposesoftware.co.uk)

## PrintSense to sponsor Synaxon National Conference

PrintSense, the specialist managed print business operated by Ingram Micro UK, has signed up as a sponsor of this year's Synaxon National Conference, taking place at Staverton Park, Northamptonshire in June.

Launched just over a year ago, PrintSense gives resellers an easy, low cost route into MPS through a carefully chosen set of vendor-agnostic solutions and services.

New services include the PrintSense Foundations automated toner replenishment service and PrintSense.Complete, a comprehensive three- or five-year service with competitive hardware lease pricing including on-site servicing and consumables delivery.

The PrintSense menu of bespoke and ad hoc services also includes asset tagging, pre-delivery inspection and installation, Green Button testing, first-line software installation and support, and on-site surveys.

Gemma Glen, Head of Print, Peripherals and Supplies at Ingram Micro, said: "During the first 12 months of the programme we have learned a lot about managed print and what resellers and customers really need. We've now launched a whole range of additional services, which we will be talking about and demonstrating at the Synaxon Conference. We'll be looking to bring as many members on board as possible."

[www.ingrammicro.com](http://www.ingrammicro.com), [www.synaxon.co.uk](http://www.synaxon.co.uk)

## New head for Tech Data supplies business

Colin Shepherd has taken the helm at Tech Data UK's supplies business. He has more than 15 years' experience working in specialist supplies roles within distribution.

Commenting on his appointment, Shepherd said: "Tech Data has access to leading brands such as HP, Epson, Canon and Xerox and a tremendous and unrivalled capability to assist resellers in driving their supplies business. I intend to take full advantage of those resources to ensure that our customers have the opportunity to maximise sales of cartridges and other consumables, supplies and accessories."

Tech Data stocks 4,000 consumable product lines including inkjet and toner cartridges, paper and film, labels and other consumables for leading printer and MFP brands.

Resellers can identify the supplies they need using Tech Data's Supplies Configurator and check stock positions and place and manage orders via Tech Data's InTouch online platform, 24-hours a day.

In total Tech Data holds £100 million of inventory and over 40,000 different product lines; it delivers over 10,000 items every day with a success rate of over 99.99%; and provides credit lines of more than £1.5 billion to customers. [www.techdata.co.uk](http://www.techdata.co.uk)



## Tech Data takes on A3 HP MFPs

HP has extended its distribution agreement with Tech Data to cover its entire range of HP LaserJet MFPs including high-end A3 models like the best-selling HP LaserJet Enterprise Color MFP M880 series.

As well as extending the availability of higher-end devices to the wider business reseller market, Tech Data plans to recruit a significant number of managed print services partners.

Mark Glasspool, Tech Data Director of Product Marketing, said: "HP partners can now come to Tech Data for all multifunction products. We'll be working with HP to demonstrate the benefits of its solutions and engaging with partners to maximise their potential. Between now and the end of 2015, we will be actively seeking out and talking to prospective new HP partners."



# Bridging the paper-digital divide

**Zodiak Rights is bringing its catalogues to life with an augmented reality app developed by Blue Sky Creative.**

The market leader in the worldwide distribution of television programming commissioned Blue Sky Creative to create interactive catalogues promoting *Wallander*, *Location*, *Location* and other programmes for the annual MIPCOM event in Cannes.

Pointing an iPad at static images in the catalogue triggers promotional videos so that programme buyers can see what they are getting as well as reading about it.

Paul Houlton, Managing Director at Blue Sky Creative Ltd, said: "Zodiak had glossy catalogues and great videos, so AR was the perfect way to link them up. Using the iPad's camera and



the image recognition software in our app, the salespeople could launch video clips directly from the hard copy catalogues. By providing a bridge to rich digital content, AR breathes new life into good old paper catalogues."

<http://blueskycreative.co>



## Design challenge

To celebrate the launch of the ST3Di ModelSmart Pro printer range at the Staples store in Milton Keynes, ST3Di is challenging pupils in local secondary schools to submit their 3D designs to a panel made up of industry experts, media, influential bloggers and model creators. The five winners (one per school) to be announced in June will have their design printed and receive a £100 gift voucher. The school with the most entrants will receive discount vouchers for ST3Di products. ST3Di, part of Environmental Business Products, a collector and remanufacturer of inkjet cartridges, plans to roll out the ST3Di ModelSmart Pro range to other retailers in 2015. [www.st3di.com](http://www.st3di.com)



## Rising star

**The Zhuhai CTC 3D printer has achieved second place in the January 2015 ranking of 3D print quality produced by 3D Hubs, which surveys more than 10,000 3D printer users in more than 160 countries.**

Based on an open source prototype, MakerBot Replicator, the \$700 printer is designed, developed and manufactured by Zhuhai CTC Electronic Co., Ltd. The Chinese company entered the 3D printing market in 2010 and opened the world's largest desktop 3D printer manufacturing facility in April, 2014. [www.ctcprinter.com](http://www.ctcprinter.com)

## Enduring relationship

Pitney Bowes has renewed its strategic alliance with HP, which has been in place since 2009 and helps Pitney Bowes integrate digital and physical mail, primarily through the IntelliJet Printing System and Print+ Messenger colour inkjet system used by printers and mailers to produce high quality, high impact physical communications.



## Giving waste a new life

**A 3D printer that uses filaments made exclusively from recycled, post-consumer plastics is one of the featured products in the EKOCYCLE shop-within-a-shop in Harrods, London.**

A collaboration between The Coca-Cola Company and musician will.i.am, EKOCYCLE is a collection of desirable lifestyle products made from recycled materials.

The plug-and-play EKOCYCLE Cube 3D printer from 3D Systems lets users create useful new items out of waste plastic. Each EKOCYCLE-branded cartridge contains filament made from three recycled 20oz PET plastic bottles. Consumables are available in red, black, white and natural colours.

[www.cubify.com](http://www.cubify.com)



## Higher definition inkjet printing

**HP claims to have raised the bar in inkjet printing with the launch of High Definition Nozzle Architecture technology for HP inkjet web presses.**

The technology doubles the native print resolution of current HP inkjet printheads from 10,560 to 21,120 nozzles, delivering 2,400 nozzles per inch, and supporting dual drop weight per colour for sharper text, more accurate skin tones and smoother colour transitions.

High Definition Nozzle Architecture technology will be incorporated into all HP Inkjet Web Press platforms, including the HP T200, T300 and T400 Inkjet Web Press families and those sold through resellers. Existing customers can upgrade to the new technology.

## Message on a bottle

The Dutch vodka brand MEDEA is using 'message on a bottle' technology to interact with consumers. The combination of programmable LED displays on bottles, Apple's iBeacon Bluetooth technology and a MEDEA app enables retailers and/or consumers to compose and wirelessly transmit scrolling messages to the bottles' LED displays. Each bottle is pre-programmed with six familiar phrases, such as 'Happy Birthday', 'Congratulations' and 'Thank you', that crawl across the label in electric blue. Owners can also add their own messages.

[www.medeavodka.com](http://www.medeavodka.com)



## RS launches own brand 3D printer

RS Components, the trading brand of Electrocomponents plc, has introduced the first RS-branded 3D printer. The RS IdeaWerk 3D printer is claimed to be 30% cheaper than other 3D printers in its class and very quiet in operation, making it suitable for use in offices, classrooms and the home. RS also sells 3D printers from 3D Systems, Ultimaker, BEEVERYCREATIVE and RepRapPro.

[www.rs-online.com](http://www.rs-online.com)



## There's more to life than Black and White...

Simple, Compact, Powerful Ricoh's A4 printers and MFP's

The new Ricoh A4 black & white MFP and printer ranges are compact and designed to be easy to use and easy to manage.

They offer a high quality output at full speed - all for a very attractive price. Of course, it's not just about printing, with MFP models that scan, copy, and fax within this series, you'll have the functionality you need where you need it to maximise office productivity.



**SP 3600DN**

**Black and White LED printer**

The new SP 3600DN is a 30 ppm device, perfect for small work-group of 2-5 people and print environments of 3000-5000 page per month



**SP 3610SF**

**Black and White LED Multifunction printer**

The new SP 3600 & SP 3610SF are 30 ppm device, perfect for a work-group of 2-5 people and print environments of 3000-5000 prints a month



**SP 4510DN**

**Black and White LED printer**

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Wayne Snell: newly created role

## Wayne Snell joins DSales

Wayne Snell has joined DSales (UK) Ltd in the newly created role of product manager, with responsibility for promoting the company's expanding line-up of ineo MFPs manufactured for Develop by Konica Minolta Holdings Inc..

Snell was previously Marketing Manager at Olivetti (UK), also a customer of Konica Minolta Holdings Inc., and before that group product manager at Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd.

## New MD for Vision

Vision has appointed Philip Bond as Managing Director. Previously Group Sales Director, Bond has been with the group since it started in 1985.

He said: "We have exciting plans for the future including expansion of our sales and services reach, development of our Telecommunications division and the newly launched Office Supplies team to complement our offerings to new and existing clients. We will also continue our focus on the right fit acquisitions."

Over the last three years, Vision has achieved double digit growth through a combination of acquisitions and organic growth.

## UTAX (UK) signs up Isle of Man partner

UTAX (UK) Ltd has signed an exclusive Partnership Agreement with Bridson & Horrox, a supplier of stationery and print services on the Isle of Man. The agreement will help Bridson & Horrox Group deliver managed print services to the offshore financial industry and local IT service companies.

Bridson & Horrox Group managing director Darren Horrox said that he was attracted to UTAX by its range of reliable, economic and secure MFPs, its software solutions and its technical, service and sales support.



## Apogee to make some noise

Apogee is lending its support to the Make Some Noise to Change Young Lives fund-raising initiative organised by Global, the Media & Entertainment company.

All Global radio stations, including Heart, Capital FM, Classic FM, Smooth, LBC, Capital Xtra, XFM and Gold, with a combined reach of 23.2 million people per week, will be uniting behind the campaign to help disadvantaged children and young people across the UK.

Global has earmarked 103 projects to receive grants in 2014/15, including a charity supporting teenagers with cancer in Glasgow; a young carers project in Barnet; a bereavement charity in Berkshire; the children's hospital in Newcastle; a centre for stammering

children; an activity club for disabled children in Bedfordshire; a sport project for youngsters with cerebral palsy in Nottingham; a Downs Syndrome group in Swindon; a music therapy project in Milton Keynes; a special school in Devon; a Suffolk project specialising in emotional and mental health problems; and a centre for care leavers in Kent.

Over the next 12 months, Apogee will be taking part in numerous fund-raising events for the cause including The Great River Race, with teams in the Cutter and Over 28 categories, and The Nuts Challenge. In addition, Head of Marketing and Strategy Keith Williams will be taking part in the Slateman Savage, Marlow and Sandman triathlons.

[www.apogeeCorp.com](http://www.apogeeCorp.com)

## The business opportunities behind the headlines



by Andy Milsom,  
Head of Partner  
Training and  
Development,  
BNP Paribas  
Leasing Solutions

I guess like many individuals involved in sales, I watched the recent budget announcement with great interest, to see if behind the headlines there hid new business opportunities.

An important element of my training seminars is to try and interpret how the macro economic and political environment can translate into potential sales opportunities. Any changes in government policy give this process additional focus.

I conclude that there are two features of George Osborne's speech that may interest IT sales organisations.

Firstly, there was no confirmation that this year's generous Annual Investment Allowance of £500,000 for qualifying capital expenditure will be extended into 2016. So, I would suggest businesses take full advantage of this current arrangement and get orders placed reasonably quickly, particularly for large infrastructure projects.

In this context, it is well worth remembering that equipment subject to hire purchase agreements, such as those offered by BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions, qualify for the current Annual Investment Allowance. They also have the added benefit of spreading the cost of acquisition over a number of years. This has obvious cash flow benefits, as well as allowing businesses with a limited CAPEX budget for the current year to take advantage of the 2015 tax environment.

