



VIRTUAL PANEL SERIES: NEW SOLUTIONS TO DIVERSIFY YOUR DEALERSHIP

By Scott Cullen
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Vendors make their elevator pitch.

Clockwise, Lauren Simmen, Will Meggers, Brian Balow, Ben Parker, Bob Madaio, Mina Lee, and Jessca Bernardo

There is a wide array of opportunities to diversify your dealership beyond traditional office copy and print. New diversification opportunities are emerging every year. Some are related to existing products, services, and solutions, and others are standalone diversification opportunities.

Rather than ask our panel a half dozen questions about diversifying, this time we asked them a single question.

We challenged six vendors to offer their most persuasive, concise pitch as if they were in an elevator with a prospective dealer client. We asked them to make their case for a product that is not a traditional office imaging device and emphasize why it is an excellent diversification opportunity. The goal: to get a follow-up meeting or call agreed to before the imagined elevator door opens.

We gave our participants a long leash in that we did not quibble should they turn their pitch into an advertisement for one of their products. Any dealer who has ever sat through a sponsored segment at an industry event or peer group meeting understands that this presents a challenge for vendors who are deeply passionate about their products. Therefore, we've allowed them to craft a pitch for a longer than usual elevator ride and not the standard thirty seconds or so.

Going up?

AMETEK's Power Quality Solutions

We all know that the printing industry has been changing for some time. COVID-19 accelerated some of that change over the last year, and many dealers like yourself are looking to diversify your businesses and stay ahead of the game. Looking for new solutions in your existing business is a great step. With ESP, we have a full portfolio of power quality solutions, specifically power conditioning and battery backup devices for every type of product. With many dealers expanding their print production offerings, coupling them with a battery backup device will provide continuous clean power, no matter what happens on the grid. This means that controllers stay up and running until a cancel job can be done properly, reducing downtime and increasing customer productivity. Power anomalies affect all machines. ESP can partner with you to determine the best solution for any product. – *Lauren Simmen, director, marketing, AMETEK Power Quality Solutions*

GreatAmerica's HaaR (Hardware-as-a-Rental) Solution

Office technology sellers say the best cure for declining print volume has been to diversify into a services model and become a "total technology provider." Those adopting this approach have become essential to their clients who have kept their businesses up and running in a new work-from-home (WFH) world.

The WFH paradigm has placed high demand on technologies that support efficient and secure business operations among a geographically scattered workforce. Sales of Managed IT Services and ancillary offerings such as security, VoIP, and workflow solutions have picked up considerably, with financing solutions to acquire these technologies matching the pace.

The GreatAmerica HaaR solution (Hardware-as-a-Rental) has helped sellers by packaging their multi-part solutions into a no-hassle transaction that bundles hardware, software, installation, and recurring service charges all on one invoice to the customer.

On eligible transactions, GreatAmerica offers a prefund option that matches a typical cash sales process, thereby accelerating the path to closure. Prefund refers to GreatAmerica funding a solution provider for a transaction before the end-user has confirmed its receipt, evaluation, and acceptance of all the equipment under an agreement. It generally requires a special prefund agreement between GreatAmerica and either the customer or the end-user. The speed of the prefund path can limit the open window for competitors between signature and implementation and/or assist the decision-maker in making a purchase similar to how they would if they had available cash.

The technology buyer who uses a HaaR agreement has the option to upgrade at the end of the stated term, which is particularly beneficial when the solution provider's managed services rely on clients having updated equipment. HaaR also simplifies what can be a confusing constellation of services into one monthly invoice that includes a monthly payment for the equipment rental and professional services, as well as any recurring fees for monthly managed services. HaaR provides a consistent income for solution providers, while offering the convenience of a budgeted monthly payment for end users.

We see HaaR usage increasing exponentially in the coming months as the economy reopens and pent up demand for technology from delayed decision-making is released. *Wil Meggers, vice president and managing director, sales, Office Equipment Group, GreatAmerica Financial Services Corp.*

Ricoh USA's Graphic Arts Wide-Format Devices

This is a great time for dealers to reevaluate how they go to market. When considering diversifying product, solutions or services offerings, dealers need a clear plan in place that both complements existing infrastructure and supplements the recurring revenue and profit streams that are associated with their core imaging businesses. In the production portfolio, one of the core adjacencies to imaging and production is the Graphic Arts Wide Format segment targeted at the sign and graphics market. This market is expected to grow double digits over the next five years. By introducing adjacent solutions to the imaging core, dealers can leverage their existing imaging and production infrastructure to cross and up sell, while simultaneously gaining entry into new markets with new customers and new lines of business. It is also a good time for dealers to reevaluate some of the software and professional services they could be charging for, and Ricoh is in a unique position to help them identify opportunities to add incremental value to their current or new production customer base.

Ricoh has a long history in wide format and inkjet technology-related segments and holds some very key proprietary technologies that give us a competitive advantage and an ease of execution working directly alongside dealers to help them reach their business goals. Having highly competent, in-house resources working hand-in-hand with dealers allows us to provide not only the products but also to assist with both pre- and post-sales, which helps dealers keep costs down while focusing on their priorities and maximizing both the top and bottom line.

We also provide training at all levels for both front and back office, whether a dealer needs a robust on-ramping program to get their sales organization up to speed and baseline certified on products or more advanced training and services utilizing our wide format-specific resources that have 20-plus years' experience in this segment. This training and in-house expertise—when combined with the full backing of Ricoh's dedicated dealer subject matter experts—is at the immediate disposal of our dealers and offers a solid on-ramp into new categories. – *Brian Balow, national vice president, sales & services, Ricoh USA*

Rochester Software Associates' (RSA's) WebCRD Web to Print Solution

As a dealer that already offers production print, the reasons to diversify to offer workflow software like RSA's WebCRD Web to print software are compelling. Even more so during the pandemic.

