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ISSUE 35 · 2016



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VOX POP

Apprentice:
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PAGE 25

MFPs

KYOCERA launches
ten new models



PAGE 34

SIGNAGE

Digital signage
presents new revenue
opportunity



PAGE 40

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ISSUE 35 · 2016

04 Bulletin

What's new in printers and printing

10 Conference

Highlights from Integra's Get Connected 2016 National Conference

12 Acquisitions

News of HP's acquisition of Samsung took the industry by surprise

15 Information Capture

The new era of enterprise content management

19 Research

New report into UK's home businesses evidence of an opportunity for resellers

20 MPS

Make the most of Brother's channel solutions

22 Cover Story

Jet Tec celebrates its British heritage

25 Vox Pop

PITR asks the channel if hiring an apprentice is good for business

34 MFPS

KYOCERA launches ten new MFPS

36 Workflow

How to succeed at business process transformation

38 Dealer Profile

Acquisitions drive growth for Direct-tec Group

40 Digital Signage

Beta Distribution launches new digital media solutions business

41 MPS

Spicers reports success within its recently launched Xerox partnered MPS service

46 Events

Over 100 UTAX partners attended the annual conference at Heythrop Park



50 60 seconds with...

Rod Tonna-Barthet, CEO of Annodata

Comment

The news that Samsung is selling its print business to HP has sent shockwaves through the industry. PITR asked a number of resellers and Quocirca analyst Louella Fernandes for their take on this latest acquisition in the print industry (see page 12).

According to Photizo Group, the number of manufacturers in the imaging industry for home and office products has fallen by half, from 32 manufacturers in 1980 to only 16 manufacturers today. As the industry enters a stage of significant maturity, it says we can expect to see further consolidation.

During a webinar to provide insights and for the industry to provide their assessment of HP's acquisition which was attended by 430 imaging industry professionals, Photizo Group conducted a poll to understand the perception of the impact on the industry.

It included a four-point scale ranging from business as usual (minimal impact), to evolutionary, revolutionary and transformative (something that radically changes the industry). Surprisingly, 52% of the respondents identified the acquisition as transformative or revolutionary for the industry. The other 36% believe it is evolutionary while only 12% think the acquisition is business as usual.

It will be interesting to see how HP and Canon relationship evolves once the dust has settled.

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KingswoodMedia

PRINT.IT Reseller is published by Kingswood Media Ltd., Amherst House, 22 London Road, Sevenoaks TN13 2BT • Tel: 01732 759725 Email: neil@printitreseller.uk www.printitreseller.uk

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© 2016 Kingswood Media Ltd. Design: Sandtiger Media www.sandtiger.co.uk

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BULLETIN

StorPool to develop European channel

Distributed storage software specialist StorPool and Vesper Technologies, a reseller of bespoke compute, storage and networking solutions have signed a new strategic partnership.

The new agreement will enable StorPool to further develop its European channel and will allow the reseller to bring StorPool's software-defined storage solutions to its customer base in the UK.

StorPool's high-performance, cost-efficient block storage software helps public and private cloud builders provide organisations with a fast, reliable and affordable service. Since it was established in 2011, the vendor has secured numerous customers worldwide and continues to realise its ambitious growth plans.

Vesper Technologies sees the partnership as a natural fit with its core business, which was built to exploit the emergence of software-defined technologies.

Allan Kaye, Managing Director at Vesper

Technologies said: "As well as offering traditional solutions, we are passionate about the benefits of and the transition to the software-defined data centre. StorPool's block storage software is an ideal addition to our portfolio. We have built our company around supporting and guiding our customers through the rapidly-evolving and complex world of IT infrastructure and StorPool's technology will add value to our propositions by helping our customers to save money while enjoying robust storage performance."

Boyan Ivanov, CEO at StorPool, added: "We select resellers with a strong understanding of both the market trends and customer's needs so that they can really get to grips with what we deliver for end-users - affordable and high performance data storage. Vesper Technologies has all the right credentials to help us achieve even more for cloud enterprises in Europe by being among the most proactive resellers in the SDS field in the region." www.storpool.com

Vonage partners with DMSL

Cloud communications provider Vonage has partnered with communications distributor DMSL to launch its channel partner programme in the UK.

The partnership provides Vonage with the opportunity to immediately extend the distribution of its cloud communications solutions throughout the UK through DMSL's nationwide network of resellers.

Vonage chose DMSL as a partner for its ability to identify, recruit and engage with its strong, network of resellers across the UK that understand the value of cloud communications for business.

"The addition of Vonage to our provider portfolio means instant access to high quality, flexible business communications solutions that meet the needs of our resellers and their customers," said DMSL Managing Director, John Carter.

DMSL will also be positioning Vonage as the centerpiece of a new reseller recruiting plan. "We believe that being able to offer the Vonage solution will help us to attract even more resellers. We are launching a new nationwide reseller recruitment program centred on the ability to offer Vonage products and services. We expect to see a high level of enthusiasm from our resellers and their business customers," Carter added.

www.vonage.com • www.dmsluk.co.uk

Next generation launch for Exertis

Exertis has announced the launch of its next generation of Linx 8 and 10 inch tablets and a ground breaking display station designed exclusively for use with those products.

Linx has established itself as a successful brand in both the consumer and business markets with a range of high spec, affordable Windows tablets. Its reputation was further enhanced when the brand was recognised for its quality, winning the Microsoft OEM Partner of the Year 2016, a significant achievement for a relative newcomer but a reflection of its market share and customer acceptance. www.exertis.co.uk

Logicalis UK and Paxata team up

International IT solutions and managed services provider Logicalis UK and Paxata, a market leader in data preparation have entered into a first-in-market partnership.

Driven by the industry's desire to utilise big data, the partnership will allow Logicalis' customers in the UK, Europe and other key international markets to create actionable ingests to drive business transformation and strengthen its solutions and service offerings in the business analytics market. As part of the partnership agreement, Logicalis will serve as a reseller for Paxata and provide training and other professional services to joint clients.

"When searching for a launch partner in the UK market we looked for companies who, like us, understand the benefits of analytics," says Rik Tamm-Daniels, Paxata's VP of Technology and Partnerships. "Logicalis offers that and much more. Bringing an abundance of expertise across a range of industries. We're thrilled to have Logicalis on board and look forward to significantly expanding our mutual business in the UK, Europe and other key international markets." www.paxata.com • www.uk.logicalis.com



Computacenter joins ServiceNow partner programme

Computacenter has joined the Sales and Services Partner Programme of ServiceNow, a provider of service management software solutions from the cloud.

Clients can access ServiceNow's entire software spectrum via Computacenter. In addition, as a services partner, the IT service provider offers consulting and integration services related to the cloud solutions. The partnership is unique in that it links ServiceNow's IT service management solution

with Computacenter's award-winning Next Generation Service Desk (NGSD). This enables the IT service provider to offer both products together or integrate the other product into pre-existing ServiceNow or NGSD solutions.

Kevin James, UK Managing Director of Computacenter, said: "Many clients already use ServiceNow's innovative IT service management solutions. That is why it was a logical step for us to enter into this partnership, especially because the solutions are the perfect addition to

Computacenter's NGSD and Digital Workplace offering."

Lewis Gee, Senior Director, Regional Partners EMEA, ServiceNow said: "Computacenter is one of the leading providers of user helpdesk services, something shown by the development of the NGSD. That, combined with its presence in major European hubs, service delivery around the world and an extremely strong sales team benefits our mutual ServiceNow customers."

www.computacenter.com



TechData

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Document Network Services showcases the 'office of the future'

As part of its 20th anniversary celebrations, Document Network Services opened up its Innovation Centre on Pride Park, Derby, to showcase the 'office of the future'. With cutting-edge touchscreen technology, an interactive boardroom table and award winning technology, the company says that the efficient, streamlined, cost-effective office may sound futuristic, but it's a reality that is improving businesses right here and now.

The Innovation Centre, which opened last year and is the first of its kind outside London,

showcases new office equipment and the latest software solutions available.

Managing director, Darren Marsh said: "Although advanced, reliable technology is at the centre of our provision, our focus is always on our customers and providing a first-class service, which is why our anniversary celebration is all about people. For the first time we're opening up the Innovation Centre beyond our existing client list and inviting everyone to celebrate with us, experiencing the innovative office solutions that continue to motivate and excite us, even after 20 years!"

www.dnslimited.co.uk



Irongate prepares for the big 4-0

Irongate Group is preparing to celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2017. To mark the first phase of this milestone, the company has refreshed its brand identity and launched InOne, a new procurement solution aimed at saving companies significant time and money when buying business supplies and services.

Managing Director Adam Noble explained: "InOne combines all of Irongate's specialist sub-divisions and industry experts to provide businesses with a powerful single source package for all of their business supplies, with one supplier, one point of contact, one delivery and one invoice all accessible via one online ordering system."

A new website has also been launched, offering an improved user experience for customers and the new InOne online ordering portal to help procurement departments order what they need quickly and efficiently.

www.irongategroup.co.uk



Sharples MD says Brexit is not the only issue

Some business owners currently have more pressing challenges than just the ongoing Brexit debate that seems to be, quite rightly, uppermost in every politician's mind, according to Mark Brocklehurst, Director of Warrington-based document management specialists the Sharples Group.

"For example, the Hanjin Shipping situation, where the South Korean based shipping firm sought bankruptcy protection earlier this month, will have a significant impact on the businesses that rely on the company to deliver their products to customers across the world," he said.

"Like many companies we only store a certain amount of stock so immediately when we heard about the Hanjin situation, we took precautions and put in place a disaster recovery system," he explained. "Being independent we work on alternatives meaning we can buy from different suppliers ensuring that our clients will not be affected."

Brocklehurst argues that although the Brexit issue will have an impact on businesses, there will always be an endless range of issues for business owners to deal with. "Running a business is a challenge in itself. But, with the right experience and knowhow, most situations can be dealt with successfully. I'm sure Brexit will be the same!" he said. www.sharplesgroup.com

Spicers are first choice

Family owned Choice Stationery Supplies has signed a new five-year contract with Spicers. Having moved to Spicers in October 2014, the company has seen an impressive 43% growth in its business, a result it attributes to joining a partner who truly understands their business.

Founder Paul Andrews said: "Moving to Spicers felt like the right decision for us as it was refreshing to work with a business that truly listened to what we wanted and took the time to understand our needs and where we wanted to go. Spicers aren't afraid to take risks and move away from the rule book when required to get results that work for both of us." www.spicers.co.uk



Xerox expands channel partner network

Xerox has appointed mail and print room managed services provider Franking Sense, as an authorised document technology partner and authorised service provider.

The Bolton headquartered company will now offer the full range of Xerox office equipment, including Phaser printers and WorkCentre and ColorQube multifunction systems. Franking Sense will also offer managed print services through Xerox Partner Print Services (XPPS).

"The strength of the Xerox brand made the company an obvious choice when we were seeking a new document technology and managed print services partner," said Operations Director Daniel Gilbert (pictured). "In particular, Xerox's channel managed print service offering, XPPS, will enable us to significantly enhance the scope of our offer to customers."

www.nationwidefrankingsense.co.uk

Sharples staff get on their bikes

Nine of Sharples staff members left their cars at home on National Cycle to Work Day. They cycled to work from three different counties, racking up a total of more than 300 car-free miles.

www.sharplesgroup.com



Diary dates

Green Light

VOW's Green Light event will take place on December 2 at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole. The event, which normally takes place in January has been brought forward, following supplier and customer feedback.

This year's Green Light event is set to have a brand new format that will build on the success of previous events. VOW says there will be an inspiring agenda of content and educational sessions, the day will finish with the Green Light Gala Awards Dinner to recognise and celebrate what resellers and suppliers have accomplished this year, and for the first time the wholesaler will be crowning off the evening with an after show party. www.voweurope.com



Printing Charity annual lunch

The Rt. Hon the Lord Blunkett is the guest speaker at the Printing Charity's 189th Annual Luncheon which takes place on November 3 at Stationers' Hall, Ave Maria Lane, London.

Lord Blunkett said: "As The Printing Charity's President for 2016, I attended the Print Futures Awards in July and am looking forward to the Annual Luncheon which is a great networking event for people working in printing, publishing and packaging." www.theprintingcharity.org.uk



Mud, sweat and tears for charity

A team of 17 runners from Lyreco braved six miles of mud and more than 15 brutal obstacles to take part in the Tough Mudder Half event at Cholmondeley Estate, Cheshire.

The Tough Mudder team which was made up of staff from across the country and included France-based HR Director Morten Wiil who travelled to the UK to take part, raised funds for the firm's worldwide education programme.

Trials they had to endure throughout the run included having to push, pull, and roll their way through 60ft of slick, rotating barriers in muddy waters, wading through mud pits and conquering the 10ft Hero Wall.

While his colleagues were tackling the assault course in Cheshire, sales manager Richard Young was facing his own challenge competing in a Half Ironman in Weymouth, which involved an open water sea swim of 1.2 miles at 7am in the morning followed by a 56 mile bike ride, featuring more than 2,000ft of hill climbs and finally a 13.1 mile run.

The fundraisers, including Managing Director Peter Hradisky, are on target to raise more than £4,000 for Lyreco for Education, a programme that aims to give children living in poor conditions a better access to education.

www.lyreco.com



Duplo hosts a royal London Calling

Duplo's London Calling VIII had a distinct royal flavour this year. Its Surrey showroom was remodelled as a 16th Century palace and the firm's Addlestone HQ renamed 'Automated Precision Palace' for the event which took place on October 4.

Visitors to this exclusive print application event enjoyed a feast of live workflow and print demonstrations.

New was the iSaddle2 which builds on the success of the iSaddle saddle stitching family, the official unveiling in the UK of a new Ricoh Inline Booklet System and the UK preview of the Pfi DI-CUT 300 die cutter, as well as other innovations.

Marketing Manager Sarah Crumpler said: "The concept of London Calling is always customer focused and this year was no different. We even took the opportunity to host a customer focus group on the day to gather customer feedback in further developing our own business, as well as helping them."

www.duplointernational.com



Legacy investment holding businesses back

Organisations risk falling behind in the race for competitive advantage by clinging on to legacy communications technology, according to Annodata who warns that companies should think carefully about when to migrate their existing infrastructure to the cloud.

A recent report from Hexa Research suggests that UC is expected to grow significantly in Europe by 2020. "Adopting UC cloud services can afford organisations many benefits, so it makes good business sense to ensure that an organisations' IT strategy considers this transition or certainly begins putting the appropriate steps in place to ensure a seamless adoption process," Annodata CEO Rod Tonna-Barthet said.