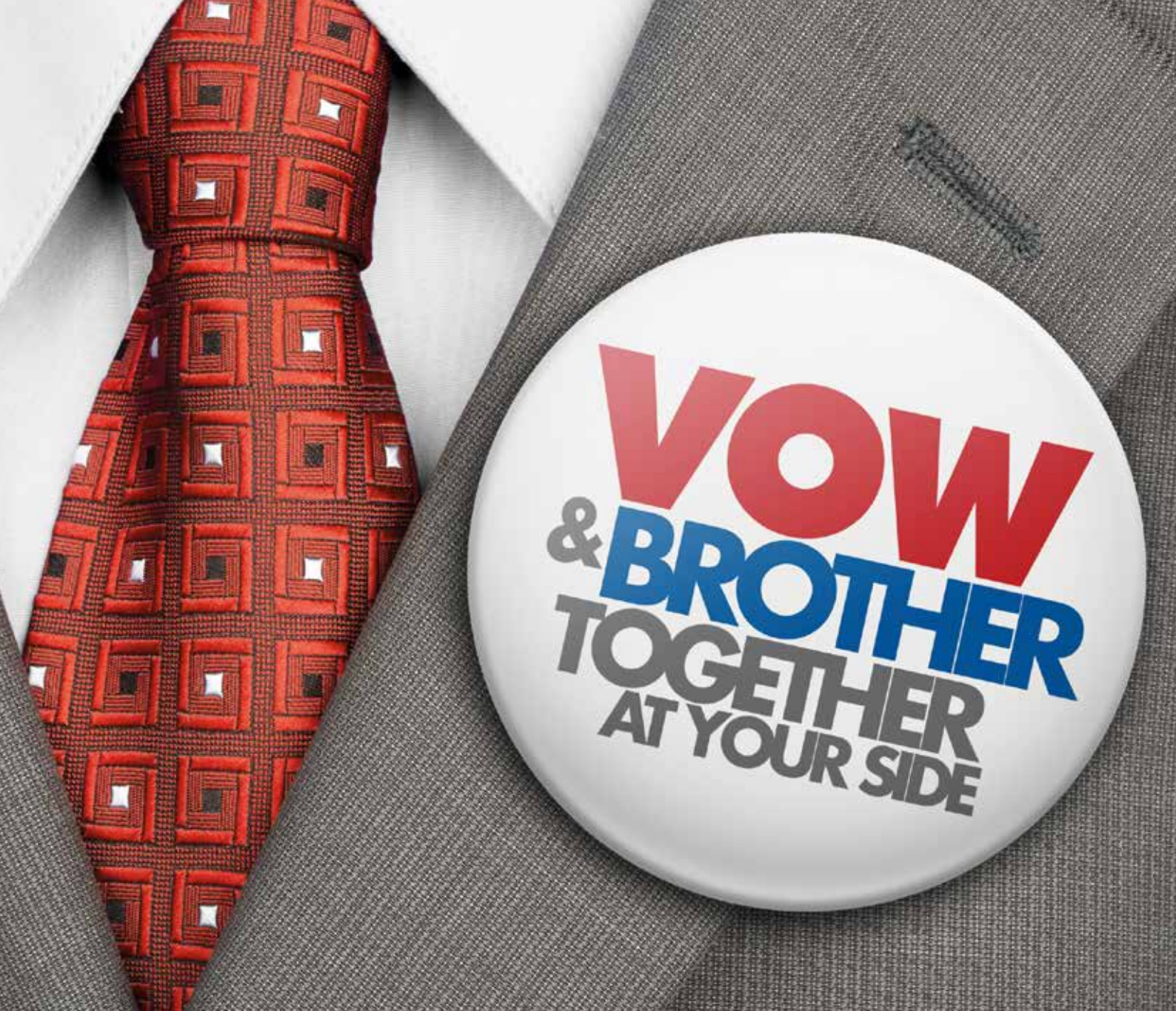
Secondly, I expect to see many potential business opportunities arising due to the evolving trend towards local autonomy, with attractive incentives for businesses to set up and expand within certain geographical areas.

The Chancellor announced that of the 24 existing Enterprise Zones, eight would be extended and a further two will be created in Plymouth and Blackpool. These zones have historically offered enhanced incentives for companies to acquire capital equipment.

'Watch this space' for the trend of local authorities assuming greater spending powers and using any money available to attract business investment. Greater Manchester and Cambridge were examples given in the budget announcement, and any reseller operating in those areas would be well advised to keep themselves informed of local business initiatives.

[andy.milsom@uk.bnpparibas.com](mailto:andy.milsom@uk.bnpparibas.com)





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**PRINT IT RESELLER**

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD

Epson: Workforce Pro RIPS

# RIPS tide

Epson has established an MPS dealer network for its RIPS business inkjets

Following a lengthy interlude since their launch last year, Epson has finally started to sell its Workforce Pro RIPS inkjet devices through a network of 26 dealers, including ASL, Bytek Ltd, Conrac, Sapphire Print Solutions and Scan DB.

Replaceable Ink Pack System (RIPS) devices have been specially designed for managed print services (MPS) and come with extra large ink sacks containing three years worth of ink. The black ink pack has a capacity of 75,000 pages and each of the three colour ones contains enough ink for 50,000 pages.

There are four colour models in the RIPS range, an A4 printer and A4 MFP, and an A3 printer and A3 MFP.

## Vertical focus

Mark Allen, reseller product manager, Business Imaging at Epson UK, told *PrintIT Reseller* that the first 26 dealers had been chosen for their ability to deliver managed print services and for their expertise in key verticals.

"We are looking for dealers that understand key verticals. For instance, we took on Scan DB because it has a relationship with White Consulting Limited, which won a tender to supply broadband and cashless catering into schools via the E2BN framework. ScanDB supplies all of

**In the last 6-8 weeks, Epson has sold 200 RIPS devices in the UK, with only Germany shipping more units.**

the reprographics for that framework. We haven't even started a mailshot or campaign on that yet and we have already got something in the region of eight schools proposed for Epson RIPS," he said.

Allen believes the attractions of low running costs, energy efficiency and a small environmental footprint make RIPS particularly compelling for education customers, pointing out that the products were very well received at BETT. He adds that RIPS is also generating a good deal of interest among commercial and healthcare organisations, including the NHS, PCTs and doctors surgeries – a key focus for Sapphire.

In the last 6-8 weeks, Epson has sold 200 RIPS devices in the UK, with only Germany shipping more units.

## Channel recruitment

To help drive further sales, Epson is planning to extend its existing network, especially in Scotland and Wales – the Irish market is already covered by Bytek Ltd. However, Allen argues that dealer recruitment is not a priority.

"Potentially we are going to take on more dealers, but we probably don't need to at the moment, as we are doing the numbers we want to be hitting. But if the right dealer comes on board and they can service the product, then, yes, we will talk to them," he said.

While Epson could broaden the distribution of RIPS to resellers that don't have their own servicing, with Epson providing maintenance on their behalf, Allen says that for the time being Epson remains committed to the servicing dealer channel.

"RIPS has always been a servicing dealer product," he said. "It just fits that market. They have the expertise; they understand those markets; and the product has been designed around them. We do have non-RIPS products, the PDL devices, which we try to push through the IT reseller channel. But RIPS boxes are designed for the servicing dealer channel."

## Dealer benefits

As an alternative to laser products, RIPS has a number of benefits for dealers, including low running costs,



Mark Allen, Reseller Product Manager, Business Imaging, Epson UK

the opportunity to increase margin and minimal need for servicing.

"That's one of the big benefits," said Allen. "There are not many replaceable parts – no imaging unit and no developer unit. RIPS is a low servicing product that could happily run for the lifetime of a contract without needing a change of ink pack."

He adds that there are also opportunities for dealers to expand their product offering by taking on other Epson products.

"I'll give you an example. ScanDB has been asked by E2BN whether there's an opportunity for wide format products to compete with HP. Our SureColor TS range is not only well priced, it's a modular box, so a school could have it just as a printer for around £2,000 to £3,000, which is a very competitive price. I think dealers are absolutely gobsmacked about what we can bring to table," he said.

"It's quite heartening when a dealer comes in and has a look at our wide format range and the different types of printing we do – our receipt printing for instance. They are quite taken aback at the extent to which we are at the forefront of print."

## Product development

RIPS is currently limited – there are only certain segments that the workgroup devices fit into – but Epson is already gathering feedback from the channel and feeding it into the European marketing team to influence future product development.

"We've had some requests to put in smaller ink bags," Allen said. "And one of the dealers came back to us and said 'Do you have single-function mono RIPS, as ideally we would like to look at addressing just mono fleets of printers and refreshing some HP accounts?'. The roadmap will change and RIPS will definitely adapt. But the machines we've focused on to start with are absolutely perfect."

[www.epson.eu](http://www.epson.eu)





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# Sharp's Cloud Portal Office adds even more value

Designed to take office productivity to a whole new level, Sharp's Cloud Portal Office creates new opportunities for channel partners to secure a new revenue stream by adding further value to Sharp MFPs.

**With this document sharing and collaboration solution, Sharp is meeting the demands of Generation Cloud, empowering its partners to capture a larger chunk of a growing market. Industry analysts IDC said that half of all businesses are already using cloud services in some form or other today and that this figure is predicted to rise to more than 90% in the next three years.**

A Gartner study of large businesses found that despite the fact that the explosive growth in the number of mobile devices used by employees is driving demand for easy remote access, only a small proportion had moved towards cloud email or office systems.

These findings, coupled with the results of research conducted by Sharp last year, which identified the emergence of a new generation of worker that's moving towards a more flexible, collaborative working model and an increasingly tangible demand for

more collaborative, flexible working practices, reinforce the point that by delivering cloud-based solutions, channel partners have the potential to grow their businesses.

#### **Giving back control**

Solutions Product Marketing Manager Chris Hale said: "With Cloud Portal Office, resellers have a powerful message to convey to customers.

"An issue with a number of cloud storage solutions on the market today is that the business doesn't have full control over the information that's stored and accessed. Say for example a member of staff wanted to share a file, they could simply open up a Dropbox or similar account, but what that means is that information is removed from the business and outside of its control. Worst case scenario, if that employee moves on, then potentially the data moves with them and is no longer accessible to or controlled by the business."

**Half of respondents believe that increased collaboration in the workplace would have a direct impact on their business' bottom line.**

Hale said that Cloud Portal Office removes this threat. The service is accessed through a single sign-on portal, the Sharp Cloud Portal, which is securely controlled by the IT department. As employees leave or take on different roles, administrators can use the Sharp Cloud Portal to change access permissions, cancel/add subscriptions or increase storage space at a moment's notice – all through a secure web page.

#### **The business case**

The Sharp survey, which polled SME employees in UK, France, Germany, Sweden and The Netherlands, identifies a clear opportunity gap between what Generation Cloud workers are demanding in the workplace and what is actually being provided by SMEs across Europe.

Half of respondents believe that increased collaboration in the workplace would have a direct impact on their business' bottom line by making it more profitable. However, the reality of service provision within the SME sector is far from the demands of Generation Cloud workers.

The results demonstrate that by not fully embracing new ways of flexible and collaborative working, SMEs are failing to realise the business benefits it can bring:

- 61% of respondents claim it would make them more efficient;
- 43% do not have ways to easily share documents and collaborate with people outside the corporate network;







## CLOUD PORTAL OFFICE

- 39% of employees say their company has no official policy on sharing work information beyond the work network;
- 67% of employees still typically share information as paper print-outs;
- 13% of employees download collaborative working tools if their company doesn't provide them.

### Securing new revenues

Sharp Cloud Portal Office is an advanced file storage and collaboration tool designed to make businesses more efficient and to support an increasingly mobile workforce by making it easier to share information. Hale said: "In a nutshell, Cloud Portal Office simply allows businesses to collaborate better. It allows users to securely access, upload, download, manage and print files; create new folders; collaborate; and share – from any PC, mobile device, Sharp MFP or Sharp BIG PAD interactive whiteboard."