COVID has accelerated the trend toward digital printing, online print submission, and remote work. In recent Keypoint Intelligence research, 49% of respondents said they would definitely increase the use of online ordering to purchase printed materials. In-plant and corporate print centers have been less impacted by the pandemic than commercial printers, especially in regulated industries (healthcare, insurance) and government production print operations. RSA's WebCRD Web to Print is the only solution designed to meet the unique needs of in-plant customers.

How can WebCRD help you increase revenue and profit? By delivering a proven solution that meets customer needs and full end-to-end workflow. WebCRD is Web to Print, production management, and VDP all in one solution. It is more than a single point solution, and RSA offers other production workflow products and integrations with internal and external systems like user authentication and shipping.

What this means for your dealership is upsell opportunities with additional modules, other RSA solutions, and professional services like VDP template development on top of annual software maintenance. WebCRD customers have a high retention rate; Web to Print is integral to a shop's production. Having a "sticky" customer is important when new printers are sold, and because RSA solutions work with all production printers, you can choose the equipment vendor you want to work with.

With WebCRD you can leverage your customer's requirements to support work from home workflows (both shop staff and customers), an urgency to increase efficiency to drive down labor needs and costs, and flexibility to adapt to changing needs and processes.

We assure you and your customer's success with presales, sales, and professional services support during the sales process through install, post-sale technical support, and unlimited instructor-led product training. Contact your local RSA BSM to learn more at www.rocssoft.com. – *Ben Parker, sales director, Rochester Software Associates*

Sharp Imaging & Information Systems of America's 4T-B AQUOS BOARD

As we come out of the pandemic and workplace technology needs continue to shift, it's never been more important to diversify your product inventories beyond MFPs and printers. Doing so only elevates your value proposition to end-users, showing that you are thinking outside the box. Cost-effective display technology is one segment that would fit our industry's business model quite well, considering so many businesses and schools are still recovering from the pandemic and are wary of spending while keeping up-to-date with technology. Sharp recently launched a solution that works perfectly for classrooms and meeting rooms looking for an upgrade to their displays that won't break the bank: the 4T-B70CT1U AQUOS BOARD® interactive display.

This 70" Class (69.5" diagonal) 4K Ultra-HD display offers effective collaboration solutions to facilitate learning. Equipped with a plug and play feature, it provides quick integration with various cloud-based platforms, including Chromebook, to present Google Classroom on a large screen in an educational setting. With its 20-point multi-touch functionality, several users can collaborate and write on the screen at the same time, while its powerful RS-232C and LAN command set allows for flexible remote control from connected devices. Users are also in complete control, with a "public mode" option that blocks any unwanted operation, whether in a classroom or public location.

Oftentimes in a school setting, advanced display connectivity capabilities may add unnecessary cost for screens that may not be regularly used in the classroom itself. What's great about our new interactive display is that it comes with all the essentials for collaborative learning – large size, high resolution, easy connectivity, and more – at a lower cost per room, and by one of the most trusted names in display and printer technology. With more end users looking to purchase all of their office tech under one roof, we anticipate substantial benefits for dealers to diversify into solutions such as the Sharp 4T-B AQUOS BOARD interactive display. You can learn more by visiting <https://business.sharpusa.com/AQUOS-BOARD/Models/Details/4T-B70CT1U>. – Bob Madaio, vice president of marketing, Sharp Imaging and Information Company of America

Toshiba America Business Solutions' Label and Receipt Printers

COVID-19's impact on businesses is unprecedented and is forcing organizations to rethink their strategies on how to expand revenue sources while sustaining profit. Discovering which other products to leverage from existing technology partners multiplies the value of resellers' customer networks.

Toshiba enables dealers to extend their revenue opportunities to adjacent and growing markets.

Beyond Toshiba's industry-acclaimed e-STUDIO multifunction printer line, the company also features an extensive label and receipt printer portfolio, including mobile, desktop, and industrial label printers and point-of-sale (POS) receipt printers. These products help extend resellers' share of wallet with existing customers while expanding into thriving vertical markets, including healthcare, eCommerce and more. The products maintain Toshiba's focus on high productivity and low total cost of operation. Therefore, the value is clear, and the learning curve is short as Toshiba's printer portfolio helps fully optimize operations and uptime for both front-office and back-office operations.

Toshiba's systems address everything from storefront POS receipts to mobile printing applications and healthcare needs of lab labels to patient wristbands. The company's printers also prepare warehouse and logistics packaging labels while helping ensure smooth business operations for virtually every vertical market.

One area that sets these printers apart from MFP sales is the demanding environments in which they perform. Toshiba's ruggedized label and receipt printers blend sturdy components with IP-rated dust and moisture protection. In fact, Toshiba's latest innovation, the HSP Series POS printers, feature an IP21-certified, splash-resistant design protecting the system against solid objects and liquids prevalent in bar, restaurant, and hotel environments. The printers additionally deliver premium print quality and text readability to further improve customer satisfaction. When it comes to expanding your revenue opportunity with products built for the task, this is a clear opportunity for easy expansion.

Moreover, the Toshiba team is highly responsive to its customers while offering flexible and customized services to maintain organizations' operations. This helps ensure a greater return on equipment investment while lowering recurring operational costs, which is especially important in this challenging time. *For more information on Toshiba label and receipt printers, please visit: <http://business.toshiba.com/products/printers/#label-printers> – Mina Lee, senior product line manager, label and receipt printer solutions and Jessica Bernardo, product marketing manager, label and receipt printer solutions, Toshiba America Business Solutions*