"One of the major barriers to adoption is that organisations feel they have to sweat their historic investment in legacy technology. Undoubtedly, businesses should always aim to get the best performance from their existing estates and it may be tempting to hang on to old equipment for as long as possible. But this is a false economy. Legacy systems can be a drain on the IT department and maintaining these can be cumbersome and expensive, impairing an organisation's growth," he added.

www.annodata.co.uk

Europe's mid-market could be missing out

New research commissioned by Ricoh has revealed that mid-sized businesses in Europe could be missing out on up to £4.8 million of annual revenues because of barriers that hinder their growth. 16% of mid-sized business in the UK and Ireland believe that their revenues could have been significantly improved by 16-20% over the last year if such barriers to growth were not in place.

The top three obstacles to growth are the need

to comply with complex and costly regulation, the struggle to attract the best talent and finding, buying and applying the right technological solutions.

According to the research, 30% of mid-sized businesses in the UK and Ireland have yet to apply digital solutions that would enable them to scale up and become big brands, critical to capturing some of the revenue they miss out on each year.

www.ricoh.co.uk

Kodak Alaris expands scanner portfolio to drive digital transformation

The new Kodak i3500 Scanner is the latest addition to the i3000 Scanner family from Kodak Alaris. With speeds up to 110 pages per minute in colour, it is ideal for general office settings in a wide range of industries and vertical markets, including government, banking, insurance and healthcare. The included software tools extract critical data from documents and seamlessly feed it into existing business processes and workflows.

The company has launched this new solution to support business and IT managers in organisations of all sizes, in their quest to master Data Chaos. It will quickly and affordably digitise paper-based



documents to make information easily accessible across an organisation and help decision makers and knowledge workers respond faster to customer needs. www.kodakalaris.com/b2b

Sharp completes A3 colour MFP line-up

Four new high speed MFP models completes the company's refreshed A3 colour line-up. The MX series now includes thirteen devices from 30 to 60 ppm, with the latest additions offering the same flexible workflows and easy-to-use functions common to the whole range, plus the ability to handle higher volume print, copy and scan jobs quickly and efficiently.



Available in speeds of 50 and 60 ppm, the MX-5050N and MX-6050N Essential models are adaptable devices that meet all standard print, copy and scan needs and can be upgraded as and when a business demands. The 50 and 60 ppm MX-5070N and MX-6070N Advanced models combine value-added features such as W-iFi and cloud connectivity and a motion sensor for quicker wake-up times, with a sophisticated solutions platform. www.sharpbusiness.com

Print Audit Europe raises £12,000 for charity

A cycling event organised and supported by Print Audit Europe has raised £12192.15, with donations still coming in.

A group of six cyclists rode over one thousand miles between the Channel port of St Malo and the Mediterranean resort of Nice, in fourteen days. The ascent recorded was over 41,000 feet which is the equivalent of climbing Ben Nevis ten times.

Managing Director Phil Madders was very grateful for all the support the team had received from customers, suppliers and friends. He said: "They were all incredibly generous, both in their financial and moral support. As a team, we enormously benefitted from the encouragement we received via social media, email and text messages. And the money our ride managed to raise was absolutely fantastic!"

The charities that will benefit from the 2016 bike ride are MS Society, Cancer Research, Bloodwise, Alzheimer's Research UK and Woking Hospice.

This year's tour was the fourth event the company supported and the total raised so far for charity is £37,153 <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Phil-Madders4>

in brief...

Cloud-based mobile-only solution for SMEs

Mobile operator iQela has launched an innovative new service that gives small and medium sized businesses a complete mobile-first, cloud-based unified communications solution. It allows businesses to take control over their communications strategy, helping them to mobilise their workforce, boost productivity and eliminate expensive on-premise hardware upgrade and maintenance costs. In addition, mobile call recording, compliant to all current regulations and unlimited cloud storage are available as dedicated services.

www.iqelamobile.co.uk

Contract win for HyperGrid

HyperGrid, the developer of the world's first and only HyperConverged Infrastructure-as-a-Service (HClaaS) solution has won a contract with Infuse Technology, a Midlands IT managed services provider.

The contract will see the deployment of HyperGrid's HCI and storage solutions to provide greater agility in supporting the organisation's short- and long-term IT development projects whilst significantly reducing its costs and footprint.

www.hypergrid.com

Azlan strengthens management team

Azlan, the enterprise value-added distribution business of Tech Data, has made key additions to its management team, naming Huw Jones as Business Unit Manager, HP Enterprise and also announcing the appointment of Sarah Williams as Sales Director.

They join Simon Bennett, Business Unit Director, Enterprise and Peter Spreadbury, Director, Software on the Azlan management team under UK Managing Director, Rob Tomlin.

www.azlan.com.



Rob Tomlin, UK Managing Director, Azlan



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ricohpledge.com

Integra members connect at national conference

The UK's largest dealer buying group Integra Business Solutions, held its Get Connected National Conference 2016 at The East Midlands Conference Centre on September 15

Turnout each year is always high and this year was no different, over 230 delegates from some of the UK's leading dealerships attended. As with any owner-managed business, taking time out of the office needs to have an intrinsic value and the general consensus amongst those that attended was that the opportunity to get together with like-minded dealers, network and share ideas in a non-competitive environment, and take best practice back into their business, is one of the biggest benefits that Integra membership affords.

Designed to encourage dealers to 'get connected' to customers and new business opportunities, the day opened with an insightful keynote address from Integra CEO Aidan McDonough. Beginning with a market overview, he described the current landscape, saying that the pace of change is more rapid than ever before. He cited the rise of the 'super dealer' (a result of recent mergers and acquisitions), the fact that Amazon is muted to enter the B2B space, the digital revolution, and the impact of Brexit on exchange rates and the resultant pricing volatility, as examples of recent developments that pose a number of challenges and opportunities to members.

"There is huge strength in the independent channel," he said, adding: "You are significantly more flexible and agile than large, corporate organisations and can change rapidly, don't underestimate the power of your relationships."

Agenda

The agenda included a number of practical



Aidan McDonough, CEO, Integra

business sessions and workshops. Martin Wilde from MWA Research provided an overview of the market, values, margin trends and sales volumes through 2015. Barrie Hayes, CEO, BPGI Ip delivered a compelling presentation focusing on how delegates can connect to and win key accounts and Joel Harrison, Editor-in-Chief at B2B Marketing talked about how members can reinvigorate their marketing activities to connect with existing customers as well as new prospects.

Gary Partridge of Lexington Corporate Advisors hosted a session entitled 'Planning your exit strategy' and Steve Bilton, Managing Director, Evolution Software demonstrated the company's new webstore.

This year's guest speaker was Gilan Gork, South Africa's most renowned mentalist and he closed the day with a powerful, thought-provoking and extremely entertaining presentation.

The four-hour long Get Connected Supplier Exhibition was packed, members took the opportunity to engage with all of the suppliers who attended, to talk through new products, promotions and special offers, as well as network with their peers.

This year's exhibition housed 65 key supplier partners across all industry sectors

including office products, furniture, retail and education, through to 3D print, MPS and IT services.

During the exhibition, members were asked to vote for the Best Dressed Stand and the Product of the Show. Antalis scooped the award for Best Dressed Stand and Sigel were nominated for the Product of the Show award.

Gala dinner

Integra presented the Initiative Awards at the black tie gala dinner. Entertainment was provided by digital close-up magician Tom London who wowed guests with the most amazing tricks. Dubbed the iPad magician, he seamlessly merged both traditional and modern magic, performing a multitude of illustrious sleight of hand and misdirection. His digital illusions involved pulling an iPhone (and more) out of an iPad! And a talented balloon artist created mini balloon caricatures for guests both pre and during dinner.

After dinner entertainment was provided by comedian Simon Evans, who has appeared on the Michael McIntyre Roadshow, Live at the Apollo and Mock the Week among other highlights and live music by talented band So lot of funk.

£2,000 was also raised on the night which will be split equally between two very deserving charities, Cancer Research and CLIC Sargent.

www.integra-business.co.uk



2016 AWARD WINNERS

Manufacturer of the Year Award

DAMS

Wholesaler/Distributor of the Year Award

Antalis

Member of the Year Initiative Awards

Each year Integra recognises members for their ongoing support and for excelling in what they do. This year's winners were:

Alliance Member of the Year

Stanford Marsh

COG Member of the Year

Bennett Workplace Solutions

Directory Member of the Year

PBS Business Solutions Ltd

Gold Member of the Year

Lomas Office Furniture and Stationery Ltd



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HP Ink/302

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Samsung to sell printing business to HP

Samsung is to sell the entire global operations and assets of its printing business to HP. The move, part of Samsung's efforts to concentrate on its core business areas, represents a major shake-up in the print industry

In a meeting held in Seoul on September 12, Samsung's board of directors approved the sale of its printing business unit to HP Inc., a deal valued at \$1.05 billion.

In a statement the company said that upon the approval of shareholders it would spin off the printing business unit into a separate company as of November 1 and sell a 100 per cent stake of the newly created company and overseas assets related to the business, to HP.

This is the largest print acquisition in HP's history and one which according to HP, accelerates its growth opportunities in the copier segment, strengthens its leading laser printing portfolio that has been established with Canon and paves the way for future printing innovation.

An announcement released by HP stated that it aims to reinvent and replace service-intensive copiers with superior multifunction printing. The company said that the acquisition positions it to 'disrupt and reinvent the \$55 billion copier industry, a segment that hasn't innovated in decades' and that it is investing to 'disrupt this category by replacing copiers with superior multifunction printer (MFP) technology'.

Accelerating growth

"When we became a separate company just 10 months ago, it enabled us to become nimble and focus on accelerating growth and reinventing industries," Dion Weisler, President and CEO of HP said.

HP also says that the deal also creates new avenues for growth and greater profitability for partners as they expand managed print services as sales models shift from transactional to contractual.

"We are doing this [accelerating growth and reinventing industries] with 3D printing and the disruption of the \$12 trillion traditional manufacturing industry and now we are going after the \$55 billion copier space. The acquisition of Samsung's printer business allows us to deliver print innovation and create entirely new business opportunities with far better efficiency, security, and economics for



customers," Weisler added.

HP argues that copiers are outdated, complicated machines with dozens of replaceable parts requiring inefficient service and maintenance agreements, claiming that customers are frequently frustrated with the number of visits needed to keep copier machines functioning.

Under the agreement, Samsung will source printers from HP and continue to market in Korea under the Samsung brand.

Samsung's printing business which has 6,000 employees, a production base in China as well as more than 50 sales offices globally, posted 2 trillion Korean won in revenue in 2015. The acquisition brings a compelling intellectual property portfolio of more than 6,500 printing patents and a world-class workforce that includes nearly 1,300 researchers and engineers with advanced expertise in laser printer technology, imaging electronics and printer supplies and accessories, to support continued innovation in print market solutions.

Formidable A3 portfolio

Samsung has built a formidable portfolio of A3 MFPs that deliver the performance of copiers with the power, simplicity, reliability and ease-of-use of printers and with as few as seven replaceable parts. Integrating the Samsung printer business' products, including their mobile-first and cloud-first

user experience, with HP's next-generation PageWide technologies will, according to HP, create a breakthrough portfolio of printing solutions with the industry's best device, document and data security.

"HP Inc. has been a valued partner and customer of Samsung," said Dr. Oh-Hyun Kwon, Vice Chairman and CEO of Samsung Electronics. "We can now leverage our combined capacity for innovation to further enhance the value of our relationship."

Acquiring Samsung's printer business will also strengthen HP's ability to service customers in global laser printing, a category where it has enjoyed a strong, mutually beneficial partnership with Canon for more than three decades. HP is confident this transaction will provide new opportunities to further strengthen and accelerate this highly valued relationship.

Fujio Mitarai, Chairman and CEO of Canon Inc. said: "HP and Canon have long discussed print innovation to create customer value in business printing and in the growing MPS market. This transaction will further evolve our collaboration and bring about growth for both of our companies."

The acquisition is expected to be accretive in the first full year following closing, with cost synergies and a strong financial model. The transaction is expected to close within 12 months pending regulatory review and other customary closing conditions. After closing, Samsung has agreed to make a \$100 million to \$300 million equity investment in HP through open market purchases.

Michael Burke,
Managing Director,
Burke Systems and
Solutions

Louella Fernandes,
Associate Director,
Quocirca



Toni Gibiino,
Group Marketing Director,
RDT Office Solutions



new range of innovative, market leading A3 print devices from HP. So when the rumours of an acquisition hit the market, we did assume like most, it was simply the new OEM partnership.

"Come the announcement on Monday 12 September and once we had digested the news and fully understood the dynamics and components of the acquisition, we started to clearly identify the opportunities and recognise the market strength of two global and leading printing brands coming together. As a current Global Partner, we remain committed to our partnership and the exciting developments the new alliance will present."

Challenges ahead

Louella Fernandes, Associate Director at Quocirca says that HP does have a strong portfolio for the A3 space but it faces challenges in integrating Samsung's A4 portfolio. "Its disruption of the A3 market is based on displacing very established competitors with a loyal client base and it is hugely reliant on its channel to step up and sell contractually for it to achieve any measure of success," she said.

"The majority of A3 copiers are sold under a managed print service contract, which typically includes proactive maintenance and automated supplies replenishment. With service delivery being a key strength for many established MPS vendors such as Canon, Ricoh and Xerox, potential customers will need a compelling reason, beyond serviceability, to shift completely to an HP fleet. HP faces challenges ahead, and absolutely needs its channel fully engaged to gain any measure of success in the market," she added.

A significant event

In the context of how it will impact the UK market, Toni Gibiino, Group Marketing Director of independent reseller RDT Office Solutions, said he would class the event as significant in its contribution towards transforming the market, adding that the



Mark Smyth, Operations Director, Vision

term 'disruptive' appears to be over-used right now, for a number of reasons.

"HP Inc. have some work to do structurally, in terms of connecting with the traditional A3 copier/ MPS dealer channel, when it comes to contractually focussed resellers, rather than transactional," he said. "HP have certainly made some inroads with their MPS partner programme in A4 over the last three years, but it'll be very interesting to see how they'll integrate the Samsung products into their offering."

