

# Q&A: Joanne Collins Smee

## Xerox executive addresses dealer questions

Compiled by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

Recently, Office Technology magazine interviewed Joanne Collins Smee, executive vice president for Xerox Holdings Corp. In June 2022, she was also named president for the Americas at Xerox Corp. All of the questions she addressed were requested from and submitted by Xerox-authorized BTA member dealers.

Collins Smee is responsible for leading all go-to-market operations across the region and enhancing the way Xerox brings its full portfolio of offerings to partners and clients of all sizes in the United States, Canada and Latin America. She joined Xerox in September 2018 as senior vice president and chief commercial officer to spearhead the development of Xerox's software and services strategy. Her role expanded in February 2021 when she took the lead of Xerox Business Solutions, the company's technology and services provider for small and medium-sized enterprises, U.S. channels and the company's global IT services business. Prior to her time at Xerox, Collins Smee led technology transformation services for the U.S. federal government and spent more than 25 years at IBM in global executive roles, spanning client sales, support and delivery of technical products and services.

Below are some of the dealer questions submitted to Office Technology and Collins Smee's responses.

**Dealer: Xerox is not set up to accommodate dealers in the same way as the offshore manufacturers. What structure or process changes is Xerox implementing to better serve the dealer channel?**

**Collins Smee:** If you think about our competitors, they do not necessarily have the same variety of go-to-market channels that we do here in Xerox. One thing that I have heard from our multibrand dealers is, "We want you to give us more things like you give your single-brand dealers or your direct salespeople."



At our recent Partner Forum [held June 21-23 in Miami, Florida] our multibrand dealers, for the first time, composed the biggest community at a Xerox national meeting. They clearly are interested in what we have to say; we are focused on making sure that we are becoming easier to do business with. We have made investments in online survey tools to have that dialogue with the dealers on a regular basis. We have also launched a dealer advisory council, which was new for us in 2023.

We are very keen on listening and acting on what we are hearing so that we are a vendor of choice — a partner of choice — for our multibrand dealers. They are an incredibly important part of our strategy. In fact, we have already made some improvements that have resulted in positive feedback from our dealers in areas like bid support and product fulfillment. We have more work to do, but we are focused on ensuring a positive experience for our dealer community.

**Dealer: What can you share about Xerox's current contract with Fuji?**

**Collins Smee:** I get this question from a lot of partners and from the direct side. Fuji remains a strategic partner for Xerox. It is in both parties' interest for us to cooperate and to work collaboratively where it makes business sense. Will we compete? Yes, but we are also strategic partners and we will continue to work together to satisfy our end clients. [At the Partner Forum, CEO] Steve [Bandrowczak] used the term "frenemies," which I love.

**Dealer: I have concerns that the Fuji relationship may not continue. Will Xerox be maintaining consistency in its line of products?**

**Collins Smee:** We have the most expansive portfolio of products out there and it includes offerings that Xerox

manufactures, such as Baltoro and iGen. In addition, very importantly, we have been spending a tremendous amount of our engineering resources on software development. Whatever OEM we work with, we utilize our basic ConnectKey technology and associated software products, like FreeFlow Core and XMPie. Our software is our secret sauce.

We talk about platforms with our clients and that really resonates with them. It is not just about a device. It is the software that runs that device. That is our differentiator, and we will continue to spend a tremendous amount of our engineering investment and resources on our software portfolio, which generates the solutions that a client is seeking. We are going to continue to source some of our products from Fuji, but we believe we have the superior value proposition because of our software investments and the associated solutions.

**Dealer: Will Xerox be announcing plans for new growth and differentiation after losing its exclusivity with Fuji PrimeLink, Versant and Iridesse products?**

**Collins Smee:** We are investing and developing new value drivers, like artificial intelligence, augmented reality, automation, cybersecurity, our distributed cloud and hyperpersonalization. We see it with our clients. It is additional value and it is the area where we will continue to invest and make a difference for our clients. We will make those available to our dealers.

**Dealer: Why did Xerox choose to upgrade its line of A4 devices model by model? This creates model confusion and makes it difficult when working with a major account that purchases many of the models.**

**Collins Smee:** The team was really keen to get out new A4 models as soon as possible, and then in the midst of that we had the supply chain constraints. We had to adjust our rollout schedule, but our goal was getting these great new products out as quickly as possible. That is why it was not done in one big bang. It has been done from a model-by-model perspective.

One of the key things, though, is all of these products can be set up using our Xerox Easy Assist app. They are all cloud connected. The different models are coming out at different times, but they are still on the same base infrastructure and using our solutions, like Workflow Central. They basically will plug and play. We are really proud of our new A4 portfolio and,

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hopefully, the dealers will start to use those products and realize their value.

**Dealer: With the global concerns regarding Lexmark's ownership [by Ninestar, a Chinese company whose products are now banned in the U.S. market], how will this affect the new A4 products being introduced by Xerox?**

**Collins Smee:** Xerox sources some of

its A4 MFPs from Lexmark. We add Xerox-developed software and rebrand as Xerox A4 MFPs. We have completed a comprehensive review of our supply chain, sourcing and export strategy to ensure compliance with the designations and applicable legal requirements. We have a diverse supplier base and do not anticipate significant impact to our provision of equipment and supplies.

**Dealer: With the decline in future print revenue, what other products/services will Xerox be promoting to its dealers?**

**Collins Smee:** I am glad you asked that question because it is something we are spending much time and energy on and talking to our dealers about. One big thing is robotic process automation, RPA. We are already introducing that to our agents, piloting it with one of our agent communities and getting ready to roll that out to the dealers. We have a great offering that is easy to sell and deliver through the channel. We have been working on it for more than a year with our direct clients.

It is a tremendous offering. It basically automates workflow for specific clients. Our dealers are dealing with many of their end clients that may be digitizing work and, after the digitization occurs, the question from the end user may be: "My workflow has 20 touch points. How can we make that more efficient and make it only 10?" RPA will help them do that. We have teams of people that go in and assess the workflow and then write scripts to do that. That is something we have packaged. We have certain verticals that we are selling it into. We think this will be a great offering for our dealer community.

In addition, [leader of the North America Channel organization] Karl [Boissonneault] and the team have been working with CareAR and allowing our dealer community to actually sell CareAR. This is an augmented reality software that we use internally. We are selling it externally, but we think that it is a great software package that our dealers could also utilize and sell. ■

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