An overall decline in output volumes and click charges has led to reduced revenues for dealers, but with Cloud Portal Office, Sharp is offering its partners the opportunity to secure potential new revenue streams.

"Cloud Portal Office not only supports end-users in better collaboration, but also adds real business value to Sharp's resellers who have seen an overall decline in print volumes and cost per copy rates. Cloud Portal Office provides an opportunity for partners to engage in new conversations with existing clients and new prospects to secure additional revenues," Hale said.

"There are a host of cloud-based services on the market today," he explained. "But Sharp Cloud Portal Office is unique. Some MFP manufacturers provide the connection into Cloud solutions, but no storage space or functionality; while storage providers don't provide the necessary integration with MFPs, which are essentially the on/off ramp for document workflow.

"In contrast, Sharp is offering a full

service – which includes both storage and integration with office products – in a single sign-on service. For those partners who already provide document management and workflow solutions, Sharp's Cloud Portal Office will help ensure they remain a valued business partner to clients."

Hale added: "In today's market, dealers are not competing on price, the differentiator is all about the value-add and the service delivery. Offering Cloud Portal Office will help with client retention and help ensure your customers keep coming back."

### Seamless connection

Sharp's BIG PAD interactive whiteboard connects to Cloud Portal Office just as effectively as its MFPs. With BIG PAD, users can display presentations and other documents in a format that's big enough for everyone in the room to see. It's easy to use – users simply select the file, drag it to the whiteboard and open it up.

Via the BIG PAD's touchscreen technology, users can capture everyone's ideas by adding notes and comments in freehand before saving it all in a new document and securely storing it in the cloud.

Meeting notes can be created and shared in an instant – even with colleagues in a different country – and anything that's on-screen can be preserved as a PDF.

### Single sign-on

"The service is based on a per-user subscription model, rather than an MFP subscription model and will provide a regular

income stream for dealers. Plus, the pricing structure fits with dealers' current model whereby they invoice click charges on a monthly/quarterly basis," said Hale.

It also removes the requirement for significant capital outlay or investment in dedicated IT staff to manage it. "The investment required to set-up and manage a facility to access documents anytime, anywhere would be significant both in terms of equipment and people," explained Hale. "But with Cloud Portal Office the only outlay is the cost of the subscription. Which can be scaled up or down as the business requires."

"Cloud Portal Office adds a whole new dimension to mobile working," said Hale. "It also offers flexibility in that users can print from any Sharp cloud-ready MFP, wherever they are.

"Anyone who has subscribed can use an Android or Apple iOS device to work on the move. What's more, a uniform design across every mobile platform means that everyone has the same experience regardless of which mobile device they're using."

All data is protected by access controls, powerful firewalls, state-of-the-art encryption technology and redundant fail-over systems. That means information is always safe, always secure and always available.

As all modern Sharp products are already equipped for use with Cloud Portal Office, opening the service to new users (including existing customers with cloud-capable Sharp MFPs already installed) is simply a matter of granting them monthly subscriptions.

[www.sharp.eu](http://www.sharp.eu)

**In today's market, dealers are not competing on price, the differentiator is all about the value-add and the service delivery.**





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# Jam today



## Business process are getting clogged up with paper, claims Adobe as it launches its document cloud

**More than four out of five (83%) professionals believe their productivity and effectiveness at work is being hampered by outdated document processes, according to a study of 5,000 office workers released by Adobe to coincide with the launch of Adobe Document Cloud (see below).**

*Paper Jam: Why Documents are Dragging Us Down* reveals that 74% of professionals in the US, UK, Germany, France and Australia are reliant on paper documents at work and six out of 10 would switch jobs if it meant less paperwork.

As implausible as this sounds, it does suggest a degree of frustration with paper-based document processes, with 54% saying that inefficient processes are stopping them from doing their best work.

Paper is not the only drain on productivity. Almost half (44%) of respondents say that the volume of e-mail attachments has made their work life more complicated; and 40% have lost important electronic information or documents, with 66% of those losses being caused by a computer or hard drive failure.

Overall, the two greatest frustrations cited by respondents were not being able to find documents they know exist (82%)

and managing version control (77%).

Another frustration is not being able to access documents when away from the office, seen as a priority by almost two thirds (64%) of respondents. Only 43% of documents are accessible in digital format, with just 6% stored in the cloud.

Reliance on paper is not purely the responsibility of employers. While more than four in five agree that paper-free working saves time, 50% admit to being emotionally attached to paper documents. More than one third (35%) said they felt uncomfortable only having digital copies of work documents.

### Adobe Document Cloud

To help business people cope with the inefficiencies of existing paper-based and digital workflows (e.g. email), Adobe has developed Adobe Document Cloud.

Available via subscription or one-time purchase, Adobe Document Cloud is a collection of integrated services offered through an online personal document hub with a consistent online profile across all devices. Together, they enable users to create, review, approve, sign and track documents on a desktop or mobile device.

Bryan Lamkin, senior vice president of Technology and Corporate Development at Adobe, said: "While most forms of content

have successfully made the move to digital (books, movies, music), documents and the process of working with them have not, and that needs to change. Adobe Document Cloud will revolutionise and simplify how people get work done with critical documents."

### Key elements include:

- **Adobe Acrobat DC.** Featuring an intuitive, touch-enabled interface, this all-new solution takes Adobe's PDF software to a new level with the ability to convert any paper document into a digital, editable file that can be sent for signature;
- **eSign Services** (formerly Adobe EchoSign). Included free with every subscription, this lets users electronically send and sign any document using any internet-connected device;
- **Mobile Link and Mobile Apps.** These smartphone/tablet apps let you access, work on and sign documents when you are away from your desk. They also let you use a smartphone camera to capture and convert any paper document into a digital, editable file.
- **Document Management and Control.** Services such as Send & Track let you track and control documents as they are worked on and processed by colleagues. Intelligent tracking gives you visibility of where critical documents are along a process, including who has opened them and when.

[www.adobe.com/uk](http://www.adobe.com/uk)

**74% of professionals in the US, UK, Germany, France and Australia are reliant on paper documents at work**



*continued...*





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\* based on specifications for Canon imageFORMULA DR-C225 and DR-C225W document scanner models only

\*\* vs a HP equivalent model (Average Mean StreetPrice Context Dec Data, 1500page per month, Full colour Printing with 5% coverage, Just toner cost not inc HW.)

\*\*\* The high yield XL ink tanks allows MAXIFY users to save money with a low cost per page (running costs as low as 4.4p for colour printing (and 1.0p for mono printing if using the multi pack, or 1.2p if purchasing the single black ink pack)

...continued

## Wet ink signatures still a major cause of printing

Free e-signing services with every subscription to Adobe Document Cloud is likely to be a major attraction as the need to add a signature to a document remains a major cause of printing.

According to research by ARX, a leading provider of digital signature solutions recently acquired by DocuSign, more than one third of all printed documents are printed for the sole purpose of adding a signature.

The study by American City & County analysed practices in US local and state government, but its findings will strike a chord with readers on this side of the Pond:

- 37% of all printed documents are printed for the sole purpose of adding signatures;
- Nearly 30% of respondents say that more than half the documents they print are output solely so that they can be signed;
- 42% of survey respondents say that collecting traditional signatures using pen and paper delays each signature-dependent process by 2-7 days. For some, the delays are even longer;
- 32% of all respondents are already either using digital signatures or are planning to do so; nearly 50% more say they see the need for them in their organisation;
- 95% of those already using digital signatures have seen efficiency increases and 85% have seen shorter turnaround times on signature-dependent documents.

The factors that are most important to respondents when selecting a digital signature solution include security and integrity of sensitive data (88%); ease of use (84%); control over user management/governance policies (82%); and ease of implementation (79%).

The main reservations relate to security, control, integrity and location of sensitive data (77%); acceptance/legality of digital signatures (74%); and compliance with regulations/audit requirements (63%).

[www.arx.com](http://www.arx.com)



e-signing with Adobe Document Cloud



## Reasons to love mail

Not everyone prefers digital communications. As this selection of recent research findings show, there are many occasions when, and reasons why, a posted letter is still the best option

- 7 out of 10 people prefer to receive legal or banking information in the form of a letter. Just over one quarter of us are happy to receive such information via email. Less than 1% think a phone call or text message appropriate for formal communications.<sup>1</sup>
- Almost 50% of people prefer to receive sales information via a letter or brochure, closely followed by email, cited by 42.8%. Less than 7% like to receive sales information face-to-face.<sup>1</sup>
- Mail has a greater impact on the area of the brain associated with long-term memory, indicating that printed communications are more memorable. Mail has a 32% more powerful effect than email on long-term memory encoding (LTME) – one of the key metrics for advertising effectiveness – and a 72% greater impact than TV.<sup>2</sup>
- Mail also has a higher neuroscience engagement measure than other media, suggesting that people interact with mail and absorb its messages in a largely unconscious way. The neuroscience engagement measure for mail is 33% higher than for email and 60% higher than for television.<sup>2</sup>
- People value something 24% more highly when they can see and touch it rather than just see it.<sup>2</sup>
- A majority (57%) say that receiving mail makes them feel more valued; only 17% feel the same about email.<sup>2</sup>
- Almost two thirds (63%) of consumers take mail more seriously than email.<sup>2</sup>
- People who receive bank statements through the post are more than twice as likely to correctly identify how much money is in their account as those who receive statements online (82% vs 32%).<sup>3</sup>
- Direct marketing campaigns that include mail are 27% more likely to deliver top-ranking sales performance, and 40% more likely to deliver top-ranking customer acquisition levels than campaigns without mail.<sup>4</sup>
- An average of 23% of all mail is shared between people in a household. 21% of promotions and special offers are shared.<sup>2</sup>
- Mail is kept in a household for an average of 17 days for advertising mail, 38 days for door drops and 45 days for bills and statements.<sup>2</sup>

1. Avery

2. Royal Mail MarketReach, The Private Life of Mail

3. Keep Me Posted, London Economics, Managing Money Online

4. IPA Effectiveness Awards Databank



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# Time to invest?

Nuance to do more to promote the benefits of its office productivity solutions



Steven Steenhaut,  
Senior Director of  
Marketing EMEA,  
Global Marketing,  
Nuance  
Communications

**Nuance is calling on the software industry and UK resellers to do more to promote the benefits of PDF technology, as it releases new research showing that when it comes to investment in office productivity solutions, small and medium-sized businesses in the UK are lagging behind their counterparts in Germany and France.**

A new study by the speech recognition and document management company, *Better technology, greater efficiency*, shows that the adoption of both PDF and speech recognition technologies is significantly higher on the continent than over here.

The proportion of businesses with fewer than 50 employees that use PDF technology is 92% in Germany, 86% in France and just 71% in the UK. The respective figures for speech recognition solutions are 14%, 6% and 4%.

Perhaps as a result, the proportion of SMBs that spend more than five hours a day working on text-based documents is significantly higher in the UK than in Germany and France (14%, 10% and 9% respectively).

## Limited use

Although the take-up of PDF software appears to be high, Steven Steenhaut, Senior Director of Marketing EMEA, Global Marketing at Nuance Communications, warns that many businesses will be using only the most basic functionality.

"A lot of people have PDF software, but we have to be careful what that means," he said. "There is a strong likelihood that many will only have a PDF reader installed, which allows them to open the PDF but not to edit or convert it."

Low awareness of PDF features is partly the result of familiar problems faced by SMEs, including not having the time (41%) or money (52%) to learn about and invest in appropriate technology. In addition, almost one third (32%) of respondents only review their software requirements every year or more.

Steenhaut adds that the software industry itself is also partly to blame for poor PDF implementation. "We as an industry are doing a lousy job of explaining the advantages of PDF or at least educating people in how to make the best use of this investment," he said.

One encouraging outcome from the perspective of resellers is a perceived link between Nuance's marketing spend and the adoption of its solutions by small and medium-sized businesses.