In Gibiino's opinion, the battle for market share won't be won over who has the best equipment or applications, he believes that it's going to come down to pricing, engagement with the channel resellers and the OEM's marketing budget. "Samsung created a strong blueprint in many of these aspects. Structurally, how they line up against the likes of Xerox, Ricoh and Konica on A3 is going to be important to the speed of their success. Let's be realistic, it's not a case of 'if' they'll become a dominant A3 player, it's more of a 'when' discussion," he added.

"The market is heading for further consolidation. We've seen the number of OEMs halve to 16 over the last 30 years and I wouldn't be surprised to see some other big moves over the next 12 months," he predicted.

"It's all being set-up for a Game of Thrones style finale, as the pieces of the puzzle begin to fall into place for the end game. Who will be left standing? he said in conclusion.

www.samsung.com
www.hp.com
www.burkesystems.co.uk
www.visionplc.co.uk
www.rdt-osg.com
www.quocirca.com

More questions than answers

Michael Burke, Managing Director, Burke Systems and Solutions said that the first he knew of the HP Inc. acquisition of Samsung Print was on Monday morning (12 September) when he received a phone call from his Samsung Channel Manager.

He said that the news has sent a shockwave through the organisation, which is Samsung's OA partner for Northern Ireland. "It has certainly been at the forefront of my mind since announced. At this stage, there are more questions than answers," he explained. So far, we have received no information from Samsung," he explained.

"While I don't expect much to change in the short to medium term, I would be concerned about how HP plan to increase their market share of the A3 market," Burke commented.

"They've stated they intend to 'disrupt and remodel' a market they see as lacking innovation for decades. When they start to market the new A3 products through the HP Partner network, we immediately face a greater number of competitors selling the same product portfolio. If this happens it will have a commoditising effect on the products with the inevitable erosion of margin. However, if they stick with the tried and tested method of appointing authorised and accredited Partners who are fully trained on products and solutions and if they take a strategic viewpoint on the geographical market, then this could increase credibility with the products and may actually enhance our opportunities with a wider and diverse HP product portfolio," he added.

"In the immediate future we will of course remain committed to the Samsung print portfolio," Burke said. "Ideally Samsung in conjunction with HP would have outlined joint plans for the next 12 months. I've spoken with a few Samsung Partners and we're all the same; in considerable doubt and uncertainty as to what happens next," he concluded.

Exciting developments

Commenting on the news, Mark Smyth, Operations Director at Vision said: "We were initially aware of HP's partnership with Samsung to go to market with printer technology from Samsung's current line up and the plan to launch a complete

The acquisition of Samsung's printer business allows us to deliver print innovation and create entirely new business opportunities with far better efficiency, security, and economics for customers

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Going through the phases

The new era of enterprise content management, as outlined at the Fujitsu Information Capture Conference (ICC)

Held every two years, the Fujitsu Information Capture Conference (ICC) is an important event for the scanner manufacturer's reseller and partner community. Over two days in September, Fujitsu welcomed more than 400 people to this year's ICC, which took place in Waterloo, London. As well as highlighting new solutions, the event gave delegates an insight into key trends in content management.

The ICC is part of Fujitsu's programme of channel education, which it sees as fundamental to future growth. Indeed, in his opening address Mike Nelson, Vice President at PFU (EMEA) Ltd, pointed out that resellers who attended the 2014 event enjoyed an additional 12 million euros of scanner sales in the year of the conference – and as much as 30 million euros when you take into account other services and ancillary equipment such as storage.

So what was there to learn this year?

Jo Caudron, founder of Duval Union Consulting, set the scene by explaining how we are entering the third wave of digital disruption. Unlike the first wave in 1995, which transformed the music, video and photography sectors, and the second wave in 2005, which impacted print media, TV, travel and HR sectors, Caudron warned that the third wave was touching every industry, including retail, healthcare, automotive, finance, education, telecoms, FMCG, food, banking and insurance.

Evidence of this transformation was revealed by changing 'business touchpoints' e.g. the transition from meeting room to conference room to virtual reality; from paper storage to digital storage to the cloud; from paper to PDF to real-time smart data; and from the office to home office to new ways of working.

Caudron pointed out that the rate of change was deceptive. Because businesses are adopting digitisation at different rates, a supplier could convince themselves that it was possible to carry on as normal losing only a few customers each year. To them, he put the question 'what percentage of customers can you afford to lose year after year?'

He added that the need to support customers at every stage of the digital



adoption curve means that businesses must master the old world and the new.

Phase Three

John Mancini, chief evangelist of AIIIM, made the same point in the context of electronic content management. He argued that because successive stages in the evolution of document and content management don't replace what has gone before but are layered on top, organisations will have to connect the dots between traditional ECM systems and new, third wave mobile solutions.

In his keynote presentation, Mancini identified the three distinct phases of content management that have emerged over the last 35 years:

Phase One: Document Management and Workflow – the automation, mainly by Fortune 500-type organisations, of complicated, mission-critical processes, such as insurance policy admin and cheque management. These solutions were expensive, complex and highly customised. There were no standards and people had

Jo Caudron,
Founder,
Duval Union
Consulting

The need to support customers at every stage of the digital adoption curve means that businesses must master the old world and the new

to undertake week-long training courses to use them. This didn't matter, said Mancini, because typically just 1-3% of knowledge workers in an organisation were responsible for back-end processes.

Phase Two: Electronic Content Management (ECM) – by 2000 document management had morphed into ECM. This was promoted as an enterprise layer, but in reality it was still driven by business departments, resulting in knowledge silos. ECM had started to spread down into mid-sized businesses, but it was still mainly a big company game.

Phase Three: Mobility & the Cloud – in the late 2000s things started to change, explained Mancini, as first Sharepoint (2007) and then enterprise 'sync and share' offerings like Box upset industry price points and precipitated the shift from ECM specialists to knowledge workers. There was a fundamental change in how solutions were adopted, but usability and mobility were still a problem. Phase Three, dominated by mobile and cloud, has changed all this. Today, process owners can implement their own solutions; business processes can be 'applied'; mobile is at the centre and not an afterthought; and usability is essential – any solution that takes more than 10 minutes for people to learn how to use is a non-starter.

Explaining the key differences between legacy ECM systems and Phase Three ECM systems, Mancini said: "Legacy ECM systems are all about technology; modern ones are all about applications. Legacy ECM was mostly a large company thing; now it's relevant to just about any size of company. In the legacy era, usability and mobility were an afterthought; now they are core. In legacy land we said 'someday' about the cloud; today people want the cloud now. We went from an environment where IT was buying technology to one in which businesses are buying applications (Gartner says that by 2020 80% of the IT spend will be by the business rather than IT). We've gone from a legacy world of costly, very complex integrations to one in which people want to configure not customise. And, lastly, the focus has gone from 24-36 month projects that set out to change everything to modest, application-specific improvements that can

Continued...



...continued

be scaled and extended throughout an organisation.”

Not everything is perfect. Mancini points out that businesses are frustrated by the security implications of greater mobility and the blurring of lines between home and office; and that there is a massive legacy drag – the gap between what they can do with the systems they have and the type of organisation they want to become.

Digitisation vs digitalisation

Mancini says that organisations need to do three things to overcome this drag:

1 Get paper out of their organisation. “Of the end users we have questioned, 72% agree that ‘business at the speed of paper’ will be unacceptable in a few years’ time. I think that time has already come and gone”, he said.

2 Understand that digitalisation is different to digitisation. “When we talk to people about how they are using digital capture, you still get a scan-to-archive type of game. We’ve been in scan-to-process now for 10 years. Organisations must figure out that this is not just about digitising paper and sticking it in an archive; this is about how you digitalise a business; how you take capture and move it from document capture to information capture.”

3 Sort out back-end processes. “Back-end business processes are still a mess. Businesses could get away with this in an earlier era when their processes weren’t exposed to customers and suppliers as directly as they are now. But when an organisation opens up and when walls become more transparent, back office processes have to run efficiently,” warned Mancini.

Lessons for the channel

So what do these trends mean for the reseller community? Clearly, there is potential for increased sales and deeper relationships by helping customers achieve the three goals outlined above and by connecting the idea of information capture with the broader digital transformation initiatives that organisations are wrestling with today.

However, Mancini points out that digital transformation is also changing the way that IT is bought by customers, which is having an effect on resellers’ own operations and their approach to market.

“Think about how the sales skill set needs to change,” he said. “This is a big issue for this industry. CEB, creator of the Challenger Sales model, says that 57% of the buyer’s journey is complete before the first customer contact with the supplier. Think about how different that



John Mancini, AIIM

is from the ‘lone wolf’ model that we have traditionally had for the heroes in our sales world – the person who is out there meeting or exceeding sales quotas all the time, sprinkling special dust that turns prospects into customers. Those guys still exist, but in a glasshouse world most people are going to acquire most of their information about who you are, what you do and how you do it before they even talk to any of your sales people.”

Mancini points out that in a world where marketing is becoming increasingly important it is essential for resellers to overcome the huge gap that exists between sales and marketing. “Customers rate the sales person as the least influential interaction in the buying process, while online content is quickly becoming the dominant driver of commerce. Unfortunately, most people are still using traditional selling models,” he said.

Mancini adds that this, and the fact that growth in technology spend is coming from ‘the business’ buying IT rather than IT staff buying IT, requires a new sales approach.

“Most people spend their sales training dollar on sales models or making sales people familiar with the product portfolio. Yet, when we ask people what stops them from achieving their goals, it normally comes down to their inability to establish a business case for change. That’s a huge challenge for us moving forward in this space. In a consumer-centric era, in an application-centric era, in which the business is buying you have to be conversant in selling solutions. People aren’t buying technology any more, they are buying applications. So you really need to think about how you build up the confidence your sales people have in selling solutions rather than selling technology.”

In conclusion Mancini said: “Content management is changing and changing very rapidly, and that change will accelerate. Customer stakes are rising; they

get that they have to change; they are wrestling with the question of how to map their legacy systems with these innovative systems. Document capture is morphing into something far more strategic and that presents huge opportunities for this space, but we have to help educate people to connect the dots between what we all know about information capture and what the C-level is trying to achieve with digital transformation in their organisation. Neither side will get it organically. We have to educate the C-level and we have to educate existing people in organisations that their competencies are relevant to the new set of challenges. The last point is the skills set needs to change.”

www.aiim.org
www.pfu.fujitsu.com/en/

Award winners

No conference is complete without an awards ceremony. Here are Fujitsu’s 2016 award winners:

Partner of the Year: Western Europe
• NotaSolutions, France

Partner of the Year: East Europe and Russia
• Konzept, Poland

Partner of the Year: Middle East & Africa
• PC Time Co., Saudi Arabia

Newcomer of the Year
• NuSynergi, UK

Best Mobile Scanner Integration
• Tconsult, The Netherlands

Best ScanSnap Integration
• Telecomputer, Germany

Best PaperStream Integration
• Marno, Italy

Best Network Scanner Integration
• ALOS, Germany

AP Partner of the Year
• Genapi, France

Best Marketing Program
• Westcoast, UK



President’s Award
• Indra, Spain

Imaging Alliance Program Award
• Palaxo Technologies, United Arab Emirates

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Frama offers new growth opportunities to partners in the IT reseller community

Swiss manufacturer Frama has a fantastic relationship with its business partners in the channel. These partners, collectively known as the Frama Partner Network, are the backbone of a route to market highly valued by the franking machine experts

Although traditionally partnered with copier companies, Frama is looking towards the IT reseller community for businesses wanting to make a move into the profitable document handling marketplace.

For dealers used to selling software solutions as well as business machines, a move into the emerging end-to-end document handling arena is a logical and lucrative step. With a breadth of products and solutions including Franking machines, security scanners, secure registered email platform and digitising document software the Frama solution has something to suit any business, attract new customers and offer something new to loyal customers.

Frama is actively looking to help dealers in the IT marketplace to make the most of this market by offering them a wealth of new growth opportunities.

Growing presence

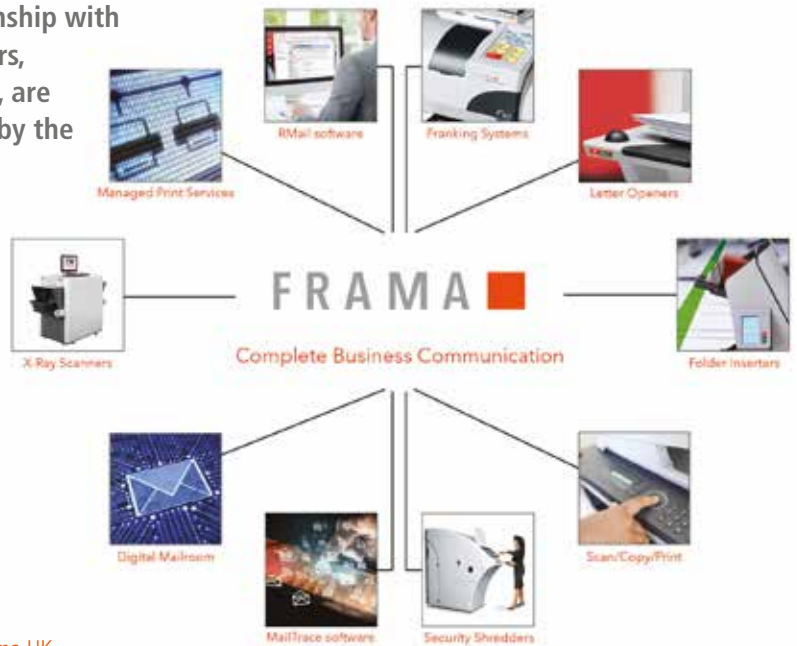
In the last few years, Frama has consistently increased its presence in the partner channel so that partners' own sales people can help spread the word about our products and brand directly to their customer base and prospects. The Frama Partner Network is a great way to work together and reach out to a wider audience.

Lenny Wood, Marketing Manager for Frama UK, says: "The aim is to be seen as a single solutions provider. That is something Frama can nurture and build on, offering a different but relevant product line that they may well be asked for. We are able to extend our partner's product portfolio, helping to diversify and generate a new stream of income."

Customers like having a recognised brand, but with the local relationship and care a partner can provide. This is a true win-win situation for everyone involved.



Lenny Wood,
Marketing Manager, Frama UK



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Study reveals hidden potential for IT resellers

A new study commissioned by cloud computing company Vonage, conducted by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, incorporating primary research by YouGov, has revealed that more than half (52 per cent) of the UK's total business population is made up of home businesses

There are over 2.75 million home businesses in the UK today, representing a 23 per cent increase over the past decade, according to the Heart of Home Business Britain report. These businesses contribute an estimated £94 billion gross value added (GVA) to the economy, just under six per cent of the total value of British economic output.

