

# Smart Moves

## Dealers share opportunities & strategies for 2025

Compiled by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

**W**hat do you believe will be the greatest opportunities for office technology dealers in 2025? What do you believe will be the best strategies for success in pursuing those opportunities? Recently, Office Technology magazine asked these questions of dealers in an email survey. Following are a number of the responses received. Additional responses can be found at [www.bta.org/2025Opportunities](http://www.bta.org/2025Opportunities). Perhaps comments shared by your fellow dealers will provide some guidance to help you in the year ahead.



legacy systems to the more versatile and lower-cost cloud solutions. Conference room collaboration and presentation technologies are evolving. We have already begun to see very nice activity in this area. There is significant room to grow here. Business phone systems will continue to be an area that provides consistent growth for us, as well as providing a solid opportunity to offer bundled IT solutions along with our telecom offering.

**Strategies:** The best strategies for success are to be strategic, bold and innovative. Pick strategic verticals that your business already excels in and become the expert technical advisor in those fields. Do not go after anything and everything. This is a buckshot strategy that seldom works effectively. Be the trusted experts that your customers can rely on for expert advice as they navigate a highly competitive and challenging technological world.

*Wayne Piskin, vice president & co-owner  
CCP Solutions, Farmingdale, New York*

**Opportunities:** For Plus Inc., our greatest opportunities for long-term sustainability are IT services contracts along with all the software that goes with them (e.g., Microsoft 365, antivirus-EDR, off-site backup and firewalls). Phone systems, production print, flatbeds and wide format [are also opportunities]. The greatest growth opportunities in 2025 are production print and net-new copier/printer accounts. All of this would be through organic growth.

**Strategies:** Getting more feet on the street along with more educational blogs and webinars, and doing monthly events in our showroom. Also, getting our website optimized for more hits, as well as making social media posts.

*David Carson, president  
Plus Inc., Greenville, South Carolina*

**Opportunities:** I believe dealers must continue to evolve their own individual unique selling propositions. In what core areas have you already differentiated yourself from your competition? We are very aware that we must continue to expand IT services into more profitable areas like security as a service. Cyberattacks are always evolving, and now artificial intelligence (AI) has elevated the sophistication of attacks to a whole new level. Business owners are starting to understand that they can no longer avoid this conversation. We are also looking at surveillance as a service. We are planning to begin providing cloud-based surveillance solutions. I believe there is a wide-open opportunity to migrate older

**Opportunities:** I think the greatest opportunities are emerging technologies, such as AI. It can be used for anything — from rewriting contracts to automating any sort of in-house processes — and the list goes on. Cloud services, even though it has been commoditized, is still a good gateway to other services. There are many clients of all sizes out there that just need help establishing SharePoint, etc. As far as products are concerned, for those who have not delved into security cameras, etc., I think AI-powered video security will be a good market.

**Strategies:** Sales 101. Start with your existing clients and push for referrals.

*Mark Van Den Hoek, president  
The Office Advantage, Mitchell, South Dakota*

**Opportunities:** The greatest opportunity lies in fully integrating AI into our businesses. By leveraging AI, we can reduce costs, improve efficiency and drive profitability, positioning ourselves to thrive in an increasingly competitive

market. Beyond operational advantages, AI will revolutionize how we communicate with prospects and customers, enabling us to deliver more personalized, timely and impactful connections.

**Strategies:** To capitalize on these opportunities, businesses in our industry must begin incorporating AI immediately. This means dedicating resources to understanding AI's capabilities, testing its applications and embedding it into day-to-day operations. Companies that resist adapting to this transformative technology risk being left behind. Adopting AI is no longer optional — it is a necessity for staying relevant and competitive in 2025 and beyond. We must embrace this evolution with urgency and commitment.

*Keven Ellison, vice president of marketing  
AIS, North Las Vegas, Nevada*

**Opportunities:** This is a tough one. We are still seeing really good opportunities in optimizing and rightsizing fleets with fleet analysis tools and secure print release software. Also, addressing security. We are focused on automation solutions like DocuWare, DocuSign, workflow software, etc. These solutions work, gain customer satisfaction and get us very sticky in our accounts.