"A figure that was very surprising to us was that 14% of SMBs in Germany are using, or at least are familiar with, speech recognition technology," said Steenhaut. "This is a high number, which I think is a reflection of the marketing activity we have done in Germany. Advertising that makes clear what the advantages are of speech recognition has resulted in higher uptake in Germany than in the other countries where we haven't been running these activities."

**We as an industry are doing a lousy job of explaining the advantages of PDF**



## Wasted time

So what are some of the points that Nuance wants to get across? With four out of five SMEs surveyed stating that their business could be made more efficient in certain areas, including the management, creation and editing of text documents, how can PDF software help them improve their document processes?

"PDF software can help streamline the document flow in companies in terms of security and ease of use," said Steenhaut. "For example, when you receive a form, using PDF software you can edit it and immediately fill in the form on your PC instead of having to print out the document, fill it in by hand and then scan it in again."

He adds that PDF software also brings big benefits to document filing and retrieval. "We have a case study of a legal company that switched from filing paper documents in metal cabinets and started using PDFs to store documents electronically instead. This allowed them to get rid of all their paper storage, which freed up a lot of office space. They saved £60,000 by doing that. Secondly, because PDFs are searchable, they are easier to retrieve. Last but not least, PDFs can be made completely secure through encryption software," he said.

## Voice processing

Dragon Naturally Speaking speech recognition software is another Nuance solution that can help SMBs save time when dealing with documents.

"The reasons are three-fold," explained Steenhaut. "First, it's three times faster to speak than type – even if you are a good typist; second, by definition you are not making any spelling mistakes; and third, speech recognition also allows you to stay productive when you are mobile or on the road through the use of dictation devices like an iPhone or digital recorder."

He added: "The typical markets where speech recognition is already well embedded, namely the legal and healthcare sectors, have seen their revenue increase in an important way thanks to speech recognition, as it gives them more time to do other things e.g. cold calling to find new customers or additional marketing activities. It frees up time that can be invested in other activities."

For time-starved SMBs any technology that can improve productivity is worth a closer look.

[www.nuance.co.uk](http://www.nuance.co.uk)



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# Doing more with less

ECi Software Solutions, headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, USA, with offices and companies throughout the USA, Australia, England and the Netherlands, is a leader in industry-specific information technology solutions.

**Developed for office equipment dealers, ECi's solutions help automate e-commerce, back office, delivery optimisation and internet purchasing to make light work of time-intensive manual processes. Using these solutions, dealers are able to do more with fewer resources.**

Paola White, VP Sales and Marketing for UK/Ireland, said that ECi is geared to support its clients in securing profitable growth.

The company provides the premier Managed Print Services (MPS) solution FMAudit, which streamlines and automates the meter reading, billing and supplies replenishment processes. FMAudit provides tools and workflows that include device assessment, data analysis, TCO, proposal generation, ongoing device monitoring for supply levels, supply triggered marketing, meter billing, service alert filtering and green impact reporting. These tools provide dealers with business-critical information that reduces the time and effort required to manage and maintain MPS contracts.

"Collecting data is all well and good," said White. "But it's what you do with it that brings the real business value and this is where ECi's e-automate ERP solution, which combines contract and service management with stock control, accounting, purchasing and sales, really comes into its own."



Paola White, VP  
Sales & Marketing,  
ECi UK/Ireland

**These tools provide dealers with business-critical information that reduces the time and effort required to manage and maintain MPS contracts**

## End-to-end visibility

With e-automate, disparate functions of the business are pulled together into one system to support greater collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Already used by more than 1,200 companies globally, e-automate is a solution that can effectively handle businesses of any size. It has an intuitive process-based user interface, which makes the system easy to learn and use, and is designed around the business management needs of a service dispatch-oriented company.

While FMAudit allows dealers to collect valuable data that supports fleet management, e-automate provides a complete end-to-end solution that delivers real visibility of when an individual machine in the field becomes profitable.

"When a dealer provides a device either on a lease or rental basis, an element of the cost includes supplies and servicing. While FMAudit provides data on usage and supplies, when a machine is FOC, they don't actually have any visibility over when that device becomes profitable," said White.

"The robust real-time reporting tools provided by e-automate allow dealers to easily get to the critical information they need to manage the most important aspects of their business. This enables them to better understand when that install makes them money," she added.

"New intelligent devices send key data back to the dealer automatically but older models require manual intervention. By automating these processes, the deal becomes profitable faster. The ability to drill down by user provides even greater intelligence, enabling dealers to identify areas of over- or under-utilisation and take the necessary steps to better deploy devices for fleet optimisation."

The service element also allows dealers

to keep track of and optimise service technicians, ensuring maximum productivity levels and an improved bottom line.

## Better integration

The company has also announced the integration between FMAudit and ROI Print Manager software from Print Control Software Inc, a move that adds another layer to FMAudit's ability to support clients who offer MPS. This new alliance will enable dealers to track data at both device and end-user levels.

With one click, FMAudit clients can launch ROI Print Manager using FMAudit's Deployer Technology. Clients can then capture user-level workflow details in addition to traditional device-related data. This solution provides analytics to deliver effective document management strategies as well.

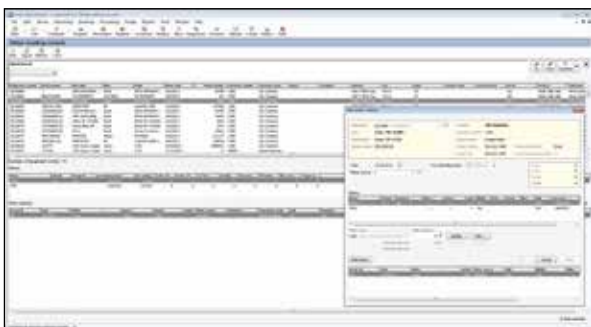
Kevin Tetu, President of FMAudit, said: "Our customers will have the benefit of accessing a new level of data tied directly to their clients' end-users when utilising ROI Print Manager."

Vishal Tah, Director Indirect Markets, Printrac Limited, added: "It's no longer about '10,000 pages were printed from this machine or that one', it's about who created the pages, were they relevant to the business, what did they cost and could the documents have been produced faster or cheaper. Integration of FMAudit to our portfolio will enable us to give a complete managed service solution from pre- to post-sales for a managed print provider."

By extending FMAudit data into robust end-user analytics, dealers will have the ability to determine the 'who, what, when and where' of document workflow, providing them with the ability to be more competitive and differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded MPS marketplace.

The enhanced FMAudit product is structured to help dealers make the transition from MPS to Managed Document Services. "For far too long, the focus of MPS has revolved around automating meters and toner replenishment. Now, FMAudit and ROI Print Manager will deliver the broader solution many providers have always intended to bring to their clients, enabling comprehensive document and output management," said White.

[www.ECi.eu](http://www.ECi.eu) • [www.printrac.co.uk](http://www.printrac.co.uk)







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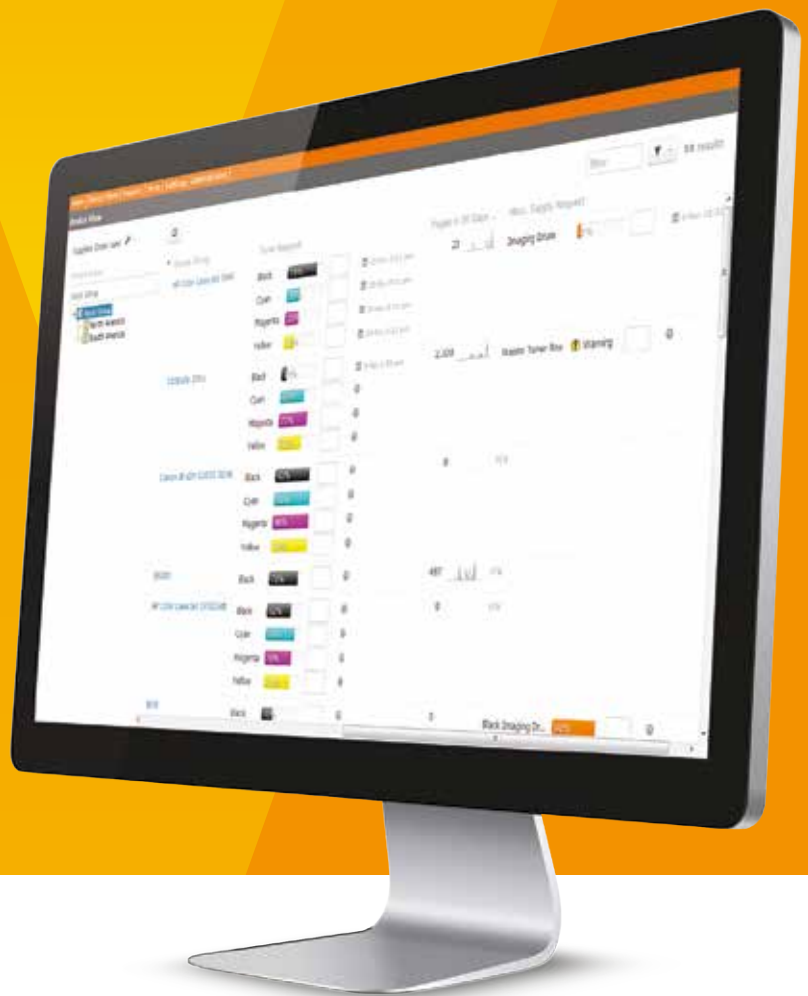
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PRINTFLEET®



# New look, same vision

*PrintIT Reseller* talks to Danny Molhoek about Lexmark's new brand identity and what it represents

**Lexmark has changed its logo for the first time in many years, replacing its grey and red diamond with a square aperture in shades of green and rotating the x in the company name.**

It has also consolidated all acquisitions, including Perceptive Software, under the Lexmark brand for the first time. The Perceptive name will now only be used in product names, such as Perceptive Content, Perceptive Intelligent Capture and Perceptive Search.

The new brand identity, including the tagline 'Open the possibilities', is designed to reflect Lexmark's broader offering as it continues to evolve from print specialist to software solutions and services provider.

Since 2010, Lexmark has made a series of strategic acquisitions, gaining expertise in intelligent capture, enterprise content management, healthcare content management, financial process automation and enterprise search.

Following the unveiling of the new logo, *PrintIT Reseller* Editor James Goulding spoke to Danny Molhoek, Managing Director & Country General Manager for Lexmark in the UK and Ireland, about the company's new brand and strategic direction.

***PrintIT Reseller:* What is the thinking behind the new brand identity?**

**Danny Molhoek:** We have a new logo and a nice new colour to go with it, but the bigger message is that we are now positioning ourselves in the marketplace as one big brand that incorporates everything we offer. Previously we kept Perceptive Software as a global brand, but we feel now is the time to change that and make it clear to the market that there's one Lexmark and one brand.

From now on, everything that is under

the flag of Lexmark is going to be named Lexmark, including future acquisitions – we are incorporating Readsoft now and have made a bid for Kofax. All software brands are going to be part of the Lexmark enterprise software division. But we are not going to throw away the Perceptive name completely; it will still be used in several product names like Perceptive Content, Perceptive Intelligent Capture and Perceptive Search.

Perceptive has been part of Lexmark for five years. It is time to make this change.

***PrintIT Reseller:* Why didn't you do it before?**

**Danny Molhoek:** It's something that's been on our minds for a while, but there were benefits in keeping the Perceptive name, especially in the US where it's a very, very strong brand. Also, buying an organisation the size of Perceptive is something that we needed to learn lessons from. In the last 12 months we have become much more agile and quicker about these kinds of things. We have learnt from our experience with Perceptive Software and will use that wisdom going forward by incorporating the other companies.