DMSL, the specialist distributor and aggregator of communications services, says that the findings of this report into the UK's home businesses is evidence of a massive and growing opportunity for communications and IT resellers.

12 per cent of the businesses in the survey operate within the IT and telecommunications fields, more than any other single industry. The report states that while technology is enabling home business success by lowering the barriers for start-ups, it also notes that these businesses need more mentoring and support.

According to DMSL, the Heart of Home Business Britain report shows that the growing population of smaller enterprises need support to make the best use of technology.

Huge potential

John Carter, Managing Director of DMSL, which recently partnered with Vonage to launch the company's channel partner programme in the UK, says that the report reveals huge potential for local reseller businesses that are focused on supporting small and home-based businesses.

"The Heart of Home Business Britain report shows us that there is absolutely no shortage of opportunities for resellers who can offer the quick, simple and effective solutions and services that these small, home-based businesses will be looking for," he said.

Carter argues that most home-based firms will want the reassurance of knowing that their IT and communications supplier is



John Carter, Managing Director, DMSL

local. "What this report shows is that there is a massive hidden opportunity for B2B resellers out there. Many of these home-based businesses will be very dependent on their IT and communications and when things go wrong, they will need to get problems sorted out straight away. They will want their trusted IT supplier to be close at hand."

Benefit from the boom

He added: "They may be used to thinking on their feet and learning new skills, but as they get busier, they will also need to call on more external help and expertise. Some will grow to the point where they need to move to dedicated business premises, at which stage they will need even more assistance. If locally-based resellers can provide the right kind of services and support, they will really benefit from the boom in entrepreneurial activity and home-based working."

DMSL works with a nationwide network of partners through which it offers a range of broadband connectivity and cloud-based or hosted voice services. It runs focused marketing programmes that identify business opportunities and then passes these onto resellers to fulfil at a local level. DMSL provides support during the sales and provisioning process and can also give resellers access to its own billing engine to simplify customer management.

www.dmsluk.co.uk

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Brother's MPS: breaking the mould

Phil White, Managed Print Sales Manager at Brother UK, explains how Brother has created MPS solutions that suit both large corporates and small and medium size businesses, allowing the channel and customers to make the most out of managed print.

The print industry has long focused its efforts on promoting managed print services (MPS). Not only does MPS allow end-users to benefit from greater flexibility and control over their print solution, it represents secured long-term revenue and opportunities to provide additional services for vendors and their channel partners.

MPS has traditionally been tailored to corporate customers where end-users have a wide-range of complex print requirements and are typically provided with a high end multi-function device by a value added reseller.

At Brother we've aimed to make it as easy as possible for MPS to work for end-users, while also making it easy for channel partners to implement. This has seen us develop MPS solutions for the channel that provide partners with a choice of highly flexible corporate and public sector offerings as well as solutions for end users that require a more simple solution.

Establishing larger MPS environments

MPS requires a bespoke customer-centric service, especially when it comes to agreements at the corporate end of the



market. This means tailoring solutions and services specifically to the print environment and the customer's needs.

While most vendors will approach the market with an off the shelf, or one size fits all approach to managed print, at Brother we don't think this is enough. For each of our MPS agreements, once Brother and the channel partner have understood the

Phil White,
Managed Print
Sales Manager,
Brother UK

customer's requirements, the services are developed to fit the specific needs of the customer.

At Brother we only sell our MPS offering through the channel and we give our partners as much support as possible when it comes to developing these agreements.

Our end user sales team, pre-sales technical teams and MPS specialists offer a range of tailored support from project management through to installation as well as recycling. These services can be delivered in-house or by channel partners themselves, creating nine opportunities for channel partners to develop their own revenue streams within a Brother managed print service.

We're proud that we haven't sold the same MPS solution twice to any of our corporate customers – our service is incredibly flexible and truly tailored. In essence, alongside channel partners we can deliver a truly bespoke solution.

At your side

Brother's 'at your side' ethos also provides support throughout the pre- and post-sale process to ensure end-users get the best from their managed print service agreements.

Our three-stage implementation process for new customers sees us assess their print environments, transition to the new managed print service agreement, and then continually optimise the service to ensure maximum value is delivered to the customer. During the assessment stage, our end user sales team and pre-sales technical teams work alongside the customer and channel partner to ensure data is collected and customer needs are understood and considered when designing the solution.

Following this, our project management team support the transition from the customer's original system to the



Flexibility is key to Brother MPS, we understand that end customers and partners have different requirements. The modular approach to MPS at Brother means partners and customers can choose the types of service they require from us and tailor the solution to their unique needs.



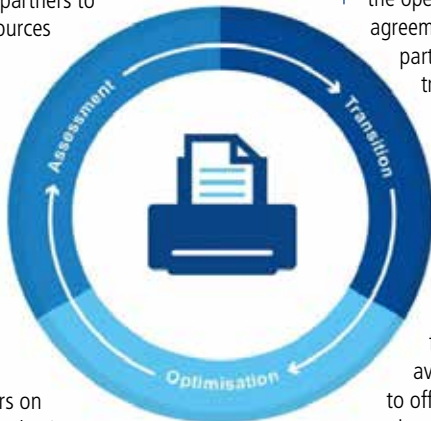
new Brother MPS solution. A Brother Service Delivery Manager will then lead the optimisation of the customer's MPS solution – providing reports and performance updates to ensure the customer benefits from a modern, intelligent MPS system.

Making MPS mass-market

As the transactional print hardware market continues to contract in size at around 5% per annum, the aim at Brother is to open up MPS to as many channel partners and customers as possible. Brother has invested in a platform allowing all channel partners access to managed print services without the need for these channel partners to invest in any additional resources themselves.

This allows channel partners to quickly (in five clicks) create an MPS agreement, empowering a wide range of channel partners, from VARs to office supplies resellers, to agree managed print services over the phone with their customers, with the aim of taking transactional print customers on a journey to the benefits of a basic

Brother's three-stage approach to MPS



At Brother our aim is to provide our channel partners with a managed print service to fit all types of customers, from SMEs to large corporate and public sector customers. To do this we have provided a range of services to the channel that allow Brother channel partners to sell a basic print service right through to a complete managed print service.

managed print service.

The easy-to-use interface provides both the channel partners and the customer with a simple and effective service including installation, break-fix service and automated supplies fulfilment. While allowing the end user to gain the operational efficiencies that MPS agreements afford, it helps channel partners to benefit from this broader trend, securing long-term revenues and enter the IT services market with zero investment in new resources.

A flexible, simple and fast approach to MPS

Our overall approach to MPS focusses on four key pillars – flexibility, simplicity, speed, and availability of experts. This allows us to offer a truly customer-centric model. In addition, our Commercial and

Public Sector End User Sales Teams are available to work with our Brother Channel Account Management team to develop new MPS sales opportunities for our channel partners. Pre-sales Technical Support, Project Management and Service Delivery teams then work with our channel partners to ensure the solution design fits the customer's needs and is implemented in a way that delivers maximum value and minimum disruption to customers.

This means both channel partners and our customers can be confident in the solution from assessment throughout the lifetime of the contract, no matter the size of the customer, the strategy of the channel partner, or the complexity of the MPS solution.

www.brother.co.uk/Business-Solutions/MPS

An iconic British brand

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Jet Tec brand and the company is marking it with a brand relaunch designed to celebrate its British heritage

Jet Tec has been at the forefront of remanufacturing inkjet and toner cartridges for two decades. The company's all-encompassing range of remanufactured ink and toner cartridges which are developed and produced in the UK in its Lincolnshire-based factory, provide a quality, cost-effective, eco-friendly alternative to OEM cartridges.

Jet Tec product lines include remanufactured HP, Dell, Canon, Brother, Epson, Kyocera, Lexmark and Samsung cartridges. The company's commitment to innovation and dedication and passion in production, design and development, is reflected in the quality and reliability of its inkjets and toners.

"Our offer is comprehensive and only the best components are incorporated into each and every product, we produce," Business Development Manager Becky Capes explained.

"Innovation is at the core of our manufacturing operations, we formulate and produce our own ink as well as devise processes and equipment to clean and test all of our products," she added.

Jet Tec tests each and every ink and toner cartridge before it leaves the factory, a process that ensures the highest quality products. Cartridges also feature ExtraLife smart chips, a development that delivers smart value for money, with this technology, Jet Tec products can now print up to 100



per cent more pages than original supplies.

Demand for its products continues to grow, affordability is of course a key factor in this, Jet Tec products can offer up to 70 per cent savings on original equivalents, but even more important is the quality. "We are so confident in the quality and performance of our products that every inkjet comes with a two-year guarantee and toner has a three-year guarantee," Becky said.

A British re-brand

Jet Tec products now sport a fresh new look. The 20th anniversary coincides with a brand relaunch which Becky says celebrates the fact that Jet Tec is a British brand.

"We are extremely proud that all of our products are made right here in the

UK and we want to shout about it," she explained. "We have totally redesigned the toner packaging across the entire range to celebrate our Britishness."

At the heart of the new branding is a traditional red Routemaster bus. The London bus is quintessentially British and its iconic design is recognised the world over. It's been reported that of the 2,876 Routemasters ever built, that just under half are still in existence, and one of them is at the company's Lincolnshire HQ.

"The new packaging also features a Union Jack and states that the product is 'Made in England'," Becky added.

Over and above the company's intention to promote its British heritage, another key objective behind the rebrand was to support its channel customers to drive repeat sales. "Jet Tec is a credible and strong brand with a solid reputation for quality and value for money, and with this rebrand we are creating an even stronger brand identity, which will further increase brand recognition amongst end-users, and in turn help dealers to generate more repeat business," she said.

Support for resellers

Jet Tec resellers have access to a whole host of value-added resources and support. "We will continue to deliver high quality UK remanufactured products that come with a 100 per cent two- or three-year guarantee, Becky said, adding: "And we

Innovation is at the core of our manufacturing operations, we formulate and produce our own ink



also offer our dealers additional support across a number of areas.”

Jet Tec resellers benefit from excellent margin potential and repeat sales, orders can be placed online, and the company offers free next working day delivery (UK mainland), minimum order applies.

A wide range of free bespoke marketing materials are also available through the company’s ‘Click & Print’ service, these include point of sale packs, posters, leaflets and other promotional materials. Some of the materials such as web banners, e-shots and mailers can be co-branded and ordered through the company’s unique trade area on its website.

In addition dealers have access to free technical support, “We have a UK-based helpline for our resellers as well as a toner help support website,” Becky added.

Environmental protection

Jet Tec has achieved ISO14001 certification. All production and packaging is managed in-house and the company has a forward-thinking approach to environmental protection which includes minimising the impact of all its operations from the energy used to power factory machines, to recycling of waste packaging, and freepost envelopes used in its recycling schemes.

Jet Tec’s remanufactured cartridges are produced using original cartridges collected through its recycling schemes. Its sister company, The Recycling Factory, works alongside Jet Tec to manage its recycling schemes providing collection materials, POS, support and real time reports.

The cartridges go through a strict inspection process to verify that they are suitable for remanufacturing, are cleaned with a specially formulated cleaning solution to remove all the residual ink, before they are refilled, print tested and packaged.

“The recycling process ensures that each cartridge is filled to the maximum capacity with high quality ink. In many cases its offer extra ink when compared to the original, which benefits both the consumer and the environment, as the cartridge is not only recycled but contains extra ink, therefore printing for longer,” Becky commented.

www.jettec.com

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Buy British, Buy Jet Tec.

Over and above the company’s intention to promote its British heritage, another key objective behind the rebrand was to support its channel customers to drive repeat sales

Jet Tec has introduced a number of new products into its range:

Kodak photo paper

The printer cartridge remanufacturer has expanded its product portfolio with a complementary range of Kodak photo paper.

This new addition takes its range to almost 800 products, and there are with further inkjet and toner products planned for launch in the coming months. The new range of Kodak photo paper complements the company’s inkjet cartridge offering and is available in a range of sizes as well as specialist media products including magnetic photo paper.



JetIntelligence toner cartridges

Jet Tec’s range now includes the remanufactured HP JetIntelligence range offering the latest in printing technology. First to launch are the HP CF360A and CF400A ranges with further additions to follow.

Through extensive R&D the Jet Tec remanufactured range ensures no loss of printer performance from the first page to the last. Offering a significant saving against the cost of the OEM, they are certain to be a key addition to any reseller’s range.



3D printing pens

Jet Tec has launched a range of new 3D printing pens and has the sole distribution rights in the UK.

The beginner-level 3D Styler pen is adaptable, colourful and easy to use. It uses adjustable temperatures and speeds to enable the user to create anything they wish and can use both of the market leading plastic filament types – ABS & PLA.

The 3D Styler Pen Pack includes two coloured filaments and there are additional packs containing three colours, 3.3 metres each, available in wither red, blue and yellow or green, purple and white.

Jet Tec is also offering the Polyes Q1, the world’s first cool resin light-curing 3D printing pen with patented technology. Marketed as the safest and most environmentally-friendly 3D creative printing pen on the market, this technology enables three-dimensional physical graphics or structures to be drawn.

Cordless and chargeable, this pen uses a light-sensitive liquid resin (as opposed to plastic) that is extruded through a micro motor, at a low safe heat. Consumers can finalise their designs by curing the creation with the LED.

Wireless and portable with an ergonomic design, it controls ink speed freely, includes a safety switch to prevent LED light contact with eyes and replaceable ink cartridges deliver a low usage cost and better customer experience.

The Polyes Q1 3D Pen Pack includes three refills and accessories include a five colour standard refill pack – red, yellow, blue, green and brown and a five colour premium refill pack featuring glow in the dark, temperature changing and transparent resins.



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Hiring an apprentice. Is it good for business?

As apprenticeships gain momentum across many business sectors, *PrintIT Reseller* asks this month's panel for insight into take-up within the channel

PITR: Do you currently employ apprentices or do you intend to in the near future?

Scott Walker, Head of Business Development for MPS, ZenOffice:

"Yes. We have literally just brought a new apprentice on board this September."

Mark Smyth, Operations Director,

Vision: "Vision has been participating in apprenticeship schemes for some years. We've had tremendous success in our client services centre, field service, technical help desk, finance and logistics. In most cases, we go on to offer full time employment, resulting in some excellent additions to the team!"

