



# Epson's InkBoldly

## Manufacturer sees inkjet as the 'future of the office'

by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

**F**ocused, in part, on expectations for the continued rise of inkjet printing in the office environment, Epson America hosted the InkBoldly Epson Partner Conference Feb. 6-7 in Huntington Beach, California. Through general and breakout sessions, Q&As and event activities, attendees had the opportunity to engage with Epson executives and learn about Epson's latest innovations.



*Keith Kratzberg*

During the conference, Epson demonstrated its range of solutions for businesses with a focus on the education, health care, hospitality, corporate, home office and AEC verticals through its Solutions and Technology Showcases. It also highlighted its latest inkjet printing devices powered by PrecisionCore inkjet printing technology, including the unveiling of the WorkForce Enterprise AM Series, which will be available this month (March 2023). The series includes the AM-C6000, AM-C5000 and AM-C4000 A3 printers, providing 60-, 50- and 40-pages-per-minute printing, respectively.

Among the presenters in the opening General Session was Keith Kratzberg, president and CEO of Epson America. As he began his presentation, he stated that his goal, in part, was to ensure all attendees leave the conference with an understanding of Epson's corporate strategy in the printing environment. "We are a purpose-driven organization," he said. "Our purpose is to enrich lives and help create a better world through compact, efficient and precise innovation. It's a simple statement. We have been doing it for a long, long time from the very beginning of our company, and we have incredible plans for what to do with that in the future."

Kratzberg emphasized Epson's long history of precision engineering. "That is really at the core of the company; this is our purpose — compact, efficient, precise," he said, citing, as an example, Epson's heritage as a clock manufacturer. "Epson miniaturized the quartz timing device in a very few short years from the size of a commercial refrigerator to an incredibly small size that you could wear on your wrist. It was Epson engineers who developed and launched the world's first quartz watch, the Seiko Astron."

Looking to the future, framing Epson's corporate strategy, "I think a strategy should be really clear, it should be simple and it should be very aggressive," Kratzberg said. "What are some examples of that? Amazon's Jeff Bezos said decades ago that he wanted to build what he called the 'everything store.' That

pretty much describes what Amazon is today. You can buy just about everything on Amazon — 'the everything store.' What is Google's strategy? Google says its strategy is to organize the world's information and make it available; that's not easy to do, but pretty simple to understand. So, what is Epson's strategy? Epson's strategy is to build the world's most advanced printing technology and to spread it across the entire market."

Kratzberg described Epson's PrecisionCore technology as "the world's most flexible piezo element for ejecting ink drops." Epson has "basically miniaturized all of the important functional parts of a four-color printer into a microchip," he said. "We are now manufacturing this technology in incredible volumes."

How incredible? "Epson manufactures 15 million PrecisionCore micro-piezo printheads every year," Kratzberg said. "There is no other company in the world that is even close in terms of the scale of piezo printheads — not even close."

Within the office printer market is "a classic case of what's known as 'the Innovator's Dilemma,'" Kratzberg said, referencing the name and focus of Clayton Christensen's 1997 book. "The Innovator's Dilemma is the challenge that leading companies have when disruptive technology is introduced. How do they balance the profits they get from their legacy technology while trying to promote the new technology? This has happened over and over again."

Citing the example of a current high-profile disruptor, Kratzberg noted that many have said in the past that it is too late to introduce a new automobile company into the market. "The incumbents were so big and so strong it couldn't happen," he said. "Look at what is happening. One new company with disruptive technology, Tesla, is literally worth more than all of the incumbents combined, even with its stock down. And so now, whether it's Ford, Mercedes, Toyota or General Motors, they're all trying to catch up with the disruptive technology of the electric car."

In the office technology market, "Epson is a pure disruptor," Kratzberg said. "We are '100% in' that inkjet is the future for the office market," he said. "That is our focus. That is what we are committed to making happen. So why do we think that we are going to be successful in this? Why do we think that we can make this happen? Because we believe we have the world's most advanced printing platform — PrecisionCore." ■

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