***PrintIT Reseller:* Do you think that before there might have been a stigma about being a hardware company but now you are far enough down the line as a solutions provider for that no longer to be the case?**

**Danny Molhoek:** I joined Lexmark at the end of the '90s and even in those days I never regarded Lexmark as a typical print company. We always positioned ourselves as a company that would tie everything together from a network point of view, and we were very early with managed



*Danny Molhoek,  
Managing Director  
& Country General  
Manager, Lexmark  
UK and Ireland*

**Perceptive has been part of Lexmark for five years. It is time to make this change**

print services (MPS) and the software and support services that we've always brought to market. So, I don't see it like that.

But from a marketing perspective, I can understand why people might say 'You are comfortable now because 30% of your revenue on a worldwide basis is tied up with software services and managed print services, so that part of your company is big enough to make the change'. There probably is some truth in that.

***PrintIT Reseller:* With all your acquisitions, it's surprising that still only 30% of your revenue comes from software and services.**

**Danny Molhoek:** I would beg to differ. It comes down to how you classify things. A click contract for us is not MPS. All our straight-out click contracts – and we do a lot here in the UK through the channel – are not classified by us internally as MPS. For us, MPS means the worldwide accounts that we handle ourselves.

***PrintIT Reseller:* Are you finding it difficult to expand your MPS business because the customer base is limited? You are not going to turn the whole market over to MPS.**

**Danny Molhoek:** Lexmark divides MPS into four different levels: you have standard device consolidation, fleet optimisation

*Continued...*



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...continued

and some reporting. In our view, this is a kind of click contract. The MPS we provide are levels 3 and 4, where you identify opportunities to improve customers' business processes. That's where our whole software strategy fits in perfectly; it enables us to deliver a much stronger value proposition to customers.

This is not something we have been doing only in the last four or five years. We've been talking about streamlining loan applications with big banks for 10 years or even longer.

The customer environment is changing so fast it's unbelievable. Take retail; it's a completely different landscape today than it was three or four years ago. You need to make sure that as an organisation you are ready to help customers go to the future. What are driving a lot of these things today are obviously cost savings, but also making sure we print less, making sure we look at the environment, making sure that we streamline business processes etc..

One of the companies we have acquired is AccessVia, which specialises in retail digital signage. Using functionality we gained with AccessVia, we recently introduced the mySignShop app for creating printed signage on demand. This is a product we have built specifically for channel partners so they can expand their portfolio and enhance their MPS contracts.

A big part of our focus around the world is on enterprise business and the companies we buy develop enterprise products. One of the strengths we have is that some of these products, perhaps not in the same shape or form, can be leveraged within the channel.

Obviously, you have to make a product that is easier to sell. For instance, if you sell a capture product into a large bank, you are talking about a potential order of several million pounds. If you go to the channel and say 'I have a great product for your SMB customers and it costs a couple of million pounds', it's not going to fly. But if you take some key elements of that product, box it up, make it simpler and offer it to the channel for a couple of hundred quid, then that's a different story. That's very powerful.

We presented mySignShop to the channel, and also Automate Accuread, a capture tool that I am very excited about. We demonstrated them to our partners and they were very, very excited. If you make something easier to sell and you box it, it becomes something sales people love because it helps their customers and at the end of the day they can enhance their profit margin.

**What are driving a lot of these things today are obviously cost savings, but also making sure we print less, making sure we look at the environment, making sure that we streamline business processes etc..**

**PrintIT Reseller: Are you surprised at how resilient printing has been? People still print a lot of paper and the volumes haven't gone down by as much as one might have expected.**

**Danny Molhoek:** Yes and no. I was recently at an event where IDC said that everyone has been expecting the number of pages to decline much faster than we are seeing in reality and that it almost looks as though things are stabilising. In a way, I am surprised – I would have expected volumes to go down faster. On the other hand, I see so many business processes involving so much paper that require major changes, and in some cases legislation, to improve that I am not surprised things are moving slowly. Even so, page volumes are dropping and will go on dropping. I think we can all agree on that. Just not as fast as everyone expected.

**PrintIT Reseller: What are some of the pain points customers speak to you about? What are the problems they experience in their processes?**

**Danny Molhoek:** There's a wide variety. We are organised in verticals and each vertical has unique challenges, but some things that are more or less the same in every vertical concern back office processes and sometimes HR processes like on-boarding. A generic example from the back office is that people want to organise the whole capture bit, for invoices etc. This has to be quicker and better.

Then in the specific verticals it differs. During the life of a contract, we hold quarterly business reviews with customers where we learn more and more about their business and what they are doing specifically. We use those meetings to suggest changes within their organisation. Sometimes we hit the nail on the head and they say 'This is a really big issue, here's the budget'. Sometimes they say 'OK, we

understand but it's not a priority for us now'.

Vertical by vertical you see different situations. One of the things that's quite hot in the retail space is HR on-boarding. If you take a look at the legal sector, it remains very, very paper-intensive. And we are doing some very interesting banking projects at the moment that have a lot to do with capture and search. And there are still processes like loan applications that could be improved. There is a lot of work still out there.

**PrintIT Reseller: What attracted Lexmark to Kofax (a capture and process management specialist, currently the target of a bid from Lexmark)?**

**Danny Molhoek:** If you take a look at how we are trying to position ourselves and take a look at the leaders in the market, you will hear names like Brainware, Readsoft and Kofax. They all fit nicely in the whole transformation story we want to put out there. The products, the R&D and the technology that they have all tie in together. Every single brand has some very unique features at various stages of these business processes. What we try to do is tie them all together. To that extent Kofax will be a brilliant addition to the Lexmark family.

*The new Lexmark identity: shades of green and a quirky rotated x*



# Lexmark™



# VOW – a true EOS distribution partnership

Providing a range of powerful services that enable customers to reach new markets and grow their businesses, VOW is leading the market in specialist EOS distribution partnerships.

Trusted by global office product corporations, national resellers, contract stationers and IT resellers to manage their EOS and wider business supplies fulfilment, VOW has built its credentials over 30 years and now has more than 20 direct EOS manufacturer relationships. It has been an authorised distributor for HP for over 12 years, with other direct relationships including Brother, Canon, Epson, Imation, Kyocera, OKI, Samsung, Sony and Xerox.

## Ongoing investment

European Office Products Awards (EOPA) Wholesaler of the Year in 2013 and 2014, the company has consistently invested in people, technology and initiatives to ensure growth and profitability for its partners. In the last 15 years it has made £20 million worth of investment in its logistics operation to meet the changing needs of the consumer.

Head of EOS services at VOW is Channel Director Nikki Todd, who describes the infrastructure in place to support customers:

**Nikki:** "In total we have invested £20 million in the last 15 years to ensure our capabilities are among the strongest in the sector. This constant investment in our operations has ensured we have the most up-to-date technology in our warehouse and transport fleets and are able to meet the demands of a very fast moving market. Investments in IT have enabled us to deliver tailored order presentations such as Pick Wrap & Label direct to the consumer or into resellers' premises at often bespoke timed deliveries to suit those resellers' operational shift patterns."



**In total we have invested £20 million in the last 15 years to ensure our capabilities are among the strongest in the sector**

## Bespoke services

VOW also offers a range of bespoke services to support the different needs of its customers, ranging from the National EOS Specialists (NES) team to a third party fulfilment service.

**Nikki:** "The NES team has a proven track record in enabling IT reseller development. Managed by Danielle Gallagher, the team works exclusively with around 600 IT resellers, getting to know each one and their specific needs. Every IT reseller has different circumstances and the NES team is dedicated to understanding these and creating an individual, bespoke relationship that helps them to grow and diversify in line with their business goals."

This consultative approach has seen the NES team help resellers achieve impressive complementary category sales growth. In 2014 this included 26% growth in traditional office products, 32% in facilities supplies, 35% in furniture, 64% in paper and 21% in technology.

**Nikki:** "We also work with National Contracted Resellers (NCR) through a specialist division managed by Paul Kirk who is supported by a business development manager and two account managers. The NCR team is designed to build special consultative partnerships with these national resellers. Its extensive knowledge and expertise enables these resellers to grow their EOS and technology capabilities while working with VOW more broadly to ensure growth across the product categories."

The final piece of the jigsaw is the provision of third party fulfilment directly to IT resellers' customers. This enables resellers to successfully outsource their warehouse and delivery operations, reduce or de-duplicate costs and focus on core sales and marketing activities.

## Front of the queue

**Nikki:** "Our vast experience in the technology channel and our direct relationships give our resellers a depth of front line support that they cannot find with indirect distributors. These relationships mean we are front of the queue for stock, giving our customers the confidence of continuous supply of original brands at all times.

"From our state of the art logistics capabilities and knowledge of category trends to hugely experienced teams and direct manufacturer relationships, we are the partner of choice for anyone looking to grow their business, outsource distribution and develop in new category areas."

**For more details contact VOW on 0844 980 8000.**

# GET THE REAL DEAL WHEN IT COMES TO RIBBONS

**Not all ribbons are the same and Nigel Wilson, General Manager of Reflex Labels Systems division, explains why using only Toshiba TEC products in its labelling and barcode printers is the only way to guarantee performance, reliability and the best possible quality.**



Warren Buffett, the great American entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist, once declared, 'Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.' When he uttered these wise words it would be fair to assume that he didn't have thermal transfer printer ribbons in mind, yet when it comes to purchasing these items, they are perfectly apt.

When manufacturers make claims about the superiority of their own consumables, compared to cheaper compatible products, it's often met with cries of 'they would say that, wouldn't they?' However, as an experienced user of ribbons from a variety of sources, as well as a Toshiba TEC value added reseller (VAR), I firmly believe that the company's own brand ribbons offer unrivalled performance, consistency, quality and value.

The ribbon sector has changed considerably over the last 15 years or so. Before then they were primarily produced in Europe and, with a few exceptions, the quality was good. Then, imports from China and the Far East started to appear and while the price was attractive, the quality left a lot to be desired. In recent times, although the general standard of compatible products has improved slightly, if you're thinking about using them in Toshiba TEC's labelling and barcode printers, take my advice and think again.

One of the most common reasons why people fall into the trap of buying compatible ribbons is the initial cost. We all like to find a bargain but, quite simply, compatible ribbons are a false economy. Compared to the genuine article, they tend to be only around 10 per cent cheaper and with the average product costing £6, this equates to a saving of just 60p, a figure which pales into insignificant when the additional advantages of a Toshiba TEC product are factored in.

Toshiba TEC's ribbons are made with a high quality back coating, something that is often missing from compatible products. This coating is there for a very good reason, to prevent a build up of static charge. In a thermal transfer printer, a static build-up can create an electrical spike, which could easily blow the pins on the print head, necessitating a replacement. With print heads costing anywhere between £100-£1500 to replace, depending on model and size, this is not something you want to do more than necessary.

It's worth pointing out here that Toshiba TEC is so confident about the quality of its ribbons and print heads that, while its competitors have component warranties of just 25km, the Toshiba TEC B-SX series of industrial label printers has a warranty of 100km. Over the course of a 10-year lifespan of the printer (if the print head had to be changed every 25km), this could add up to having to spend up to £16,000 compared to a Toshiba TEC printer of £5,600. In fact, Toshiba TEC's print heads often last a lot longer and we recently changed one that had operated perfectly for an exceptional 901km.

As well as looking after over 1,000 printers in the UK as part of managed service contracts, Reflex Systems also runs its own bureau and carries out printing services on behalf of many organisations. 95 per cent of our customers are based in the food industry – a sector that has no tolerance for poor quality printed barcodes.

If a barcode is unreadable then a retailer can fine the supplier for non compliant barcodes. It's a risk that's simply not worth taking and a Toshiba TEC ribbon will offer a level of reliability, reliance and lower total cost of ownership (TCO) that a compatible product can't. It makes sense for us too, as any downtime we experience could lead to us contravening our service level agreements (SLAs).

Many other industries also benefit from Toshiba TEC's high standards of innovation. For example, the company's new range of near edge resin ribbons are specifically designed for marine use and meet the stringent requirements of BS 5609, which sets out various durability criteria including adhesive performance, print permanence and abrasion resistance, stipulating minimum standards.