Colin Griffin, Managing Director,

Blackbox Solutions: "We have employed one apprentice, who spent 18 months training to become a technician with our engineering department. He has since completed his apprenticeship but unfortunately he then decided to pursue career options outside of the sector, which was a great shame as we would certainly have kept him on."

"We don't have any immediate plans to replace him as we are currently focussed on growing the business into several new sectors and training our existing staff members, but it's not something we've ruled out in the longer term."

Aimee Timmins, Financial Director,

Sharples Group: "We have recently enquired about taking on an apprentice and are in the process of interviewing candidates. Recruiting people that have particular skills needed to help move a business forward can be demanding. If we can find someone with enthusiasm and talent we can train them up for a specific role."

Julian Stafford, Managing Director,

Midshire Business Systems Northern Ltd: "The Midshire Group currently

employs a number of apprentices, working across sites including Stockport, West Bromwich and Sheffield. The number of apprentices employed is expected to increase as the business continues to grow.

"We have a strong apprentice programme and have been continually recruiting and training apprentices since 2011. Since that time, the Stockport office has employed eleven across areas such as business administration, IT and warehouse operations and is still looking to add to this number.

"Six of those apprentices have now completed their apprenticeships and are working full-time within the company. These youngsters have quickly progressed to administration executives, network and training specialists and even engineer roles.

"In December 2015, our Stockport office was awarded a Silver Working with Young People Award by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. The award recognises employers that have assisted with both the training and education of young people between the age of 14 and 19 in Stockport.

"To receive the award, employers must undertake internal activities such as employing apprentices and offering work experience placements, and external activities including hosting workshops, lessons or mock interviews with schools or colleges."

Chris Roll, Managing Director, RDT

Office Solutions Group: "RDT has had



Chris Roll,
RDT Office
Solutions Group

Aimee Timmins,
Sharples Group

an active policy to recruit apprentices in place for more than ten years. We are a firm believer in giving back to the local community, and providing employment opportunities is part of that commitment. Today, there are many exceptional schemes in place that support businesses employing through apprenticeships and if you have the infrastructure and means to mentor staff, apprentices provide an excellent source of talent that can be nurtured to grow within the business."

Beth Fairweather, Technical Training

Manager, Danwood: "Danwood absolutely supports apprenticeships and has been doing so for the past few years, we have seen it work very well for our business.

"In 2015, we took on ten service apprentices who completed and attained their Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3) IT Support and Helpdesk. Each one was then offered a permanent contract to become a trainee within the service area. We currently have three apprentices completing Level 3 and one completing Level 4, they will complete their training in October this year.

"We are very pleased to announce that in October we will have another seven apprentices start with the business completing their Level 3."

Continued...

Working with Samsung

PrintIT Reseller talks to Wes Mulligan, CEO of Danwood, about the company's working relationship with Samsung and how it has evolved over the last two years.

PrintIT Reseller (PITR): How are your customers' print and document needs changing and how does partnering with Samsung help you stand out from other suppliers?

Wes Mulligan (WM): Danwood operates in three different sales verticals: Public Sector; Corporate, for businesses that turnover more than £75 million; and Commercial for everything beneath that. We see different trends in each of these markets.

In Corporate, there is an increasing desire among customers to connect print with the rest of their technology; there is a desire to have common platforms and to homogenise so that all of an organisation's offices are broadly similar and run in the same way. We find that in this market, Samsung is a really good partner for us because it is able to bring in technologies from outside print, which tend to be of interest to other people in the target market – not just those who deal with print. Today, more and more customers want to talk to us about visual displays and tablets in a way that they wouldn't have done 18 months ago.

This is also true of the public sector, particularly education, which rates the Samsung offering very highly. They like Samsung's tablets and they like being able to connect to their printers through those devices. They find that students warm to that technology. It sounds a little bit

contradictory, but the public sector likes shiny new stuff; they like new ideas; they like innovation.

In schools and universities, we are seeing more and more decisions being made by a combination of IT teams and student union bodies. Student representatives now have a much bigger say; we have even had instances of students coming to tender meetings. I really welcome that because it focuses us on the value-add – if I am a student, what is it I am trying to get out of this technology and how can I use it in the best fashion?

In the Commercial marketplace, customers are still driven by two things: 1) knowing that they have got a good price; and 2) the assurance of good service. The public sector and bigger corporates expect to get good service – it's almost taken for granted. But in the SME marketplace, the quality of service varies depending on who you go to.

PITR: So, as well as helping you to engage with customers, the breadth of Samsung's range has enabled you to exploit new business opportunities?

WM: Yes, very much so. Visual displays is a relatively new area for us, but because we have such a good customer base we are already one of Samsung's biggest sellers of audio-visual equipment in the UK. Being



Wes Mulligan,
CEO, Danwood

able to provide customers with printers and visual displays is really good for us. It makes us more important to the customer, which improves retention rates. We have sold some tablets – if someone comes to us and is looking for a Samsung deal we will filter it through us – but I wouldn't classify ourselves as a tablet seller at this stage. But I definitely see that as an opportunity for the future.

PITR: How many years have you been partnering with Samsung and how has the relationship evolved in that period?

WM: We started with Samsung about 10 years ago, and we have accelerated our partnership significantly in the last two years by sharing information and holding quarterly business reviews, what we call our QBRs. These address a combination of day-to-day tactical issues and objectives that we have jointly set for the following 12 months. Sharing common objectives means that we are both pointing in the same direction. That simple framework has enabled us to grow our Samsung base significantly and develop relationships at every level of the organisation.

We also visit the Samsung headquarters in Korea on an annual basis to embed our relationship, to help make sure we are working to common goals and to ensure the Samsung supply chain and the Danwood supply chain work effectively together.

That's at the managerial level. In the last two years there has also been a step-change in the type and quality of product developed by Samsung, especially in relation to serviceability. At the end of

We visit the Samsung headquarters in Korea on an annual basis to embed our relationship, to help make sure we are working to common goals

The Danwood
showroom



the day we are a service business and anything that helps from a serviceability point of view encourages us to go out and sell that kit.

PITR: In the last few years Samsung has introduced a number of A3 machines. Has that make a big difference to you and do you see that as the key to future growth?

WM: The Samsung A3 product is a particularly good product. We really like it and have rolled out the largest A3 deal for Samsung in Europe this year. Our customers like the look of the product and they like the ease of access through the tablet and Smart UX Center. That's the primary driver for customers, both existing customers and those who want to switch to Samsung. It's that ease of interoperability.

A3 is where the future growth will be. Obviously the potential sale of Samsung to HP in 12 months' time is going to have an impact. I think it will help to create a very powerful OEM offering for HP/Samsung, because they will cover pretty much all aspects of the office arena with very good product. If they can combine the security heritage of HP with the innovation of Samsung, I think they could have some very exciting products indeed.

PITR: One example of Samsung innovation is the development of an app platform for its MFPs, which it sees as a real differentiator. Are you developing any apps for your customers?

WM: We are working with Samsung on some joint ideas at this stage. At the

If they can combine the security heritage of HP with the innovation of Samsung, I think they could have some very exciting products indeed

Easy remote resolution on Samsung devices saves Danwood the time and expense of sending out an engineer to fix a problem



moment, apps are a great talking point and a source of interest. In that respect, they are a bit like 3D printing. Everybody goes 'whoa!' when they look at a 3D printer, but trying to convert somebody from taking a look to making a purchasing decision is a slightly more elongated process. Right now, people like the idea of having an app capability. I don't think people make the decision to go down the Samsung route just because of the apps, but it helps build confidence about the 'future ability' of Samsung devices. It's having that flexibility that's important to customers, as opposed to the actual apps themselves.

PITR: Samsung has recently brought out some interesting end user apps, notably Dynamic Workflow, but arguably its servicing apps are even more useful.

WM: One of the biggest drivers we have in our business is to increase the level of remote resolution, to fix a problem on a machine in a call centre rather than having to send out an engineer. Of the five main

OEM brands that we have within our base, Samsung has the best remote resolution rates. We like that because it's a huge driver of customer satisfaction and a huge driver for our economic model. We put a lot of time and effort into getting remote resolution rates as high as we possibly can and Samsung comes top. It takes time to build up that capability and approach. And that's the benefit of having QBRs and visits to Korea, because we are able to tell Samsung more about the workings of a dealership, which are different to the workings of a direct sale business.

PITR: One of the challenges Samsung has had in the past has been penetrating the traditional copier dealer. Why do you think that has been the case and do you think that will change with growing sales of Samsung A3 MFPs and the launch of its new channel MPS programme?

WM: I can only speak about my own experience with Danwood, and Samsung has not found it difficult to engage and work with us and vice versa. If you have some organisational structure, the right individuals and are dedicated to maintaining communication and the flow of information and problem-solving between an OEM and a dealer, it works very well. If you don't have that infrastructure it can become difficult, because when dealing with any large organisation it is easy to get lost. I would disagree with the assertion in your question; our dealings with Samsung have been great – we agree objectives and deploy resources to make them happen.

To find out more about Samsung printers and new Samsung solutions for end users and resellers, including the ground-breaking Samsung Channel MPS Print+ programme, please visit www.samsung.com/uk/business/business-products/printers-multifunction/



...continued



Julian Stafford,
Midshire Business
Systems Northern
Ltd

PITR: The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) says that 92% of employers taking on apprentices noticed a more motivated workforce and 80% saw an increase in productivity in the workplace. What has been your experience?

Scott Walker: "I've employed four apprentices within the last five years. Each of those have gone on to do bigger and better things. If I can get an apprentice to the point that they've gained enough valuable experience to allow them to make their way into a role they truly want to do, then I've done my job as their mentor.

"Apprentices don't come on board with some of the bad habits we all pick up from working in different office environments. More than that, I find they are just so eager to learn new things.

"My current apprentice has been working with me for less than a week and she's already cleansed more information that the whole team has in the last six months...says it all really!"

Mark Smyth: "The apprentices we have experienced so far, have mostly been excellent, with the odd exception which you expect to some extent and would be the same if we were hiring fully experienced, skilled employees. They have a good work ethic and are keen to progress and further their careers, whilst maximising opportunities for both our organisation and personally, and it certainly rubs off on others in the workplace."

Colin Griffin: "Employing an apprentice certainly brought some benefits to Blackbox Solutions. It was particularly encouraging to see how our staff responded to the challenge of managing

Young people have a huge impact on our business, they are enthusiastic, eager to learn and have a lot of ideas to bring to the table

Mark Smyth, Vision



and mentoring a young trainee in the workplace, particularly as some of those involved had little prior experience of managing and delegating work to team members.

"Their efforts were rewarded, as the apprentice improved his grades and performance throughout his training. The members of staff involved rose to the challenge and extra responsibilities and I believe it was a great benefit for them.

"However, I wouldn't say that our productivity was improved by the presence of an apprentice and we had a few teething problems in the early months. I think the key issue is that apprentices come direct from school and in our experience it took a little time to inculcate them in the business world and for their maturity to catch up and match our expectations."

Aimee Timmins: "We are still very much in the early stages but a more motivated workforce and increased productivity is exactly what we are looking for and have discussed this as being a major benefit to taking on an apprentice."

Julian Stafford: "As a business we see huge potential in investing in young people. Our motto is hire the best, keep the best and develop our youngsters. We train them to the highest levels possible and develop them through the business in the direction they choose for themselves.

"Young people have a huge impact on our business, they are enthusiastic, eager to learn and have a lot of ideas to bring to the table, especially where technology is concerned. The youngsters we bring through are avid users of technology. They use the latest devices and apps all day every day and are at the forefront of what's

out there. Young people are the future of our business and we can learn a lot from them."

Chris Roll: "15 per cent of our existing workforce joined us as apprentices and we'll typically take between three to four new apprentices per annum. It's not easy to attribute productivity and motivation to the influx of young apprentices to the business, but there is certainly a noticeable link in the supportive culture within RDT and much of that stems from the fact we have employees that started as apprentices all across our business.

"Our experience has been very positive and we recruit on the basis that if the candidate has the right work ethic we can provide them with an opportunity to learn a little about the whole business before deciding together where they'd be best placed."

Beth Fairweather: "Yes, I would agree. When our apprentices start with the business they're assigned a mentor. During breaks from training they will go out with their mentor to shadow the work they are doing, which both the apprentice and mentor find to be rewarding.

"We have found all previous apprentices to be extremely motivated to learn new things and adapt very well to change. They integrate really well with our existing workforce and their willingness to support has a positive impact on all parties."

PITR: 83% of apprentice employers believe that they are investing in the future of their business. What are your views on developing apprenticeships to build key skills within your company?

Scott Walker: "Every company has an image of their perfect employee. An apprentice is the best way to mould that perfect employee. They're trained from scratch and carry out their tasks in the way we see as 'best practice'. I started my career as an apprentice and some of the best employees I've brought on board have been apprentices."

Mark Smyth: "The apprenticeship service is one of many ways Vision supports development and business growth, enabling us to add skills and resources in areas where they are needed most."

Colin Griffin: "At present we are focussed on growing our business into new

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Colin Griffin,
Blackbox Solutions

geographical areas and our apprenticeship programme is not a high priority. That said, we see a functional apprenticeship programme as an important component of our staff training and development in the longer term.

"I see apprenticeships as a credible alternative to university, particularly in a fast-paced industry like print and IT technology where hands-on training and experience are incredibly valuable. This industry moves so rapidly that bringing apprentices through who truly understand our business ethos and the sectors in which we operate will be crucial to building our company in the future."

Aimee Timmins: "Our view is that if we can start a young person straight from college we have a better chance of encouraging our culture into their working practice. Our intention is that our apprentice will receive training and support in every internal department of the business and cover holidays and absences. Their skills will develop over time, enabling us to fit them into a specific role in the future."

Julian Stafford: "To date, we have supported twenty five apprentices, seventeen of which are still employed with the company. One of the first apprentices has progressed very well, now working in his second year as a fully-fledged field engineer servicing photocopiers."

"Apprentices are incredibly important to Midshire's business growth. By training local apprentices to our standards they have the skills and knowledge needed for a successful career in the company."

Chris Roll: "Apprentices are fundamental to our business today and will continue to be so in the future. RDT has excellent

employee retention by any standards and this is primarily down to the fact that we develop staff across the whole of our business, which in turn builds loyalty and trust.

"We run an academy that provides staff with a programme of development based upon their chosen career path. Apprentices benefit significantly as they're able to gain accreditation across all the key business functions. This gives them valuable knowledge of our business that you wouldn't typically gain by employing within a specialised field such as sales or finance."