**Strategies:** Dealers need to invest in their people and make sure the expertise is inside — do not rely on your provider. Then you have to put in compensation programs for the geographic reps to hunt leads for the product specialists. We have proven this works. The ongoing revenue of the software licenses has large capacity and good margins.

*Nick Lioce, president  
The Lioce Group, Huntsville, Alabama*

**Opportunities:** We see huge opportunities for growth in every area of our business in 2025 and beyond. Managed IT services and production print are both growing at projected levels, and managed print is exceeding projected expectations. People are more interested than ever in understanding their complete print environments.

**Strategies:** Training our people and giving them all the support they need to be their best and, in turn, expecting them to do the same for our customers.

*Mike Steinhoff, president  
Rhyme, Portage, Wisconsin*

**Opportunities:** For iTech, I believe the greatest opportunities will be to first solidify our core print business by improving the processes and people, and driving as much expense out of our print division as possible to maximize our profits.

**“Adopting AI is no longer optional — it is a necessity for staying relevant and competitive in 2025 and beyond. We must embrace this evolution ... ”**

Second, look to diversify into other recurring-revenue technology businesses. We believe security is a key growth opportunity and we are investing in our physical security (e.g., cameras, access control) and network cybersecurity businesses.

**Strategies:** For solidifying our core print business, we are looking for experts in our industry to help improve our people/processes and drive out costs. For our MSP and security busi-

ness, we have partnered with Technology Assurance Group to help us improve processes and be more profitable.

*Mike Williams, president  
iTech, Parkersburg, West Virginia*

**Opportunities:** In 2025, our focus is on managed IT; selling and servicing on a month-to-month basis.

**Strategies:** We first came up with our ideal client. This is the client that utilizes all of our products and services. From there, we developed a marketing program around providing managed IT services. We email, cold call, warm call, do cocktail hours, etc., with just clients that fit our ideal client profile.

*Mick Dean, president  
SaraMana Business Products Inc., Sarasota, Florida*

**Opportunities:** I believe there are a great number of former OEM corporate employees who can add valuable talent to an existing smaller dealership. They were either IRIFed [involuntary reduction in force] or forced into early retirement. They need to be vetted, but there are some who still have some important years left in them to produce and mentor your 40-somethings to become better faster. I think some are upset and have some great fight in them. The institutional memory of their former clients is invaluable.

**Strategies:** Find them via just asking around and knowing your market. You just must be clear on your vision and expectations (i.e., they need to take out their own trash and they do not get their own executive assistants). Challenge them to use their decades of experience and commitment to paint the picture they want and leave the industry on a high note of success.

*Tim Stanley, CEO/owner/problem solver  
TDSiT, Lowell, Arkansas*

**Opportunities:** I believe that the biggest opportunity involves planning for future products and services. It takes a while to bring on new manufacturers and get people trained on products that they may never have seen before. There must be ownership from the front office to the shipping and receiving dock. If you are a legacy dealership, look around your building and see what products and services you use (e.g.,

cameras, Wi-Fi, shredding, document storage, etc.) and pick two. Find out who the manufacturers are and bring them in.

Find out how their distribution works. How long does it take to get onboarded? What type of sales channel model do they have? Map all of this out and then have your salespeople go out and presell the products. Take a simple survey in person. Find out what they like and dislike about their current products that you are interested in selling. Document every call and be very specific. That to me is the greatest opportunity. Looking ahead!

**Strategies:** I believe in selling on the front end. Find out where the other players are in your chosen product set. Are these products represented by a long-distance manufacturer? Is there a service organization at the manufacturer level? What is its sales support? Then sell it to yourself. Practice the pitch internally and implement the solutions that you choose. Map out the project management; does it need site surveys?

*Thomas Mitchell, president  
Connected Office Technologies, Portsmouth, New Hampshire*

**Opportunities:** Expanding our MFP base, video displays and associated services, managed IT and related services, and managed print services and print production.

**Strategies:** Two things: (1) Focus on expansion with our current account base; and (2) Net new with big hits.

*Les Harris, vice president of sales & marketing  
UTEC, Ann Arbor, Michigan*

**Opportunities:** I believe physical security will be a key product area for expansion. There are multiple reasons. One is that there are industries where the government requires better control of the security of your physical environment. Another reason is that the technology is at a level where the ease of entry into the space is not the vertical climb it once was and, subsequently, the functionality for the end user is not as intimidating as in the past.