Using the right ribbon for the application is vital and yet there is often a lack of knowledge about this issue. It's why technical support is vital and Toshiba TEC has experts who can always recommend the right solution for an application.

It might come as a surprise to learn that reliability of supply is an important consideration too. A core component of a printer ribbon is polyester. Four years ago there was a worldwide shortage, due to manufacturers of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels using all the available polyethylene terephthalate (PET) to produce their goods. Yet despite this, Toshiba TEC ensured supply throughout this period and it's full range of sizes, grades and colours was available.

Don't be fooled by low initial cost. Compatible ribbons might look like a good deal initially but when it comes to performance, consistency, TCO and the ability to protect an investment, they will prove to be sadly lacking. On the other hand, if you buy Toshiba TEC ribbons and other consumables, you can feel confident that they have been designed to meet the highest standards using the best quality materials.

**For more information on the benefits of Toshiba TEC's ribbons, call: 0843 2244944 or email: [info@toshibatec.co.uk](mailto:info@toshibatec.co.uk)**



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# The value of sponsorship

The sponsorship of events, individuals or teams raises brand profile and visibility, but what are the added benefits to the channel?

Here *PrintIT Reseller* asks some of the print and imaging industry's leading lights to share their experiences and views.

**What sponsorship activities have you been/are you currently involved in?**

**Andrew Jones, Sales Director, 1st Office Equipment:** "Currently 1st Office is a main sponsor of Bristol Academy Women Football Club (BAWFC), who play in the Women Super League (WSL) 1."

**Julietta Khoshaba, Group Marketing Manager, Xerotec:** "Xerotec sponsors British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) Racing driver Dave Newsham. We have supported him for three seasons."

**Gary Downey, Group Marketing Director, Balreed:** "Balreed is the shirt sponsor of the Kent County Cricket (KCC) team for the 2015 season, and this is something we have done for the last two years. Our logo is displayed across the chest of the white county shirt. As part of our sponsorship arrangements we also have perimeter pitch advertising signage and branding on all literature and communications that KCC produces in print and digital form, including its website, emails, match day programmes and so on. We also have match day hospitality and use of KCC facilities outside the season."

**Darrell Minards, Head of Marketing Communications, Xerox Europe:** "Xerox currently has two main sponsorships, Cirque du Soleil and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), along with a smaller sponsorship of Expo 2015 in Milan. The Cirque du Soleil sponsorship involves activation at the various Big Top and Touring shows across Europe, and the WTA involves activation at key tournaments across Europe."

**Jeremy Spencer, Marketing Director, Toshiba TEC UK:** "As one of the official sponsors of the Commonwealth Games last year, Toshiba TEC UK provided



Glasgow 2014 with a comprehensive, fully supported office automation solution in the run up to and during the Games. Six hundred of our MFPs and desktop printers were provided and supported, producing 11 million prints. Following on from this extremely successful execution of the games, we are pleased to be involved in Toshiba Corporation's sponsorship of the Rugby World Cup.

"Toshiba has a long affiliation of working with sporting bodies and rugby is a particular favourite with our colleagues in Japan. Toshiba Corporation previously sponsored the Rugby World Cup in 2007 and 2011 and this year has extended that sponsorship to include the Japanese team and will support them throughout the tournament."

**What were the reasons behind your decision to sponsor?**

**Andrew Jones:** "We first got involved with BAWFC after being approached by a director of the club who was also one of our clients, asking if we could assist with a small sponsorship package. Initially this took the form of a pitch board, sponsoring a player and a match."

"As we got more involved with the club and were impressed with the professional quality of the play and determination of the team, we decided to increase our investment for the 2014 season and renew our sponsorship as a shirt sponsor. This has given us two pitch boards by each goal, a sponsored player and a sponsored match. With the rapid growth of media coverage in women's football, broadcasts on BBC, BT Sport, ESPN and Eurosport, this has given us an immeasurable level of TV exposure."

**Julietta Khoshaba:** "The BTCC is one of the most thrilling motorsport events to watch. It's ultra-competitive, the tension is gripping and the closeness of the racing is knuckle-bitingly dramatic; at times, it's just like a day in the office! After all, success is about team work, preparation, determination, focus, discipline, having the right people and sharing a burning desire to win, so it is an appropriate investment."

**Gary Downey:** "Proximity to our HQ, relevance to our target market, affordable price, opportunity to raise our profile and generate new business, interest in the sport from the staff... there are lots of reasons to sponsor KCC."

"The major factors are Kent County Cricket's ground in Canterbury is very close to our head office in Maidstone; supporting the county's team when our main operations are based there makes a lot of sense; and our staff find it very convenient when hosting events or generating attendance from local businesses around the county. Plus, not only is cricket our MD's favourite sport, it is also a great sport in terms of the fans it attracts and the atmosphere at the ground on match day. The sort of people we want to do business with are often cricket fans."

**Darrell Minards:** "Xerox's sponsorship strategy is designed to demonstrate the Xerox brand story through product/service showcase with each sponsorship partner; develop client and partner relationships through attendance at events; and utilise partners' intellectual property in marketing activity."

"The Xerox approach to sponsorship

With the rapid growth of media coverage in women's football, broadcasts on BBC, BT Sport, ESPN and Eurosport, this has given us an immeasurable level of TV exposure





Xerotec sponsors British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) driver Dave Newsham

is more than just a logo on a banner. We work behind the scenes to create memorable experiences for customers that they then want to share with their peers."

**Jeremy Spencer:** "Toshiba has a long term heritage in rugby and this tournament gives us an opportunity to participate in another world class event. This association spans the breadth of our business domains, including social infrastructure, air conditioning, multifunctional printers, digital products and medical imaging devices. We will also support the tournament by providing products to help run the event. Above all, it offers us an excellent opportunity to raise our brand awareness across all these divisions."

### What are the benefits and pitfalls of sponsorship?

**Andrew Jones:** "We have been careful in selecting BAWFC, as we had to ensure we wouldn't upset any existing or potential clients with our involvement, or risk any conflicts of interest. As Bristol are the most southerly team in the WSL, we were confident we would not risk any upset within the South West and Wales areas that we work in, and would equally be able to invite and entertain clients at all home matches. This has also proven to be a successful social event for staff members who regularly attend games with their families."

**Julieta Khoshaba:** "One of the benefits is that the BTCC is one of the most popular and regularly viewed sports. It has a huge, loyal fan base and attracts an audience outside the UK, too. Approximately 20 million people in the UK watch the entire race season, so the sponsorship gives Xerotec fantastic, consistent visibility in front of thousands of people. However, establishing the tangible ROI and determining to what extent it increases our brand awareness, or whether it influences buying decisions, is harder to ascertain."

**Gary Downey:** "The pitfalls are a little like advertising; you can't simply spend money and expect that to bring in the business. You need to put a lot of effort in and combine other sales and marketing activities to maximise the benefits of sponsorship. Raising our profile and generating a pipeline of new contacts for new business are the chief benefits."

**Darrell Minards:** "The main benefits include gaining business, brand awareness and understanding and developing relations with customers and other partners. The pitfalls are limited, but we need to keep focused on ensuring that we are telling our brand story through the sponsorship and that it does not simply become a hospitality play."

**Jeremy Spencer:** "It offers a great opportunity for us to engage with our customers and channel partners at an event that is extremely popular amongst our customer base. That said, never underestimate the amount of time and work that goes into this type of sponsorship – and never leave things till the last minute!"

### What has or has not worked out well for you?

**Andrew Jones:** "Due to the success of the club in the 2014 season, we have now renewed our sponsorship but this time have committed to a three-year period for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 seasons. We view this investment as a massive opportunity to promote our own brand awareness. Networking with other businesses at the games has already reaped its rewards, with several new business contracts being gained."

**Julieta Khoshaba:** "What works well

is that the sponsorship package enables us to invite clients to a race. Seeing how excited they are at being invited is a really good feeling. A race is also a great chance to build an even stronger bond with our clients. In terms of downsides, the great British weather can occasionally mean rain. However, that can make a closely fought race even more exciting!"

**Gary Downey:** "What doesn't work is when you provide an open invitation for staff to use a facility like this. There needs to be accountability and lots of planning for the season and what you are going to do to maximise the return on this investment."

"Marketing and the local sales account managers work very closely, and this work begins very early – the week before the first match isn't a great idea! Getting the right balance at each match-day hospitality event is obviously critical; no-one wants to come along to watch the game and have to talk shop the entire way through."

**Darrell Minards:** "What has worked: ensuring we amplify the story across our various media channels, utilisation of the partnership in key Xerox 'owned' events and running the partnerships across. What has not worked: aligning activities doesn't always have a natural timing fit between the sponsorship and the business need or priorities."

**Jeremy Spencer:** "In relation to the Commonwealth Games, the engagement we had with our direct and indirect customers and the feedback we had from them after the event was fantastic!

"Our ability to carry out an undertaking as large as that without flaws was a massive boost for our organisation and

*continued...*

Approximately 20 million people in the UK watch the entire race season, so the sponsorship gives Xerotec fantastic, consistent visibility in front of thousands of people.

Balreed (l-r): Daniel Bell-Drummond, Rob Key and Sam Northeast



...continued



Toshiba: Brett Gosper, CEO of World Rugby, and Noriaki Hasimoto, Corporate Vice President EMEA, Toshiba Corporation

had a huge impact on the business, both professionally and from a morale perspective. Our people came together and worked tirelessly to deliver excellent service and support and work alongside other suppliers whilst realising their needs and requirements."

**How have you leveraged the opportunity to maximise your investment?**

**Andrew Jones:** "The cherry on the cake for us was the success of the club in the UEFA Womens Champions League, getting through the first round to then be drawn against Barcelona, who they beat, making them the only English club left in the Champions League to make it through to the quarter finals.

"The additional media frenzy this caused was incredible and we have gained tremendous exposure on TV and through social media.

"Our sponsored match this season is on 9 May against Arsenal Ladies FC, which promises to be another exciting game with an immense pre-match media build-up."

**Julietta Khoshaba:** "We use it for corporate entertainment. We're allowed four guests per race, the hospitality is excellent and you get a great behind-the-scenes experience. There's also the excitement of going to a high-profile, adrenalin-filled day, which makes for a terrific way to build new relationships or cement old ones. Thanks to this sponsorship, we've had some fantastic days out and spending time together helps us get to know our clients even better and on a more personal level."

**Gary Downey:** "By taking the time to plan a whole mix of activities around the shirt sponsorship, we have managed to raise our profile and capture incremental business too. The KCC team have been tremendous to work with; they understand the commercial requirements and that we have to generate

**All our dealers seem very keen to participate and clearly are keen on the sport of rugby.**

a return from this investment."

**Darrell Minards:** "Across multiple channels: social media, events, in-house showroom, competitions, PR, web."

**Jeremy Spencer:** "Where the Games were concerned, through increased brand awareness definitely.

"Where the Rugby Is concerned, we are just beginning to kick this off now (no pun intended) and from April we will start running incentives and promotions across our business units."

**What do you see as the key benefits for dealers in going down this route?**

**Julietta Khoshaba:** "There's the association with a sport that's popular among a huge fan base; the fact that there are 11 races per season means we're in front of race attendees and viewers at home for seven months; plus, of course, all

of the race footage that's shared via social media. Finally, it's a fun-filled network and relationship building opportunity."

**Gary Downey:** "If they are committed and put the time and effort in there are benefits to this, but it really isn't something to play at. Often, smaller, local sponsorship aligned with networking activities can be very effective at creating new business opportunities."

**As a manufacturer, how does sponsorship benefit your dealer network? Have you got them and their customers involved?**

**Darrell Minards:** "Xerox's channel partners participate in, and directly benefit from, Xerox's sponsorships. Channel partners' customers attend events (Cirque du Soleil performances, WTA events) and, as they are our customers, channel partners themselves are often our guests at sponsored events.

"I'm also sure many of our channel partners are engaged in sponsorships for many of the same reasons that Xerox is."