Beth Fairweather: "We recognise the industry is expanding to include more IT/Software solutions, which is why we implemented the apprenticeship scheme a couple of years ago. We decided to choose this particular path for our service apprentices so that we have the right people with the relevant skills to complement our existing teams at this time of change. We see this very much as an investment in our longer term future so that we maintain our position as market leader in our sectors."

"We have some members of staff from earlier versions of the scheme who have been with us for over 25 years; many of whom are in our service division."

PITR: How do you balance apprenticeships alongside investment in other areas of workforce training?

Scott Walker: "It's as simple as managing the diary correctly and planning ahead. I allocate half days where possible to review with my apprentice's assessor and ensure I'm allocating tasks to allow her to achieve the required modules in her qualification."

The time I've been spending on other tasks are now becoming tasks she carries out. This gives me the balance I need to focus on developing existing staff."

Mark Smyth: "We specifically identify areas of our business and roles that suit apprenticeships for key reasons such as business growth and demand, and future resource planning, especially in service and support where a continued increase in clients drives demand. The apprenticeship service provides a good method for future planning. As their skills develop, they add more value to our business and at that point they also feel more valued and their contribution is very recognisable."

Colin Griffin: "At present apprenticeships are less important to us than training our existing workforce. We continually develop our staff and several of our team are currently undergoing specialist training in fairly niche sectors, such as high volume production print, which will provide us with further opportunities for growth once they've qualified. This, in turn, will provide additional opportunities where we can offer apprenticeships, under the guidance of experienced managers and technicians who can really bring the best out of young people and shape them into valuable members of staff."

"We think that this strategic approach to training will bring us the most benefit in the long run, by expanding the knowledge of our senior team members and then providing training opportunities for the next generation of technicians."

Aimee Timmins: "We have a coaching culture and having an apprentice would encourage other members of staff that currently don't have the confidence to coach colleagues to feel comfortable possibly with a younger, inexperienced staff member to develop their own coaching skills."

Julian Stafford: "The Midshire Academy and our apprenticeship programme is just one small part of what we do to remain at the forefront of the industry and to provide opportunities for our staff to grow and develop within the company."

"We have an ongoing commitment to provide the very latest training on all manufacturers we use. Our teams are trained by the manufacturer trainers at the manufacturer's training centres."

"We believe this gives an unparalleled level of training without business interruptions. Regular team meetings

I see apprenticeships as a credible alternative to university, particularly in a fast-paced industry like print and IT technology where hands-on training and experience are incredibly valuable

continued...



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are conducted where training needs are addressed and courses booked, if ever the lead time on a course is too long, we will give the engineers training alongside a senior trained member of the team.

"We periodically have manufacturer training updates on the user features of the machines, which ensures everyone in the business is as knowledgeable as they can be on all devices. We have recently delivered a management training course and are about to undertake a customer service training programme for all employees."

Chris Roll: "From our perspective, it really isn't an investment that requires much consideration as apprentices have always proved to be a reliable ROI compared to other workforce training options. Direct costs are typically negligible, and providing you're allocating the necessary time and have the right processes in place to identify individuals that have characteristics that match the business profile, it becomes a simple decision."

Beth Fairweather: "We have our own purpose-built training facilities with dedicated trainers to support our existing employee training needs, which we are then able to extend to the apprenticeship framework. In 2016, we're aiming to provide over 5,000 training delegate days, which is more than ever before. The needs of developing our existing teams and those within the apprenticeship programme are primarily the same training needs, just phased differently based on experience levels."

PITR: In spring 2017 the way the government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. Larger employers will be required to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy, and those that are too small to pay it will have 90% of the costs of training paid for by the state. There have been concerns expressed that this may impose additional administrative red tape on smaller firms and discourage them from taking on apprentices at all. Will this change the way you view apprenticeships/prompt you to hire or stop hiring?

Scott Walker: "In my opinion, the only people raising concerns are those that don't see the true value of apprenticeships. I've heard stories of apprentices being employed as cheap labour to carry out the tasks others don't want to do.



Scott Walker,
ZenOffice

Financial feasibility would certainly be important, but we'd also need to consider whether the apprentice would bring additional value in other areas, such as their particular skill set, personality, aptitude, work ethic and so on.

"An apprentice is an investment for the future, an individual who will bring huge value to the business over the coming years, it's not an overnight fix. The costs (even to small businesses) are truly balanced by the value they bring from day one. Yes, you need to allocate more time to them in the early days, it'll take some time before they're confident and able enough to carry out the majority of required tasks, but when you get them to this point, their value speaks for themselves. Consider what most companies pay an apprentice (£7 to £8k PA), it's a great return on investment."

Mark Smyth: "I do hope we will be able to continue to use the service, however it needs to focus on giving young people an opportunity with good, sound commercial value to businesses and many organisations remain concerned about the new levy. We will focus on understanding the full extent of the changes and their financial impact."

Colin Griffin: "When considering taking on an apprentice, we'd need to consider the business case and whether the appointment would benefit the company. Financial feasibility would certainly be important, but we'd also need to consider whether the apprentice would bring additional value in other areas, such as their particular skill set, personality, aptitude, work ethic and so on.

"So, the change to the government funding wouldn't really affect our decision – we'd be more focussed on selecting the correct candidate who would be interested in developing their career with us once they've completed their apprenticeship."

Aimee Timmins: "It is our intention to use the current £1,000 contribution to motivate the apprentice. We have also made the decision to pay more than the minimum apprentice wage.

"The idea of creating a dedicated loyal workforce by initially taking on energetic young people far outweighs the costs of setting up an apprenticeship scheme. If a business trains an apprentice well, then in turn that young person will feel a certain loyalty to the company that trained them.

"The administration on small firms will not discourage Sharples from taking on apprentices. A well supported and trained apprentice that fails to meet our expectations is more likely to discourage us from looking into additional apprentices than the additional administrative red tape."

Julian Stafford: "Young people are a really important part of our business. I can't see these changes making a difference to what we do or how we do it.

"Working with and supporting young people through work experience, apprenticeships and through our academy, is one of the aspects of running a business I enjoy the most."

Chris Roll: "There are clearly pros and cons from the new scheme but we don't really have enough information yet to understand how it will impact our business. We have every intention to continue developing apprentices at RDT, as they have proved essential to nurturing new talent. It would take a significant increase in costs for us to reconsider apprenticeships in the future."

Beth Fairweather: "This will be a very big change, particularly for smaller businesses. Like all businesses, Danwood is conscious of costs. However, we also recognise the value the apprenticeship programme brings so it is a case of balancing the business needs against costs.

"This will be a key factor in determining how much we would expand the programme, but either way we are committed to supporting young people and giving them the tools to be able to enter the wider workplace while helping us deliver excellence to our customers."

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MFPs designed to help companies save resources

KYOCERA Document Solutions has launched ten new MFPs, eight of which have been freshly designed from the ground up

The latest additions to the TASKalfa range – five colour (2552ci/3252ci/4052ci/5052ci/6052ci) and five mono (the TASKalfa 3011i/3511i/4002i/5002i/6002i) devices, have print speeds ranging from 25 pages per minute (ppm) up to 60 ppm.

Two of the new MFPs, the TASKalfa 3011i and 3511i, have been designed to fulfil the needs of smaller organisations such as branch or satellite offices and small schools or institutes. These mono A3 MFPs offer the same user interface and security level as the TASKalfa 6052ci and 6002i series.

With the exception of the 30 and 35 ppm models which are a refresh of the company's existing products, the new range has been freshly designed, and according to Product Marketing Manager Trevor Maloney, incorporates a broad range of speeds and volumes as well as a number of advanced features tailored to a wide range of business needs.

KYOCERA's products are designed to enable end-users to digitise workflows in the simplest way. Each of the new devices is a flexible information sharing hub which incorporates a vast array of cutting-edge technologies. "All models have the same look and feel, they have the same chassis, offer the same functionality, image quality etc. which has advantages for both our partners and the end-users," Maloney said. "For dealers it speeds up the deployment process and reduces the amount of training required and for their customers, the user interface is consistent regardless of which device they walk up to," he added.

These A3 devices also have a much smaller footprint than earlier models, which saves space in the customer environment but more importantly lessens the environmental impact. "The new models are around 20 per cent smaller, this more compact design and lighter weight means we've achieved comparable savings across material usage, transport costs and ultimately CO2 emissions," Maloney said.

The A3 devices also have a much smaller footprint than earlier models, which saves space in the customer environment but more importantly lessens the environmental impact



High quality colour

Maloney maintains that one of the key advantages of the new models is the superb colour quality. "Our newly developed toner combines traditional toner with a chemical outer shell on each particle, which means that the colour quality is much better and is consistent throughout the range." The devices deliver 1,200 x 1,200 dpi print resolution, which is offered at full engine speed. The toner also has a lower melting point, meaning energy consumption is reduced.

For companies with even greater image quality needs, or particularly complex workflows, four of the five new colour MFPs offer an optional Fiery print controller. "These are also the first models with SRA3 capability," Maloney said. To fully utilise the machines' colour capabilities users can print full-bleed edge-to-edge A3, banner paper, tab divider sheets and paper of up to 300 gsm. "This functionality makes these devices attractive to the graphics arts sector, a new area of us," he added.

Consumables management

The new devices also include features to better manage maintenance and replacement of consumables.

The TASKalfa 6052ci and 6002i series feature a toner lock. "Many businesses change the toner before it's fully depleted," Maloney explained. "The new toner lock prevents this, a message flashes on the control panel to replace the cartridge only when it is 100 per cent empty. With this feature, our partners can rest assured that their customers are getting 100 per cent yield," he added.

And with KYOCERA fleet monitoring software, the required amount of toner is delivered when and where needed, without customers needing to call a service provider. Dealers will also save on onsite engineer time, maintenance will be arranged proactively, machine adjustments can be done remotely and consumable items can be replaced in minutes.

"Consumables can be easily replaced in about four minutes, as opposed to the twenty minutes it would have taken in the past," Maloney said.

Another innovative feature of the new A3 MFP line-up is the fact that it lets end-users use an expired black toner bottle as a waste container, reducing waste as well as the space needed to store supplies. This unique waste toner design earned the 2016 BLI Outstanding Achievement in Innovation award.

Maloney said that the new products are intended to solve a number of common business issues, most notably cutting the amount that organisations are losing on wasteful procedures. "When it comes to document management, money is wasted in several areas - printing is outsourced due to the limited capabilities of in-house printers and MFPs, toner supply is haphazard and inefficient due to not being managed properly and many separate single-function devices are used inefficiently due to document workflows not having been optimised," he concluded.

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Process management: clever investment returns millions

Jurgita Juškevičienė offers advice to organisations planning to invest in a document and process management system, based on her experience at DNB, where each euro invested in its system has produced a return of €57.

DNB, Norway's largest financial-services group, provides investment, banking, asset management and leasing services to private individuals and business clients in 19 countries.

Our remit in the Quality and Process Management Department is to oversee improvements to the efficiency of operational processes and to ensure high quality information management with minimal consumption of time and paper.

These goals are definitely not easy or quickly achievable, but the results are worth the effort – helping DNB to save thousands of euros and staff to spend less time managing documents and more time serving customers.

It is more than 10 years since we implemented a DocLogix document and process management system and in that time our investment has yielded a return on investment (ROI) of not hundreds but thousands of per cent.

So far, each euro invested in the system has produced a return of €57 from time saved on operational processes (automation and optimisation) and a reduction in the direct costs of printing and paper.

Below, I share some observations that I hope will encourage those who are considering acquiring a document and process management system to take their first steps.

1 Make clever investments and put your purchases to work

Investing in IT solutions that help simplify information and document management is a standard practice in most companies. However, without further actions, installing a solution is a dead end. You do not grow muscles by simply purchasing costly training equipment. Tangible benefits become visible when you make the system work at its optimal level by adapting it to the needs of your company and transferring

document and information management processes from paper to the system. This can be achieved only if people commit to it. Do not expect the system to break even straightaway: it will take a few years, but the return on investment will be higher if you can first identify the processes that consume the most time and paper, and only then integrate them into the system.

2 Use of the system: managed by one for the benefit of many

To improve processes must be the goal not just of one division or project but of everybody within an organisation. Making it part of an enterprise's global and strategic approach towards operations is the best way to involve staff. Appointing a person or division to take responsibility for these matters is essential for a successful outcome, because then everyone will know who to contact and whose duty it is to assess the benefits of any initiative.

3 An independently configured system means freedom of action

You will need the help of a specialist (or even an entire team) to make optimal use of the system. We have installed a platform with extensive opportunities for configuration, making us almost independent of the system manufacturer. All we require is occasional consultations to help us in the development of complex processes. The main purpose of all these changes is to establish a system that can 'think' in place of the user. Doing this presents a major challenge, but, speaking from my own experience, I can assure you that it is definitely achievable.

4 Start small, but don't stop there

Small steps are a perfect way to move forward. We started by automating several processes at a time, generally the least popular ones in the organisation. Once they were systematised, we were able to show clear benefits to users and win their trust, thus preparing ourselves for the next step. After processes are integrated into the system, your staff will quickly feel the benefits. The automated movement of information helps to develop trust among employees and make such practices a habit.



Jurgita Juškevičienė, Head of the Quality & Process Management Department, DNB Bank

5 Benefits are not emotions, but facts

If you wish to change the attitudes of staff, good intentions alone will not suffice. Instead, you need concrete facts to motivate employees to move forward and discover other possibilities that the system offers. To see improvements, you need to measure your situation prior to the document managed system implementation and process automation. For a simple example, consider the business trip documentation process we have integrated with our DocLogix system.

The tables to the left and above show that doing this has cut the process time from 8 hours to 6 minutes. To calculate the financial benefits, the net working time an employee saved during this process needs to be counted. In this case, the net working time was reduced from 16 to 6 minutes, representing a saving of 10 minutes of one employee's working time. As the business trip documentation process is repeated 3,800 times a year, this adds up to a total saving of 633 working hours, or 79 business days. Add in costs for paper and administration, and total savings come to €13,000 every year – from automating just one process. Clearly, the more processes you can automate, the greater the financial benefit.