**Strategies:** [Strategies for success include] marketing through the normal channels, sales reps looking to cross sell, your website and using search engines to get leads. Partnering with your vendor to complete the transaction is another key to success.

*Dan Strull, founder & CEO  
GoodSuite, Woodland Hills, California*

**Opportunities:** The greatest opportunity lies in selling more units to new customers, particularly color machines. Managed print services (MPS) would be the second opportunity, followed by offering additional services to current

“For managed IT services, having an in-house team is crucial ... To truly own what you are selling, you need the operations team to be in-house.”

customers, such as software, VoIP or managed service provider (MSP) solutions.

**Strategies:** Our strategy includes hiring the right sales representatives and parting ways with those who do not meet our standards. We plan to work closely with our new reps and Derek [Shebby] to ensure we stay on track. We are pushing our reps to achieve a 27% contribution margin. If a rep falls below a certain level, he (or she) will enter

a performance improvement plan (PIP) and if his performance does not improve, we will need to let him go.

Additionally, we must provide exceptional service, which we are already doing, but we need to improve our ability to sell at a higher price based on the value we offer, similar to what other dealers are successfully doing.

*Tyler Best, president  
Abadan, Richland, Washington*

**Opportunities:** I think managed IT services offers the largest opportunity for dealers in 2025. I also think that the companies that are agile enough to handle any possible supply chain disruptions or price increases will benefit immensely.

**Strategies:** For managed IT services, having an in-house team is crucial. There are some great partners out there, but to truly own what you are selling, you need the operations team to be in-house. To minimize potential supply chain risks and price increases, improved forecasting, better coordination with your manufacturers and strong internal controls will be key.

*Rogers Coxe, CEO  
Dove Technologies, Florence, South Carolina*

**Opportunities:** We are looking at a few options as discussed on BTA calls, but more than any new particular technology or service, we believe that the best opportunities are to expand what we are actually delivering to our customers from our current offerings. Most clients have one or even a couple of the products and services we provide, but most all still have opportunities for us to expand on these existing relationships.

**Strategies:** Marketing and communication to expand awareness, and comp plans for reps that motivate them to go the extra step to explore broader opportunities. Some carrot and some stick.

*Matt Nix, president  
Duplicating Products Inc., Gainesville, Georgia*

**Opportunities:** I think there is a big opportunity for water coolers going forward. We recently started selling them and we are starting to have some success with them. People

are starting to prioritize healthier drinking water and they love the cooler that can also produce ice. This is a good market for office technology dealers since they can install and service the coolers as well. If current copier customers trust you, they will go to you for water as well.

“People are starting to prioritize healthier drinking water ... This is a good market for ... dealers since they can install and service the coolers as well.”

**Strategies:** I think the best strategies are having a rep or team of reps that focuses on selling water coolers and growing that part of the business. Talk about them to all of your existing customers first and then expand to new prospects, maybe leading with water instead of other products and services. It is a much shorter sales cycle than a lot of other office technology products.

*Brett Maxwell, client relationship specialist & office technology advisor  
KOMAX Business Systems, South Charleston, West Virginia*

**Opportunities:** We see our growth in IT services, mail and telephone systems.

**Strategies:** Our plan is to sell into our customer base with these services.

*Peter Napolitano, client manager  
United Business Systems, Buffalo, New York*

**Opportunities:** [We are] focusing on our core business, but continue to look for new opportunities. That said, AI is at the forefront of our thinking and the media. It holds great promise for new efficiencies — efficiencies that may eliminate your next hire.

**Strategies:** Spend the next months learning and implementing AI efficiencies that will help you become more competitive. Obvious areas are accounts receivable or accounts payable. Once you become proficient, you may decide to “take it on the road” and offer the services to your customers.

*Robert Moore, owner  
Lockwood Moore Inc., Reno, Nevada*

**Opportunities:** Office automation and software as a service (SaaS) — more software solutions.

**Strategies:** Relying on the Business Technology Association (BTA) to provide the pathways through new vendors, concepts and education.

*Don Risser, automation specialist  
DCS Technologies Corp., Franklin, Ohio*

## 2025 Opportunities and Strategies



45% of resellers report that managed IT services offers the greatest revenue opportunity.