**Jeremy Spencer:** "All our dealers seem very keen to participate and clearly are keen on the sport of rugby. It allows us to show them and the wider world the breadth of our portfolio and the strength of our brand in action.

"We will be introducing opportunities to participate in the games, which our dealers can take advantage of, and we hope they will stand alongside us and be proud to be a part of the Toshiba brand."

Xerox: Cirque du Soleil performers strike a pose before their special performance in the Xerox stand at drupa 2012





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# Changing with the times

The Midshire Group is marking its 25th anniversary with the opening of a new Midlands base.

**Now in its 25th year, The Midshire Group has grown into a £25m business, enjoying sustained success and organic growth year-on-year since 1990.**

Managing Director Phil Powell attributes the company's success to its commitment always to keep ahead of the market. "With something like technology, which is ever changing, it is imperative to know what the next big technology requirement will be for businesses. That way we can be one of the first to bring new and innovative products, solutions and services to market," he says.

Midshire was established in 1990 in Birmingham, primarily to service the SME, education, legal, political and not-for-profit sectors. Seven years later it opened a new branch, Midshire Business Systems Northern, in Stockport, Manchester.

Until a few years ago, the two companies operated as independent business units. However, as Midshire continued to expand, most recently with the establishment of Midshire Business Systems Cymru in Pontyclun, Wales in 2013 and Midshire Business Systems North East in Sheffield last year, the directors decided to make the most of being part of a group.

Three years ago they set common goals, created a group marketing resource and developed a new website, followed by a re-branding last year. Each regional office is led by a director and to some degree works autonomously, but by pooling resources and working to a shared agenda, the group is reaping its reward.

Today, The Midshire Group is arguably

**Midshire has not lost sight of its core business, namely the selling and servicing of print and copy hardware, as well as telecoms systems.**



(l-r) Kevin Tunley, Sales Director; Darren Cooper, Sandwell Councillor; Phil Powell, Managing Director

one of the largest independent office technology resellers in the UK, with 215 staff and a MIF in excess of 10,000 nationwide. The company's focus is firmly on providing market-leading service and forward thinking product offerings, while placing customers' current and future needs at the forefront of any business developments.

Its success in meeting these aims is reflected in a string of achievements and accreditations. The company is a Ricoh Prestige Partner; was appointed a Sharp Centre of Excellence in 2010; and achieved Lexmark Accredited Partner status in 2012. It has been a Samsung Platinum Service Dealer since 2013, and last year also became a Samsung Platinum Sales Dealer. More recently it has achieved HP Gold Partner status.

## Changing with the times

Midshire has not lost sight of its core business, namely the selling and servicing of print and copy hardware, as well as telecoms systems. But that has not stopped it moving with the times. Its offering has expanded and now includes sales, service and support for the latest data security solutions; desktop printers, multifunctional products and digital production devices from Ricoh, Sharp, Lexmark, Samsung, RISO and HP; business telephone systems and superfast business broadband; and a full range of IT solutions.

"The industry is completely different now to how it was in 1990," explains Powell. "We have had to move with the

times, time and time again. There will always be a requirement in the office for printers and copiers. However, we know that the market is shifting toward printing less and scanning more. As a supplier, we now need to network machines for internet capabilities, provide scan-to-email functionality and support the wider use of cloud services, such as DropBox and Google Drive for example - a breadth of functionality that wasn't required 25 years ago.

"In line with our mission to keep ahead of the game, we have just launched our own range of cloud-based products. Desktop Monster is a hosted desktop solution that we have built and developed in-house. We know that this trend is only going to increase, largely down to the rise of mobile technology devices that are being used for both work and pleasure. People need and want access to their documents wherever they are. We have to respond as the market shifts, to ensure we're ready to deliver what our customers want and need.

"We've worked hard and built a reputation whereby our customers are confident that the solutions we provide will meet their goals in the short- and long-term and deliver tangible benefits to their business."

## Investing in the future

To help it do this, Midshire has invested heavily, creating and building a dedicated

*continued...*



# Sun, Sea, Sand and Olivetti!

## Olivetti's Top Dealers from the UK and Ireland return to Mauritius to mix business with pleasure

By popular demand, Olivetti's Annual Dealer Trip took place on the beautiful island of Mauritius, for the second year, in March, to reward the success of the Top Achieving Dealers from 2014.

The group consisted of the Top 13 Dealers, and their partners, from the UK and Ireland and their destination was the Heritage le Telfair Resort in the region of Bel Ombre. Some of the group had been to the island last year, so the whole trip was changed to allow them to see a different part of the island.

The trip included plenty of 'chilling' time, visits to the Sugar Museum and a Rum Tour, a fantastic catamaran sailing

day and plenty of partying. Dealers and their partners were able to meet other like-minded people in relaxed and stunningly beautiful surroundings and managed to exchange the hustle and bustle of their busy lives for a chance to unwind and make new friends.

Dennis Woods, of Olivetti SpA said; "Our top achieving dealers, and their partners, have all worked incredibly hard so we have recognised their endeavours and successes by bringing them on a holiday of a lifetime and returning them home with special memories of a wonderful place and excellent company which will stay with them forever."

Waiting



Chilling



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...continued



IT department that supports customers with machine networking requirements and provides telephone-based consultancy and remote IT support. It also offers specialist support for customers' general IT requirements. As a result of this approach, the group has been able to up-sell bigger, more complex solutions to existing customers who originally bought just one service.

"We invest when and where we need to," says Powell, "up-skilling existing staff or hiring new specialists in their fields when required. We constantly evaluate and re-evaluate our business for weak spots, gaps and future development opportunities."

A unified structure has supported the group's ability to flex and address any challenge or problem head on. The management teams meet regularly to discuss any changes and developments and plan how these should be dealt with.

"There will always be challenges and difficulties along the way. Yet taking a direct approach to dealing with them means they are dealt with quickly and with minimum impact on the business," explains Powell.

### Standing out from the crowd

Another USP, according to Powell, is Midshire's focus on the customer. "We are a truly independent supplier of some of the best and best-known technology brands and remain committed to putting customers first, ensuring any issues are dealt with swiftly and delivering a personal, bespoke and full service to all."

A four-strong regional office network enables Midshire to deliver a comprehensive, friendly, local service backed by a nationwide reach. Its service

operation is run locally, but managed from a central service call centre in Birmingham. A number of key appointments in this area have led to a reduction in downtime of customers' machines. In recognition of this achievement, the company was recently nominated as 'Service Provider of the Year 2015' at the Midlands Business Awards.

Competitive pricing is another key differentiator. "A strong relationship with our suppliers gives us the edge when it comes to pricing," says Powell. "We are a one-stop-shop; we don't just supply photocopiers, we supply the full office technology solution, which includes a full range of printing devices, from compact desktop printers to print production machines, as well as telecommunications solutions, broadband and IT products and services. We can offer our customers the best price available, whilst including a first class service contract to maintain the quality of the machine, and that's a powerful proposition."

### Looking to the future

With 25 years of sustained growth under its belt, Midshire doesn't plan to rest on its laurels. It has recorded a 20% increase in turnover this year and last month officially opened its new Midlands base in Doranda Way, West Bromwich.

The result of a £2.2 million investment by the company, part-funded by the Growing Priority Sectors Regional Growth Fund, with the help of Think Sandwell, Sandwell Council's business growth team, the brand new, custom-built office and warehouse facility is designed to see Midshire through its next phase of growth and development.

**We can offer our customers the best price available, whilst including a first class service contract to maintain the quality of the machine, and that's a powerful proposition.**

The move has already created 20 new jobs and gives Midshire the capacity to create 20 more in the medium term. The 25,000 sq. ft. premises include extensive warehousing, office space on two levels and demonstration showrooms.

Sandwell Council Leader Darren Cooper officiated at the grand opening. Specially invited business partners, local companies, community leaders and customers enjoyed a tour of the new premises and attended demonstrations highlighting the diverse range of products and services available from Midshire. Featured solutions included photocopiers and specialist printing equipment, 3D printing, video conferencing and the company's new cloud-based virtual desktop solution, Desktop Monster.

Key partners Ricoh, Sharp, Lexmark, Samsung, RISO, HP and Gamma were represented. Also in attendance were finance partners Siemens Financial Services, CIT and CF Asset.

"This is a significant move for the company after a sustained period of growth," Powell explains. "The new office has provided better facilities for our growing team and will enable us to deliver an even better service to our expanding customer base. It was a real pleasure to officially open the building in front of our business partners, local businesses and staff."

In addition, the company has extended its Stockport branch, taking over the unit next door. This expansion has increased its warehousing capability and provided much needed additional office space to accommodate Midshire's expanding workforce.

[www.midshire.co.uk](http://www.midshire.co.uk)





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# Olivetti's Key Partner Programme delivers real benefits

Through its Key Partner Programme, Olivetti is well placed to demonstrate its loyalty to authorised dealers and give something back to partners for their continued business.

**"Dealers know that in a competitive marketplace their customers find it easy to switch from one supplier to another because their customers' first priority, these days, is to find the best price," said Dave Goswell, Managing Director of the newly established Olivetti Agency. "This has a knock-on effect for the dealer. We realise that a dealer needs a good price, too, but by providing our partners with more than that, we're actually giving them a competitive edge."**

The Key Partner Programme was developed for Olivetti 12 years ago by its UK subsidiary and has formed the bedrock of the company's dealer programmes throughout Europe ever since. It was initially designed to be a simple rebate programme, which allowed Olivetti dealers to earn a flat-rate rebate on Olivetti purchases.

"Most dealers at this time were very similar in terms of their levels of activity, so business remained fairly constant, but some would regularly perform well and they found the benefits of the programme really useful," said Goswell.

## More competition

As the company's colour MFP business began to increase around 2005, so too did the number of larger dealers that wanted to work with Olivetti. At that point, Olivetti made the decision to create three simple Leagues: Platinum, for those with a potential to earn more; Key Partner, which covered the majority of Olivetti dealers; and Partner, for smaller or less active dealers.



**It was initially designed to be a simple rebate programme.**

This model introduced a level of competition among dealers and enabled Olivetti to offer greater and more far-reaching benefits, such as regular monthly promotions on specific products, tailored marketing support and dedicated account management. There was also fierce competition to win a place on the annual dealer trip for the top performing dealers, regular sporting activities and hospitality events with places awarded to those who achieved set targets.

Today, Olivetti has a total of 120 dealers of differing size and capability, 80 of which are very active. The programme now consists of five Leagues with a wide range of annual targets and rebates that dealers sign up to every year.

Membership of The Elite League, for dealers with very high potential for growth, is based on a dealer's projected level of business and commitment to achieve high targets. The Platinum League is still for high achievers but for those that are not quite as big as some of the Elite companies. There is also now a Premier League above the Key Partner and Partner Leagues. All the Leagues have a sliding scale of rebate, so dealers can earn more as they achieve more.

Olivetti circulates a Monthly League Table for each League, with a certificate awarded to the dealer of the month. The League Tables show the movement of the dealers each month, so it's possible to see who has moved up or down.

## Authorised partners

Dealers who sign up to the Key Partner Programme are able to use an official Authorised Partner logo in their marketing communications, demonstrating their status as an accredited partner.

"This was an initiative introduced to support authorised Olivetti dealers who were pitching against others claiming to be official authorised dealers but who actually weren't," explained Goswell. "Since launch we've reduced the number of instances of third parties trying to undercut on pricing and claiming to be able to sell new Olivetti products."

He added: "We want our partners to feel valued and the Programme helps us to do that. Actions speak louder than words and the Key Partner Programme has always delivered excellent benefits for those who are part of it."

[www.olivettiuk.com](http://www.olivettiuk.com)

## Coming soon

**Olivetti has confirmed that it is planning to introduce a new Support and Communications System that will be available exclusively to authorised dealers. The system will feature a knowledge base designed to provide authorised engineers with access to the information they need on their laptop, tablet or smartphone.**

The new system will ensure that authorised engineers are only a few clicks away from accessing vital firmware, fixes and drivers while in the field. Through a powerful search engine, they will have instant access to Olivetti's support forum and manuals and, via the Technical Hotline, to a dedicated team of people ready to take their call.