The automated movement of information helps to develop trust among employees and make such practices a habit

Steps in the business-trip documentation process	Before	After
Application	2 mins	1 min
Transfer	2 h	–
Approval	2 mins	1 min
Transfer	2 h	–
Registration in staff department	2 mins	1 min
Archiving	2 mins	–
Expense substantiation	2 mins	1 min
Transfer	2 h	–
Management of accounting records	2 mins	2 mins
Archiving	2 mins	–
Search	2 h	2 mins
Total working time	16 mins	6 mins
Total duration	8 h	6 mins





A good rating is wonderful, but you need to value criticism and suggestions even more

Units per year: 3800	Working time saved	Paper saved	€ saved (working time, paper, archiving)
One unit	10 mins	2 sheets	€3.50
Total per year	38,000 mins 633 hours	7600 sheets	€13,000

6 Soft benefits are also important
There are other advantages that cannot be measured in euros or hours, such as employee satisfaction with a newly implemented, streamlined process. In this case, employees gave the business trip documentation process a rating of 5.7 out of 6 points. Employee surveys are the easiest method of evaluation, and we include three short questions in a survey offered two months after a new process is introduced. A good rating is wonderful, but you need to value criticism and suggestions even more, because they demonstrate the organisation's involvement, and this will help you grow.

7 Walk a consistent path to save a million
Advanced IT solutions, dynamic management, proactive employees, early integration of solutions, hours saved and consistent development are spokes on a wheel that can drive a million savings

and change an organisation from within. Innovative processes motivate people to continue developing and be proud of what they have achieved to date.

Jurgita Juškevičienė is Head of the Quality and Process Management Department at DNB Bank. This article was originally published on the DocLogix blog <http://www.doclogix.com/process-management-clever-investment-returns-millions/>.

DocLogix is a document and process management solution serving more than 300 clients in 13 countries. The DocLogix product portfolio includes a range of ready-to-use document and process management apps.

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Acquisitions drive growth for Direct-tec Group

Established in 2004 as a hardware-only reseller, Direct-tec has gone from strength to strength. It has three acquisitions under its belt, more in the pipeline and has recently opened a new purpose built service centre

Twelve years ago, three guys who had worked together in a number of dealerships for many years decided to break away and set up a business that specialised in the supply of printers and copiers. Sales Director Simon Riley who joined Direct-tec four years later from Sharp, had also worked with all three partners for a number of years. "They made me an offer I couldn't refuse," he said.

OEM service

From day one, the trio - John Maryam, Adrian Crucefix and Peter Stocker, made a strategic decision to leverage the service provision offered by its OEM partners as opposed to running its own team of engineers.

"The thinking behind this was quite clever," Riley said: "Who better to service and maintain the hardware than the manufacturer? From a customers' perspective that was a really compelling proposition."

Providing products that are supported by the manufacturers' own service technicians throughout the life of the contract enabled Direct-tec to offer clients a reliability guarantee. "From the outset we stated that if the machine supplied does not perform to the manufacturer's specification during the period of the contract then it will be replaced," Riley added.

Direct-tec was originally a Ricoh (Lanier) single-line dealer but early on the directors saw real value in adding a second line and signed up with Sharp Electronics. Today it partners with Sharp, UTAX and Toshiba. Business across the three OEMs is fairly evenly split. "UTAX gives us a competitive edge within the A4 sector in particular," Riley said, adding that he believes that Direct-tec is one of UTAX's largest resellers, whilst Sharp and Toshiba offer award winning A3 products.

The company initially rented office space at Biggin Hill Airport. "Our first office was above an aircraft hangar and I believe



Simon Riley,
Sales Director,
Direct-tec

it housed Bernie Ecclestone's private jet," Riley said. Four years in it purchased its current HQ in Westerham and at the same time closed its satellite office in Spitalfields London, moving all operations into one central base.

Double-digit growth

Direct-tec has extended its portfolio to include IT Support, looking after PCs and servers as well as post room facilities and has enjoyed sustained double-digit growth year on year. The business which employs 44 people has an annual turnover of £7 million and is targeting ten per cent growth this year.

"With the exception of last year when we invested heavily in a number of areas (and still achieved 8.4 per cent growth), we have recorded on average 20 per cent increase in turnover every year," Riley said. "This growth is both organic and through acquisition," he added.



Ian Mitchell,
Operations Director,
Direct-tec

Our new distribution centre has enabled us to considerably increase our stock holding of both spare parts and consumables

Acquisitions

In 2013, the company completed two significant acquisitions, merging SMS Digital Office Solutions and Genicom into the Group, moves designed to expand its coverage within the UK. Around the same time, further expansion and sustained business growth saw the firm open new premises in Salisbury.

More recently it acquired Yeovil-based Lynx Copiers which has also been incorporated into the Salisbury office.

Lynx Copiers worked in close consultation with Direct-tec for a number of months, exploring how they could enhance the products it offers and help maximise savings by combining purchasing power and passing savings onto its customers.

The merger will see Lynx Copiers' customers gain access to products from all three OEM partners as well as the backing of a larger service team to support their engineers during busy periods and holidays.

In-house service

One of the biggest step changes to come about on the back of its acquisitions was the decision to set-up an in-house service operation. "Around six months ago, we decided to bring service in-house," Operations Director, Ian Mitchell explained. The company now employs 15 service engineers. "It was a tactical move designed to give us more control and enable us to offer a bespoke set of services to MPS customers," he added.

The company opened its new purpose built service centre in May. The building houses its customer care team who handle all customer requests for repairs and consumable replenishment across the UK.

"Our investment in both infrastructure and people [Direct-tec added 15 new members of staff to the existing team] - was substantial," Mitchell said, adding that the new service centre will provide an even better level of service to customers as well as providing spare capacity to cope with its ever expanding customer base.

"In addition," he added. "Our new distribution centre has enabled us to considerably increase our stock holding of both spare parts and consumables. Added to that we have improved the cut off times

for orders as well as benefitting from faster delivery times and improved tracking facilities."

Another advantage is that it makes them more attractive to businesses looking to sell. "We are in negotiations with a number of organisations," Mitchell said. "And what we're finding is that now we have an in-house service operation, they are more open to engaging with us as we'd look to keep their engineers on board following an acquisition."

Direct-tec has also unveiled a new online portal for customers to securely log service and supplies requests. "We worked closely with our software partners over the last few months, testing and refining the facility for our customers to log requests directly into our service management system," Mitchell said.

"We believe that this is an industry first which enables our customers to generate a service request with all the details we need to dispatch a service engineer or select the exact supplies required against their specific equipment," he added.

Charity support

The firm selected the British Heart Foundation as its preferred charity. It promotes the initiative on its website and social media channels. Direct-tec conducts an annual customer survey and for every customer that completes a survey it makes a donation to the charity.

Staff are also proactive in terms of supporting charities close to their heart. Members of the admin team recently raised £1,500 for Parkinson's Trust. Laura Chapman and Ellie Cudmore completed



Adrian Crucefix (middle) and John Maryam (right) pictured with UTAX MD Shaun Wilkinson

a Tough Mudder challenge to show their support to Steve Kingston (Laura's dad) who suffers from Parkinson's. Direct-tec matched the funds raised.

And the firm has also sponsored the Surrey FC Senior Cup for the past two seasons.

Business is good, according to Riley, who says that the firm is very much looking forward to another strong year. "As we have grown, so has our buying power. We have hardware and service pricing that is enabling us to win business in a number of competitive market places, including education, healthcare, charity and commercial sectors."

Customer service is at the core of the Group and its customer promise is to deliver tangible efficiency gains across print, IT and telecoms through its range of managed services. "The customer benefits extends beyond simply achieving cost savings," Riley said in conclusion.

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Turning a blank screen into a revenue opportunity

PrintIT Reseller spoke to Nigel Morris, Marketing Director at Beta Distribution about the company's new digital content solutions business and the revenue potential for resellers



Beta Digital Media Solutions is a newly created business that is complementary to the firm's traditional offering. Headed up by Joel Chimoides, it's designed to help dealers capitalise on the accelerating convergence of AV and IT and to provide the channel with an opportunity to get stickier with customers by offering an additional value-add solution.

Beta Digital Media Solutions has been built in a way that suits its channel customers, providing them with a one-stop-shop, a single source through which they can access solutions from a number of different vendors, (Beta has secured two direct distribution agreements with Philips and Signage live), as well as experts who will assess customers' requirements, create the content, install and network

the screens, roll out the deployment and manage ongoing content changes on the dealers' behalf.

"Supplying digital signage content packages is a service oriented business and dealers operating in this space need additional support and that's what we are geared up to provide," Morris said.

Beta DMS will continue to sell the range of AV products that has been part of Beta's business for many years. The addition of the comprehensive range of services will provide a compelling proposition. "For dealers, this is an easy sell which provides them with a recurrent revenue stream," Morris said. "They simply have to find the opportunity and we will do the rest."

Every business regardless of size has something they want to say to customers, visitors or staff. "If you have a customer with a poster on the wall, then ask the question, why are they not communicating that information on a screen, which will also give them the flexibility to change the messaging as often as they wish," Morris said. "Come and talk to us and we will take it from there."

Recognising that resellers are naturally protective of their customer base and don't readily share customer data outside of their own organisations, Morris pointed out that Beta is a trusted partner. "We don't have a direct sales arm, we are a strictly trade only distributor. Three-quarters of the deliveries we make are direct to our customers' customers, which is quite a staggering statistic and one which I believe speaks volumes about the levels of trust we have engendered with our reseller customers."

Importantly the cost of entry for end-users is ultra-low, the screens and content are provided on a lease, with a monthly fee



If you have a customer with a poster on the wall, why are they not communicating that information on a screen, which will also give them the flexibility to change the messaging as often as they wish



Nigel Morris,
Marketing Director,
Beta Distribution

payable. "It's an easy entry for the reseller and an easy decision for the end-user to make, they can be up and running for an outlay of tens of pounds as opposed to thousands of pounds," he said, adding: "How many times have you walked into a building and seen a screen that's blank or says 'no network connection'? That's a sales opportunity."

For dealers already used to selling solutions and MPS, this works in a similar way and generates a recurring monthly revenue. The subscription packages are comprehensive, simple to sell and offer significant margin opportunity.

Beta DMS will conduct a customer survey to determine their requirements and revert back to the dealer to say how much it will cost including one content refresh per month. "It's as easy as that," Morris said. "And importantly if customers require further content refreshes we will do those at a competitive rate, presenting an even greater margin opportunity."

According to Morris, the crux of this is that a blank screen has many possibilities. Global Market Insights reported that content management forms a crucial part of the system, which allows end-users to control what is displayed on their screens. "This proves the point that simply supplying the screen isn't enough, providing the content is also key. Beta Digital Media Solutions has a comprehensive content service which turns your customers' blank screens into dynamic engaging displays, it's too good an opportunity to pass on," he said in conclusion.

www.betadms.com

Spicers targeting £10m revenue with MPS

MPS is no longer the exclusive domain of the print channel, wholesaler Spicers is the latest to report successes within its recently launched Xerox partnered MPS service

As MPS has continued to gain traction over the years with more and more businesses wanting to access the cost and efficiency gains a fully managed print service delivers, the number of providers and the scale of vendors' offers has continued to rise.

One of the biggest negative impacts on traditional OP resellers of the rise and rise of MPS deployments has been on printer and particularly EOS sales.

This trend has seen a number of wholesalers, dealer buying groups and indeed independent resellers take a leap of faith and introduce MPS as part of their offer, moves that acknowledge the reality that dealers that don't take action could find themselves losing clients to competitors that can offer a more complete solution.

Channel MPS

At the end of last year, Integra, the UK's largest dealer buying group teamed up with ISN Partners to develop a tailor-made printer control and management solution designed for office supplies organisations, IT services providers and small dealers. The service, which provides a simple entry-point to MPS and which is open to all members, is delivered in collaboration with Centrex Services.

At Green Light in January, VOW reported that it has been right-sizing and operationalising its MPS category for the channel to support sustainable growth. The wholesaler is building a robust operational and commercial platform to offer MPS through its direct and wholesale channels and also increased the size of its business development team to further maximise the opportunity for conversion.

VOW's MPS methodology is designed to provide resellers with a seamless and professional approach to cross- and up-selling and by bridging the experience



gap, help them to win MPS opportunities. Essentially the wholesale model should provide dealers with an uncomplicated way to move into the MPS market, increase revenue streams, fend off transactional competition and achieve longer term security.

As part of its strategy to transform how its customers manage non-core expenditure, independent reseller Anglo Office established a comprehensive supply chain which saw it strategically partner with a number of specialists in each category.

MPS is one of those areas. The company launched AngloTech, a joint venture with TechnoCopy, a Canon, Ricoh and Olivetti reseller to deliver MPS. Managing Director Gary Naphtali said that when delivering true MPS, it's important to have credibility and strong relationships with OEMs as well as the ability to deliver a service agreement. In an earlier interview with P1TR he said: "You could potentially spend more money getting it off the ground than you would make a return, it would certainly take a lot longer. TechnoCopy has a ready-made prospect and client base and team of sales people they would have had to fund themselves, so it's a win-win."

For Anglo Office, MPS deals secured in the first six months generated a quarter of a million pounds in sales. Importantly, the dealer owns the service contracts, providing a recurrent revenue stream

which delivers a healthier net profit than it could achieve by simply selling the individual components.

Spicers MPS

Recognising both the challenges that its dealers face in delivering an MPS solution and the value that lies in the ability to offer their customers a one-stop service that bundles traditional transactional products such as toners, with service, spare parts and consultancy services in one single contract; just over three years ago, Spicers launched Sprintwise MPS.

The wholesaler appointed MPS provider Balreed (now Apogee) as its partner to deliver MPS services to end-users on behalf of Spicers' resellers. Under the terms of the agreement, the reseller received an introductory fee and margin share and once the system was set up, Balreed (Apogee) managed the contract.

According to Spicers MPS Operations Director Guy Church, one of the reasons that prompted them to launch an alternative MPS offer for Brilliant Partners was the fact that its resellers weren't benefitting from an ongoing revenue stream with this offer.

"The legacy programme is still in place and it's an arrangement that suits some of our partners," he explained. "However what we wanted to do was provide an alternative that would enable our resellers to retain the customer relationship and see a recognised revenue. Whilst they do receive a percentage kickback under

What we wanted to do was provide an alternative that would enable our resellers to retain the customer relationship and see a recognised revenue

Continued...

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...continued

the Sprintwise offer, it's not the same as achieving the total income as if they were selling a product or service direct."

About 18 months ago the wholesaler conducted an independent review of the market and looked at a number of options to determine the best route for forming a partnership with a Tier 1 manufacturer. This led to them entering into a relationship with Xerox to offer managed print services, a move that was announced in January this year.