99% of resellers are positioned to support customers that have work-from-home staff.



45% of resellers are actively piloting AI solutions.

**Cloud infrastructure/hosting and cybersecurity** are the top MITS areas to branch into.



More than 50% of resellers reported they now offer full managed IT services.

Source: Keypoint Intelligence Research



**Opportunities:** First, managed print services (MPS). Instead of simply selling a copier/MFP, the focus should be on providing a full-service solution. This could include offering devices with a set number of prints or taking over entire print environments for large companies. Although this concept has been discussed for years, MPS will continue to be one of the biggest growth drivers and a source of new business in the coming years.

Second, high-touch service. As businesses are asked to do more with fewer people, there will be a greater demand for premium, high-touch services. Clients are willing to pay a higher price for a solution that removes the burden of managing things themselves. They prefer to call someone to handle the problem, allowing them to focus on their core business without worry.

Additionally, I believe AI will continue to be a game-changer, driving significant improvements in business speed and efficiency. AI solutions, like ChatGPT, are already transforming processes and this trend will only accelerate in the years to come.

*Kevin Marshall, president  
Copy Link Inc., Chula Vista, California*

**Opportunities:** Cloud-based print document management solutions to streamline workflows and enhance productivity. Focus on remote monitoring with AI-powered predictive diagnostics for better customer support.

**Strategies:** Train and focus sales reps on more than just speeds and feeds — we need to utilize AI and bridge the gap in technology with our customers and equipment.

*Debra Dennis, vice president  
of support services  
CopyPro Inc., Greenville, North Carolina*

*Brent Hoskins, executive director of the  
Business Technology Association, is editor  
of Office Technology magazine. He can be  
reached at (816) 303-4040 or brent@bta.org.*



## Additional Responses

**Opportunities:** We have to be able to deliver services faster and become more efficient in admin. Companies have to be shown why they need to leverage technology in the workplace, and with long-term sales relationships, we should be demonstrating those — including security issues with print and copy.

**Strategies:** We need to educate our salesforce better than ever to prepare them for the challenges of today's selling.

*Chap Breard, president/owner  
MOEbiz, Monroe, Louisiana*

“Train and focus sales reps on more than just speeds and feeds — we need to utilize AI and bridge the gap in technology with our customers ... ”

**Opportunities:** Focus on continued growth in the production print and wide format spaces. We have also implemented offering service contracts for other manufacturers' products that we are not authorized to service. It seems that the clients do not care about the manufacturer's authorization as long as we can offer local service and support for their equipment. Parts, supplies and service manuals are readily available, and some

of our new techs are trained from dealerships where they previously worked. We have expanded our product line offering to include OneScreen interactive whiteboards. This product is generating a lot of interest; there are training and conference room applications.

**Strategies:** Getting back to face-to-face business. The business is out there — not in an office or from an email. Take the time to know your prospects and they will become your customers. With the help of our marketing company, we are now harnessing Google to drive leads to our site.

*Gordon Stapleton, vice president/CFO  
Quality Digital Office Solutions, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania*

**Opportunities & Strategies:** I recently came across an industry publication highlighting [the ENX] Elite Dealers and I was quickly reminded of just how cool our industry is. Watching and being a part of the evolution of our business has been really special. To this day, I still get “fired up” as I work my way through a sales cycle or offer guidance for client strategy and sales executive success. Many reading this likely remember the days of rolling copiers on the train or packing the trunk of our cars for product demonstrations. Some may still do this today.

Oftentimes, effective in-person cold calling could actually lead to a sale on the same day. You would never leave the office without paperwork and, perhaps, you saved prospect business cards in a shoebox or a three-ring binder. Now, our people have to generate everything through a CRM.

Today, we all want to be successful and grow our businesses. However, how we get there is what is always up for debate. I think we can all agree that trying something different cannot hurt. We all come across blogs, LinkedIn posts and sales “gurus” trying to show how us how their ways are the best sales approaches. There is no perfect approach, as each market is unique. There are those reading this working in urban, dense populations. There are others reading this who cover multiple states, where time and territory management is perhaps a challenge. There are sales reps who need to be in the field for success. There are others who have been successful by working mostly remote. The sizes of accounts

we all call on can vary. Now, more than ever, attrition within our accounts continues as influencers and decision makers seem to be moving to different companies. In short, any strategy that might make one successful in my market cannot be the same strategy as someone who is 3,000 miles away from me. We all have similar goals, but each dealership is unique in its own way.