Once fully operational, Olivetti says that the site will become a focal point for dealers to place and keep an eye on the status of all orders.

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# A specialist resource

## How Concept Resourcing can help you find the right people for your business

**Concept Resourcing is one of the UK's fastest growing recruitment agencies. Established for 15 years, the company has become a leading supplier of permanent and contract staff to both OEMs and resellers operating within the office equipment sector.**

According to Tom Mills, Managing Consultant of the company's document solutions division, one of its key strengths is a commitment to building long-term relationships with clients. "We work in partnership with clients not just to fill current vacancies, but also to enable them to develop an effective, flexible workforce that meets their business needs both in the short- and long-term," he said.

Concept Resourcing recruits service, sales and solutions specialists on behalf of its ever expanding client base, which includes many major manufacturers and an increasing number of dealers including those with a nationwide reach, such as Altodigital, Capita DIS, Balreed and Vision. With over 15 years' experience within the office technology sector each consultant at Concept has developed a defined specialism in each of their areas.

### Discipline-focused consultants

Last year the company placed over 160 photocopier engineers and in excess of 30 solutions consultants. Its success, says Mills, is down to its people.

"We have one of the most experienced resourcing teams in our industry," he said. "Each division is staffed by 'discipline-focused' consultants with a network of contacts and candidates in their chosen specialist area. Within the document solutions division, our consultants are all experienced recruiting within the MPS/Print industry, which gives them a unique understanding of both the client and the candidate markets."

The document solutions team headed up by Mills includes Jodie Turberfield, who is responsible for recruiting engineers in the south, and Nicola Foxall, who manages roles for engineers in the midlands and the north. Caroline Bingham is in charge of placing solutions consultants and James Salmon looks after clients wanting to recruit



*Tom Mills,  
Managing  
Consultant,  
Document Solutions  
Division,  
Concept Resourcing*

professional sales representatives with both MPS and document solutions experience.

"Each of these consultants spends 100% of their time recruiting in this vertical. They know their markets inside out and that ensures that we deliver a shortlist of candidates within 24 hours of receiving instructions that exactly meets the client's brief," added Mills.

### Consultative approach

Committed to providing a first class service that delivers value for money, Concept Resourcing offers clients dedicated account management. Mills says it is this consultative approach that ensures they deliver the quality and quantity of candidates each client requires.

"Each client has access to a dedicated specialist consultant who meets with them to fully discuss and understand the business requirements. We know that time is precious and we promise only to deliver fully vetted candidates relevant to the job criteria. We also conduct competency assessments and personality profile testing," he explained.

Ninety-seven per cent of candidates supplied passed probation last year.

Witnessing increased client demand for industry experienced field sales personnel, in January the company launched a new sales division to address this need. It has also invested £60,000 upgrading its LinkedIn Recruiter accounts and advertises all positions on over 20 leading industry job boards.

### Candidate-driven market

According to the UK Labour Report, in 2014 the UK saw the highest demand for permanent staff since 2007. In line with this, permanent salaries are increasing at their fastest rates since July 2007.

This suggests that employers are more confident in increasing permanent headcount and is good news for job hunters. The downside for employers, however, is that attracting and retaining quality candidates is becoming more competitive. According to Mills, this is pushing salaries up and in particular over the past six months has led to situations where counter offers have been made from employers desperate to hold onto their best talent.

Research recently conducted by the firm among 250 engineers that it has either placed or spoken to within the past 12 months reveals that competitive salary and benefits, friendly staff, a strong reputation, good training and a promotion path are important factors that need to be high on the agenda for employers when considering staff attraction and retention.

"Without a doubt, at this present time we are operating in a candidate-driven market," said Mills. "This is mainly due to a shortage of industry-experienced professionals mixed with an increasing demand for them."

He added: "Our unparalleled network of candidates built up over the past fifteen years puts us in a unique position to deliver to our clients. We have invested in cutting-edge recruitment technology to ensure that we can provide the best possible service. Although there is a candidate shortage, we have continued to place engineers, solutions consultants and more recently sales executives, with a number of leading manufacturers and resellers UK-wide."

[www.conceptresourcing.com](http://www.conceptresourcing.com)

To request a copy of Concept Resourcing's engineer survey results please email: [thomas.mills@conceptresourcing.com](mailto:thomas.mills@conceptresourcing.com).

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# Bridging the skills gap

The much talked about skills crisis is seen as one of the biggest challenges facing the UK economy, holding back growth and limiting productivity. But what effect is it having on the printer industry and what are suppliers doing to bridge the skills gap?



Phil Jones,  
Managing Director,  
Brother UK

**Phil Jones, Managing Director of Brother UK, says that Brother hasn't suffered from the skills shortage, but has found recruitment harder, largely due to economic factors.**

"From 2008 to 2014, it was more difficult to recruit new staff with an appropriate skillset, as post-recession people tended to stay put in their roles. However, the market is clearly moving again as the number of new job titles and moves that come through on LinkedIn each day is increasing rapidly," he said.

The Midshire Group and Office Evolution say that they, too, have been largely unaffected so far, though it is something they have had to make allowances for.

Office Evolution Director Matt Goodall notes that the biggest impact has been the requirement to plan further in advance when looking for new staff, particularly within the technical area of the business. "There is no longer a steady stream of office equipment technicians sending in CVs," he said. "Instead we have to find similar skill sets and then train staff accordingly."

Julian Stafford, Director of Midshire Business Systems Northern, says that staff levels and any potential gaps are addressed at board level every month. "We try to predict and foresee any future issues before they arise," he said.

Other companies have been affected in more material ways. Eric Shackleton, Sales Director of RDT Office Solutions Group, said: "We hit the skills shortage barrier early last year and our business came up short on delivering the right message to potential clients. We went through a period when we just moved copiers with no solution attached. Some members of the sales team had not fully understood the various software offerings and could not converse confidently with the client, so

basically they ended up just selling a box." Shackleton adds that this skills gap had affected the firm's ability to differentiate itself as a solutions-led business. "We were just like any other supplier for a while, by not providing devices with some sort of document capture, document management or monitoring software to enable the client and us to have total control," he said.

## Recruitment challenges

Whether as a consequence of the skills shortage or people's tendency to stay put during a recession, businesses like Brother have had to work hard to attract experienced trade sales people and marketers.

"We are a *Times Top 100 Place to Work* and also recently secured Investors in People Gold accreditation, the highest there is," explained Jones. "We're investing a lot in training and development, workplace layout and employee recognition programmes."

Vision, too, has found it difficult to recruit people with the correct skill levels. Operations Director Mark Smyth said: "Vision's Services business has been



**There is no longer a steady stream of office equipment technicians sending in CVs. Instead we have to find similar skill sets and train staff accordingly.**

Matt Goodall,  
Director,  
Office Evolution

actively sourcing additional, highly skilled resource with printing and document management core capabilities. The process, whilst very important, is very time consuming and it has been a challenge at times to identify the right candidates, although we are now on plan with the targeted headcount for this fiscal year based on our year-on-year growth."

Shackleton points out that whilst there are good people out there, once they are established at another supplier it's unusual for them to move on unless there is a nice financial reward, and even then they may not be persuaded to leave.

"Right now we have a full complement of staff, sales are buoyant and we are selling good quantities of units, all with some sort of solution attached or embedded. If we are struggling anywhere, it is in finding good data cleaners, telephone marketing people and telesales staff. Currently employed people will not move on; they are worth their weight in gold and unless suitably rewarded, they will not leave their current place of work," he said.

He adds that, as a result, it is becoming more necessary to provide appropriate training to new recruits. "We found that recruiting new staff with the right motivation and eagerness to learn the skill sets needed to succeed in this industry was the better approach. We teach them, we show them and allow them to educate themselves in respect of the skills they require to grow into true professionals," he said.

Office Evolution's Matt Goodall says that whilst recruiting new staff has not been a major issue for Office Evolution, it has got harder and more expensive as the business's offering has evolved. "Although potential new staff are happy to join us, they seek a salary that is higher, due to an

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advanced but different skillset than would have been the norm a few years back," he said.

He added: "Technical posts are harder to fill than ever. People are generally keen to move over from a similar technical role within IT or similar, but not within the office equipment sector."

**Apprenticeships**

One solution used by many in the industry is apprenticeships. Brother took on two apprentices last year, both of whom have now secured full-time employment, and plans to take on three more next month. "As recruitment costs increase, training up young people is a good investment," said Jones. "How you retain good people is as big a challenge as how you recruit, so ensuring that people feel valued, have career clarity and confidence that their impact is being recognised is key too."

He added: "We have re-formatted our entire recognition system based around learning and development at all levels of the organisation, from top to bottom. We use a combination of in-house and external providers to deliver specific training linked to our company and individual role/people objectives. Improving 'self' improves our company."

Goodall explains that Office Evolution is recruiting and training its own technical staff and, in conjunction with Develop, provides online and residential-based training to bring the skillset up to the required level.

"Apprenticeships are growing in popularity and most local educational authorities and chambers of commerce are actively promoting the provision of apprenticeships," he said. "Our County Business of the Year Awards always have an award for Apprenticeship Provider of the Year in recognition of apprentice programmes. It's a great way to develop your own staff with appropriate skillsets. In addition to this, hiring the right people and training them for our business is key to our future."

Goodall works closely with Develop to ensure staff are suitably trained and that the training provides them with the skills to develop within the industry. However, he points out that it is important to develop one's own in-house programmes too.

"Less than five years ago, the copier industry was viewed by IT professionals as a lesser industry. Nowadays, the influx of IT specialists into the printer and copier industry has seen the skill levels increase and close working relationships between key providers has also increased. You cannot therefore rely solely on a manufacturer to formulate training; bespoke in-house training has to become



the standard," he said.

Midshire's approach is to hire apprentices and junior staff who wish to progress through Midshire's academy to a position in IT or field servicing. Stafford said: "They learn the business and how to do things the Midshire way. This works well for us and ensures we have a multi-skilled team around the customer at all times. Two of our junior staff, who started in telesales and on the delivery van, are now among our most successful area sales managers."

Stafford adds that Midshire works with a number of apprenticeship specialists to find junior staff with the skills needed for different roles within marketing, IT, service and logistics. "Finding the right youngsters who are keen to learn, grow and develop

*Julian Stafford,  
Director of Midshire  
Business Systems  
Northern*

*Mark Smyth,  
Operations Director,  
Vision*



is our greatest challenge. But having the right support from the providers helps us through this process," he said.

**In-house training**

Vision has introduced a Trainee Academy program to develop the services and technical requirements to support continued growth. It has also introduced an e-Learning package, which it promotes to all employees, and has re-launched various learning programs, including those led by manufacturers and vendors, notably Samsung.

"The Samsung Print Training Academy offers a structured and accredited education program managed by Birmingham Metropolitan College in association with Samsung, and offers recognised technical accreditations as part of a comprehensive learning and development program," explained Smyth.

As a Xerox partner, RDT welcomes Xerox's partnership with the National Apprenticeship Scheme to provide an Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3) Diploma or Certificate in ICT Professional Competence, ICT Systems and Principles and Customer Service. "It's a structured three-year development programme, which includes a range of on and off the job training coupled with structured support from a network of mentors within the business so that candidates have all the tools necessary to succeed," said Shackleton.

He added: "We utilise the Xerox Training Programme. It's very intensive but very rewarding for the attendees, and it covers all aspects of the industry, from sales to service. The course is mainly classroom-based, accompanied by lots of online exams, followed up with good old fashioned role play scenarios for those budding actors out there! The industry recognises the Xerox Training Programme as one of the best there is."

- [www.brother.co.uk](http://www.brother.co.uk)
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**Vision has introduced a Trainee Academy program to develop the services and technical requirements to support continued growth.**

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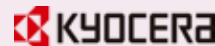
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