Xerox Partner Print Services

Xerox Partner Print Services (XPPS) is central to Xerox's channel MPS initiative, it offers a range of standardised components to support a multi-vendor environment such as assessment and optimisation, device discovery and monitoring, sales contract management, business intelligence reporting, service management and delivery and a customer service portal.

"With Xerox as a partner, we were able to launch a comprehensive offer from the full product range through to access to a dedicated call centre, helpdesk and over 670 engineers based nationwide," Church said.

Spicers has a team of dedicated MPS sales executives whose job it is to help its Brilliant Partners to maximise the potential of the MPS market. Dealers know that they have to do more to add value but for non-print specialists, MPS is still a novel idea and selling managed print services can pose a number of challenges.

"Partners can come to us and tap into our knowledge, support and intellect. We will work together, conduct a joint customer visit and put together a proposal," he added. The MPS sales cycle is longer and more in-depth than a transactional sale – it's typically a four-stage process: assess, design, implement and manage that is much more consultative-led than channel vendors are used to.

Spicers MPS specialists will support across all four stages, Xerox has the tools to automate print management, including troubleshooting and repair, supplies tracking and ordering and usage monitoring. It also manages the service and helpdesk functions on behalf of resellers, meaning that partners don't have to invest or upskill.

"What is important," Church said. "Is that the contract is between reseller

and client which means that the reseller recognises the associated ongoing contracted service revenues, that are secured and can be forecasted in the years to follow, for the life of the contract."

Early success

Spicers launched the new service to its Brilliant Partners in April. "Of the 165 partners we have, around 25 per cent came back to us to say they wanted to opt in - that's a pretty good take-up," Church commented.

The wholesaler has already seen significant success. "To date we've closed received revenues of £200k," Church said, adding that there is also a strong pipeline of opportunities. "The daily growing pipeline of opportunities is currently around £2 million, which is exactly as we envisaged the demand to be for such services in a shrinking EOS market place," he added.

Church attributes the early success to the fact that its resellers are pitching the service to 'warm' contacts. "It's not a cold call sales approach. It's not really new business as the resellers already have the customer relationships and that's where the value is and why we see this as being a very successful venture."

Spicers is targeting revenues of £10 million within the next two to three years. Church said: "We very much see this as a powerful tool to support client retention. What's great about it is that our resellers will potentially be able to offer an even better level of service that a traditional MPS specialist can, they typically have contact with their customers on a weekly basis, the touch points are far more frequent within the OP industry where the majority of sales are transactional."

To support the service, Spicers has just launched a reseller's guide to Managed Print, which outlines the importance an MPS solution could play in building a business revenues. The guide also demonstrates how the Spicers MPS service is a true end-to-end solution, backed by a full suite of support materials and guided by a team of dedicated sales professionals.

The wholesaler will also be promoting the programme to Brilliant Partners at a series of event scheduled to take place in November where it will also showcase a number of other initiatives due for launch later in the year. The three regional Brilliant Partner events will take place at its sites in the North, Midlands and South of England.

www.integra-business.co.uk
www.voweurope.com
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Guy Church,
MPS Operations
Director,
Spicers

What's great about it is that our resellers will potentially be able to offer an even better level of service that a traditional MPS specialist can

Information at your fingertips

Spicers has also implemented upgrades to all of its online portals and websites to improve the customer experience.

The new www.spicers.co.uk site better portrays the wholesaler and all of the solutions on offer, helping its established customer base to look at new ways to drive their business forward. Marketing Director Rebecca Stallard said: "We've seen a 50% increase in hits to the site since launch so it's created some extra interest."

Additional investment has also been spent developing extra functionality in the business' online order portal SpicerVision and product information website www.officerange.com. Launching under a new refreshed design, the site will incorporate better product navigation through improved attribute filtering and has been developed to be more responsive for users viewing on tablets or smartphones.

Having embarked on a journey of an extended range of supplies for broader business needs through its Limitless range, Spicers has also developed the site to enable search within this niche range of products, making it the ideal Special service for customers who demand more today than just regular office and workplace supplies.

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MPS is more than just Device Management



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UTAX celebrates success with partners

UTAX hosted over 100 partners at its annual partner conference which took place on September 13 at Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire

Shaun Wilkinson, now in his 10th year as Managing Director, opened the conference by thanking delegates for continuing to support the company.

As *PITR* reported in an earlier issue, UTAX recorded a turnover of just over £15 million in the financial year ending March 2016, representing growth of over 10 per cent for the sixth consecutive year. Direct Services which encompasses service, installation and solutions support, continues to go from strength to strength and now accounts for approximately 25 per cent of UTAX's total UK business.

Wilkinson said: "Our numbers in all areas of the business continue to outgrow the market and this growth can only be achieved with the continued support and hard work of all our partners, and I sincerely thank you all for your immense contribution to our success."

During his address, he highlighted some of the key findings from Quocirca's latest report on the state of the MPS market in the UK and Ireland.

Commenting on the survey results, he said: "These figures show that 30 per cent of the respondents are still looking for cost savings, while 70 per cent have seen the benefits of MPS and are now looking to consolidate or increase their spend. It shows that although saving costs is one of the three biggest drivers in deciding on an MPS partner it's also about getting the right return on investment combined with predictability of cost and document and printer security.

"Customers want to single source, and put all of their costs under one central contract to reduce the administrative and IT burden," he added.

88 per cent of those polled believe that MPS is important to digital transformation. "They recognise that an MFP is not just a print engine, but with the right software and solutions expertise, it becomes an integral part of their business," Wilkinson continued, adding that with 22 per cent thinking they are fully leveraging the functionality of their existing deployments: "There are massive opportunities for us to engage with our customers and by selling the right advice and solution, we can



become an integral part of their business solution."

In summary, he acknowledged that price is, and will remain very important to customers, but in his opinion the biggest thing they are looking for is a supplier with the flexibility, expertise and reputation to really make a positive impact on their business. "They want suppliers who can identify and solve real-life business issues," he said.

Pointing to the fact that some manufacturers are in the process of splitting their services and hardware businesses into separate entities, he argued that by looking at the evidence from the Quocirca analysis, this is exactly what customers do not want to see happening. "I believe this creates great opportunities for those suppliers who can offer their customers a complete one stop shop solution," he said.

Market analysis

Using research supplied by IDC, Steve Lucas, from the product marketing team, presented the latest market data and competitor analysis of the UK market over the last four years, to the end of the



Sake Ceremony

Customers want to single source, and put all of their costs under one central contract to reduce the administrative and IT burden



company's 2016 fiscal year.

Lucas reported that over the last four years, the total size of the market has remained the same, with total unit sales set at just under half a million units. "There has been a steady increase in both A3 and A4 colour MFP units, although colour A4 printers have remained static, the colour A4 MFP market has almost doubled over the four-year period," he said.

He referenced the fact that UTAX has made headway in Ireland. Five years ago, the company didn't have a reported market share for the data analysts to comment on, and it is now ranked number four in the whole of Ireland based on total volume of unit sales, Lucas attributed this success to the incredible work of its small number of committed Irish dealers.

John Cahill, Managing Director, EMS Copiers, Dublin, winner of 1,000 Club, Solutions Club and Partner of the Year awards said: "Our success is really down to the fact that we have a very good working relationship with UTAX, it's a real partnership and we've managed to get the results between us. The sector is huge in Ireland, very competitive and price sensitive and we have to find the edge. That's where UTAX come in, they are quick to respond and help us get the business. Our UTAX sales have grown seven-fold in the last five years. We're also delighted to see the launch of more solutions, it's just what we need as every sale involves a solution now."

"As you can see the market landscape is changing. Colour is becoming the norm and a clear shift towards MFPs means single function devices are less important," Lucas continued. "With the introduction of new product concepts such as our A4 console devices (the 300, 350 and 400ci) the market opens up further. Previous installations, based on volume and copy cost, but not paper size, are no longer bound to offering A3 devices. This broadening of the market, alongside the increase in colour unit sales we expect to see continuing well into the next financial year and beyond offers you, our partners, more potential than ever."

In conclusion, Lucas said that combining hardware and software in a more managed print approach, which

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Shaun Wilkinson,
MD, UTAX

is no longer just about demonstrating cost savings but driving business process efficiency, will become a key factor in the continuing development of the office equipment industry.

New products

UTAX announced a number of new product launches at the conference. First up was the introduction of its new Vertical Market Solutions Packs, verticals covered include health, legal, education and civil engineering, which it has designed to give specific end-users affordable, complementary software solutions that work alongside their hardware and professional services.

Solutions Manager Brian Young said that UTAX is uniquely placed to be at the heart of the issues, pulling together both hardware and software, enabling its partners to offer anything from a simple, time saving application on one MFP, to a large MPS installation across multiple sites and devices.

"We have specifically designed an innovative way of approaching the market to ascertain their requirements, identify areas that they may not have previously considered and jointly devise a sustainable, holistic approach to software solutions," he said.

UTAX also unveiled a new range of five mid to large volume colour A3 MFPs which feature a number of improvements including newly developed toner offering improved colour and increased print resolution, upgraded paper handling options including SRA3 and 300gsm direct from cassettes, reduced footprint for device and options, improved energy credentials and increased functionalities including 9-inch touch panel, 320GB hard disk and direct Wi-Fi.

After the business sessions, partners were treated to an entertaining demonstration by golf trick show artist, Rob Brown. In keeping with this year's marketing theme, "First Past the Post", the dinner that followed included a race night and horse racing simulators with guests raising £345 for the blood cancer charity, Bloodwise, in memory of UTAX's friend and colleague, Tracy Lawrance. The following morning, partners enjoyed a round of golf or a clay pigeon shooting experience.

www.utaxuk.co.uk



Masafumi Yoda,
President,
TA Triumph-Adler



Heythorp Park



Justin Evans &
Adrian Crucifix,
Direct-tec



UTAX Product
Manager,
Steve Lucas
discussing new
A3 range with
Fergus Moore of
Copymoore

UTAX Partner Awards

The Annual UTAX Partner Awards were presented by Wilkinson and Masafumi Yoda, President of parent company, TA Triumph-Adler GmbH. The awards were made for sales achievements for the last financial year – 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

100 Club (100 or more devices FY2016)
Simple Digital Solutions Ltd
Midrepro Ltd



100 Club

150 Club (150 or more devices FY2016)
Office Friends Systems Ltd
A-Stat Office Technology Ltd
Copymark (Sales) Limited
ABC Digital Solutions Ltd
AFP Digital Limited



150 Club

250 Club (250 or more devices FY2016)
Orchard Business Systems Ltd
Direct-tec UK Ltd
Document Data Solutions Ltd



250 Club

"With the support of the sales and service team at UTAX we are seeing our business grow year on year and are delighted to be ranked in this year's 250 Club. UTAX really look after us and our customers and we're looking forward to introducing the new range of A3 MFPs and the new solutions packs. We're aiming for the 500 Club next year!"

Carl Taylor, Orchard Business Systems Ltd



750 Club

750 Club (750 or more devices FY2016)
Copymoore Limited



1000 Club

1,000 Club (1,000 or more devices FY2016)
EMS Copier (Services) Ltd

Partner of the Year
EMS Copier (Services) Ltd

Solutions Club (FY2016)
Document Data Solutions Ltd
EMS Copier (Services) Ltd
Inplant Print Supplies Ltd



Solutions Club

Solutions Partner of the Year (Highest Sales FY2016)
Document Data Solutions Ltd

The company also introduced a number of new award categories this year. Exsel Group was named New Partner of the Year, Green Office Technologies Ltd scooped the award for Highest Growth 2016, and the Flame Award winner (in recognition of a partner which has won a single customer or order of significant value) was Gemini Office Solutions Ltd.



Highest Growth 2016

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The video is produced in conjunction with you and the final edited version will be approximately 5 minutes long. You will have editorial sign off before it goes live on our websites and also get a copy to use for your own marketing activities.

We are limiting this to a maximum of 10 suppliers on a first-come, first-served, basis.

The cost covers all the entire production process and will be filmed in early to mid December. The video will go live in January 2017 and will be available on our platforms for the entire year.

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- Given to clients for their marketing activities
- Delivered across our social media platforms for maximum reach
- Promoted via html e-shots to our extensive database of resellers
- Transcribed so information can be used in our January 2017, *Print.IT Reseller* and *Print.IT* magazines predictions sections



Some of our 2016 videos

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Rod Tonna-Barthet,
CEO, Annodata



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Where do you see the next big opportunity?

We've seen massive growth from the cloud over the past 12 months and I strongly believe that the trajectory will continue over the next 12-18 months, as clients see the huge benefits that the cloud has to offer.

However, I think that the biggest opportunity comes from the amount of organisations that are following a 'many to few' vendor strategy. Organisations are rationalising the amount of suppliers they have and are focusing on a smaller amount of companies who can provide multiple services. The opportunity for us, is to ensure we can meet the complex needs of our clients by offering a broad range of network related services.



What would make your day job easier?

All businesses thrive on the skills and talent of their employees so the more people like this you have in a company, the easier the day job becomes.

What's the best bit of business advice you've been given?

Keep it simple and demonstrate integrity in everything you do.

If you had had a crystal ball, would you have done anything differently?

It would definitely be to start our strategy three years earlier.

Describe your most embarrassing moment.

Minutes before I was due to present to several hundred people at a large industry conference, someone spilt a (hot!) cup of coffee over my trousers.



What was your first job?

Working in the handyman department of Bentalls department store in Kingston.

What would be your dream job?

I can honestly say that I have my dream job. It's a huge privilege to lead such a fast moving IT services company with almost 400 dedicated and talented individuals. If we're talking about outside of the industry, then being the Golf Pro at Augusta wouldn't be a bad job or perhaps a ski instructor in Whistler in the winter, followed by scuba diving instructor in the Bahamas in the summer!



Money's not an issue, what's your perfect car ... and where would you like to drive it?

1996 Jaguar E-Type convertible down Route 66.

Fine dining and good wine, or curry and a pint?

Curry and a good wine!

Favourite holiday destination.

The New Forest with my family and dog, Sidney.

How do you like to spend your spare time?

Time with my wife and two children is very important to me so when I'm not with them, I love getting onto the golf course and the ski slopes. I'm also currently training for a half-marathon so you'll find me pounding the streets near my home most evenings now.



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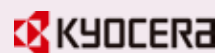
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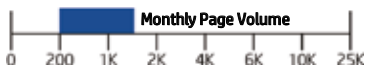
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HP's fastest printing technology



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