I believe in two things:

(1) No matter how it gets done, we need to reinforce those activities that drive sales opportunity creation. I think it still comes down to building lasting relationships and outworking the person next to you.

(2) With the evolution of technology and the changing needs of our clients, the skills of our people need to improve. The proposition we offer as a dealer channel must meet the needs of our clients and create value for them (not us).

Products have changed. Buying habits have changed. Internal employee goals continue to evolve. Client needs and workflow applications are ever-changing. Whether an independent dealer generates \$1 million to \$5 million, or more than \$400 million in annual revenues, at its core, we all have something unique to provide our local markets.

I spent the first 18 years of my career in various leadership roles within the direct manufacturer community. Now, with 10-plus years under my belt within the independent dealer channel, I can say with a high level of confidence that there is no place I would rather be as a sales professional. Given the evolving changes of the economy, demographics and the markets we serve, I strongly believe the independent dealer channel is uniquely and best positioned to meet the demands of what lies ahead.

Many of you may know me from my time spent at Canon. I used to say that when I worked for Canon: "I am here to sell Canon products." At the time, I might not have known it, but perhaps I was limited in my offerings and discovery questioning having one main item to sell. Was I truly meeting my clients' needs or simply offering what I had in stock? Entering the independent dealer channel was simply a game changer for me, as it opened up so much additional value I could offer my customers.

When positioned well, I think the diverse product offerings of an independent dealership are a key differentiator when competing against the larger direct manufacturers. I think we all seek to communicate the fact that we are able to provide strong, local services. Some dealers are small, while others are pretty big. As technologies continue to evolve, it will continue to put pressure on us to make sure we can effectively service the solutions we sell.

Specific to products and solutions themselves, I think what a dealer should offer cannot be a "one-size-fits-all" answer. At its core, many of us continue to push A3 and A4 hardware solutions and that is OK. I do, however, think that within those A3 and A4 solutions lies an incredible opportunity for us to create added value for our clients. We all know by now it is cheaper to print to a multifunctional device compared to a desktop printer. I think that is an old conversation by now, however, a comprehensive managed print strategy effectively addressing both A3 and A4 within

a fleet can tie-in all output devices as we seek to generate more revenues. An effective managed print strategy can create value for clients by highlighting cost savings, rightsizing and, perhaps, addressing the sustainability goals of a client. For dealers, a true managed print strategy can create additional supplies revenues along with output management software opportunities.

Another hot topic appears to be the "migration to the cloud" and AI. Proactive (not reactive) dialogue with customers and prospects in the form of "first-in meetings" can create enhanced rapport, gain trust and stimulate future business opportunities. To answer the question of why cloud migration might be important, I am referencing AI for the answer. Migrating to the cloud is important because it offers significant benefits like increased scalability, flexibility, cost-efficiency, improved security and enhanced disaster recovery capabilities, allowing businesses to adapt quickly to changing market demands, streamline operations and drive innovation by utilizing cloud-based technologies like analytics and AI, all while potentially reducing IT costs and complexity.

Many of the A3 and A4 technologies we all sell from our manufacturer partners can address workflow needs within the cloud. Clearly, many of us within the independent dealer channel have thriving managed IT services businesses. As clicks on copier/MFPs and printers continue to decrease for many of us, it is no secret that managed IT services can provide us with some strong accrual revenues that can offset potential losses in hardware sales within some territories.

An offshoot of managed IT is perhaps VoIP phone offerings for some. Again, this is not a one-size-fits-all solution. At its core, some dealers may continue to push traditional MFP hardware sales and I think that is totally OK.

As we seek to create additional value-added opportunities, many of my colleagues often hear me use the term "follow the workflow or follow the paper." When we do that, what happens? In many cases, it can create opportunities for mailing solutions (e.g., postage, folding/inserting, envelope printing). In other cases, it leads to document management, archival or shredding opportunities. Some of us have the bandwidth to effectively support production print and higher-end graphics solutions. In many industries, printing is not dead. The key is finding those companies and specific (vertical) industries that are going to require those products and services you have identified to meet those market demands.

We all have different solutions to offer. When seeking growth and ongoing success, there are so many different strategies to potentially pursue to meet your revenue and profitability goals. I will highlight just a few for consideration.

■ **A value-added solutions or product-driven strategy** — Many folks reading this article do have a sizeable base of customers. If this is the case, the best opportunities can reside right within your client base. Value-added offerings like postage, managed IT, display technologies, VoIP, etc., can all grow your presence within an account and make you "stickier." Many take advantage of third-party relationships to leverage their total solutions offerings and support. Also, many of the value-added offerings can be an entry point into new businesses where the traditional copier/MFP and

printer opportunity might not necessarily be there.

■ **A geostrategy** — How good do you feel about your coverage within a territory? Are your sales reps proactively seeking to grow or simply managing their accounts? If a sales territory is open, what are you doing to proactively fill that void? In cases where many seek more qualified opportunities and general “nurturing” of accounts prior to the proposal stage, considering inside sales and business development reps might help. Some do struggle to fill open territories. There does remain an opportunity for us to enhance our recruiting efforts to build a sales bench and get good people into our industry I believe that “sales as a career” is something to be celebrated early. We need to continue to deliver that message at colleges, job fairs, in social media, etc.

■ **A vertical market strategy** — Whether it is health care, education, finance, legal, nonprofit, etc., focusing on one industry for a specific campaign can provide for consistent conversations and additional revenue opportunities for your core products and value-added solutions. Someone does not have to be a named or major account executive to effectively deploy a vertical market strategy. Those types of accounts can vary in size. The key is identifying the accounts you want to go after and create consistencies within your outreach.

■ **A “general” need-driven strategy** — Sometimes keeping things simple just works. As we seek to create new prospects and grow our existing bases, we have all used general key buzzwords and phrases like “partnership,” “security,” “cost savings,” “right-sizing,” “sustainability,” “enhanced productivity,” “great service,” and “added value.” Whatever technique is deployed, sometimes it simply comes down to execution and how your message is delivered.

■ **A sales personnel development strategy** — This is always a tough one, as we all seek to drive monthly revenues and pay the bills. I fully recognize that many within the dealer community have varying bandwidth and resources. However, I do think we need to make sure we continue to invest in our people. Are your people fully aware of your company’s vision? Are we throwing people into a territory without any real guidance regardless of selling experience? Can they position themselves (without a specialist) to create value for emerging technologies? Regardless of tenure, can your people effectively deliver the value proposition you seek to offer within the markets you serve today? Are they

“busy” tending to things that limit your business growth or are they truly being “productive”? I think we get so caught up in focusing on the accounts and offerings themselves that we could easily lose sight that many of our people need to improve their skills and understanding of what we sell.

When I am working with a client, I can tell right away if I am competing with a skilled sales team or not. As a dealer network, revenue generation, growth and profit is what we all seek. I believe we all provide varying levels of sales and product training. Whatever your training initiatives are, it should be in sync with those offerings you identify that will help you reach your targets.

Ironically, people think that most training and development needs should be focused on new hires. Although successfully onboarding a new hire is certainly important, I actually think some of our top performers can also get better. If I have a long-tenured rep who is at 100% of quota year over year, perhaps put forth the development efforts to make that trusted person even better. Just like there exist growth opportunities within our existing accounts, there is huge upside for those successful sales executives who might be currently “comfortable” in their roles.

*David Aulisio, vice president of business development  
Automated Business Solutions, Warwick, Rhode Island*

**Opportunities:** Managed services and production print  
**Strategies:** Dedicated sales reps

*Tyson Stargel, co-president  
Stargel Office Solutions, Houston, Texas*

**Opportunities:** Managed print services (MPS). I believe there is an incredible upside to MPS growth. Years ago, dealers started talking about it and signed accounts to agreements. However, they did not do anything more than treat it like the copier/MFP contract. With copier/MFP and copy volumes shrinking, I am betting on the resurgence of properly managed MPS.

**Strategies:** We treat our MPS clients like “white glove” accounts. We sell the service differently than a standard copier/MFP agreement and constantly improve our offerings for those accounts. We want to take the burden off our clients for printing and allow them to focus on their core businesses.

*Sam Stone, president  
Stone’s Office Equipment, Richmond, Virginia*