

# 2023 BTA National Conference

## BTA East & BTA Mid-America host event Aug. 30-31

by: Elizabeth Marvel, Office Technology Magazine

The 2023 BTA National Conference, co-hosted by BTA East and BTA Mid-America, was held Aug. 30-31 at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts. The event featured a keynote address, a featured speaker session, a vendor panel, a dealer panel, two additional educational sessions, five breakout sessions, time to network with peers and exhibiting sponsors, and a dinner cruise aboard the Spirit of Boston.

The keynote, "Miracle on Ice: Insight Into Leadership & Teamwork," was presented by Mike Eruzione, captain of the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" U.S. Olympic hockey team. SEAC John Wayne Troxell, retired U.S. Army senior noncommissioned officer, presented the featured speaker session, "How to Transform Your Business." The additional educational sessions: "Purpose & Culture," by John Lowery and Casey Lowery of Applied Innovation; and "The Impact of Megatrends on Your Dealership & Customers," by Tami Beach, HP Inc.

The vendor panel, "Will Slave Labor Disrupt the Supply Chain?" was moderated by BTA General Counsel Bob Goldberg, and the dealer panel, "Making Strides: Inspiring Stories of Diversification," was moderated by Mike Boyle, BASE Technologies Inc. The breakout sessions: "The New Office Battleground: Building a Successful Business for the Future of Office Print," by Robert Palmer, IDC; "Prospecting to Win" and "LinkedIn to Win Team Road Map," by Rick Lambert, selltowin and In2communications; the unified communications (UC) dealer panel, "Bridging the Gap: How Dealers are Empowering Businesses Through Unified Communications," moderated by Jim D'Emidio, independent consultant; and the UC vendor panel, "UC Market Dynamics: How Vendors are Empowering Dealers Through Unified Communications," also moderated by D'Emidio.

The BTA event schedule for 2024 will be announced soon. Keep an eye on [www.bta.org/BTAEvents](http://www.bta.org/BTAEvents) for more information as it becomes available. ■

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Clockwise from top:  
The 2023 BTA National Conference featured a keynote address, a featured speaker session, a vendor panel,



a dealer panel, two additional educational sessions, five breakout sessions and plenty of networking time; 2023-24 BTA East Vice President Tim Seeley Jr. serves as an event emcee; 2023-24 BTA President Don Risser (right) presents the 2023 BTA Volunteer of the Year Award to 2020-22 BTA President Tim Renegar; BTA General Counsel Bob Goldberg (far left) moderates the vendor panel with panelists (left to right) Tricia Judge, International Imaging Technology Council, Mike Marusic, Sharp, Sam Errigo, Konica Minolta, Óscar Sánchez, Kyocera, and Charles Brewer, Actionable Intelligence; and Eruzione presents the keynote.



Clockwise from top left: John Lowery; Casey Lowery; Troxell; Lambert presents his breakout session; the UC vendor panelists (left to right): Anne Valaitis, Keypoint Intelligence, David Looft, Zultys, Jon Brinton, Crexendo, Cody Walton, Konica Minolta, and (not pictured) Eric Tuttle, Intermedia; the UC dealer panelists (left to right): Danielle Wolowitz, Shore Business Solutions, Farmingdale, New Jersey, Mike Ardry, Automated Business Solutions, Warwick, Rhode Island, and Brantly Fowler, Zeno Office Solutions Inc., Midland, Texas; the dealer panelists (left to right): Philip Houser, Document Solutions Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico, Chip Miceli, Pulse Technology, Schaumburg, Illinois, and Tim Renegar, Kelly Office Solutions, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



Left photos, top to bottom: Beach presents her educational session on the second day of the national conference; John Partenio (center left) and Philip Crean (center right) of Aztec Inc., Middletown, Connecticut, visit with Terry Kirwin (left) and Peter Kubat (right) of Sharp Imaging and Information Company of America during a break between sessions; and (left to right) Shilpa Shankar and Greg O'Briant of ACDI visit with DJ Hastings of Hogland Office Equipment, Lubbock, Texas, during a break.



## Diversify for Success

Diversification is a huge topic of conversation among office technology dealers today. During the national conference, Mike Boyle, president, BASE Technologies Inc., Bethel, Connecticut, moderated the dealer panel, "Making Strides: Inspiring Stories of Diversification." During the panel, three dealers shared how their dealerships have been diversifying to capture more business. The panelists: Philip Houser, president and CEO, Document Solutions Inc. (DSI), Albuquerque, New Mexico; Chip Miceli, president, Pulse Technology, Schaumburg, Illinois; and Tim Renegar, president and co-owner, Kelly Office Solutions, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The panel began with the dealers talking about the diversification choices they made to get their businesses where they are today.

**Houser:** "As we grew out what DSI is today, we looked at other ways that we could continue to grow the company. The first diversification step we took was adding IT ... Our first client was 1,500 PCs; it was a pretty small way to get into the IT business and it really allowed us to build out the infrastructure of our IT department ... Our IT division also spawned interactive panels, video walls and voice-over-IP telephone systems." Houser also noted that DSI provides security for customers with cameras and access control.

**Renegar:** "We actually started [diversifying] with our water division ... The second piece was our managed IT ... We made the decision six or seven years ago to get into IT and we took a year vetting that process to see if we were going to buy, build or partner ... We partnered with Collabrance at the time and still work with them on a lot of things ... Then we diversified even further ... There are other things that you can do inside of water: there's ice, which brings on coffee, which brings on PureAir. Within IT, you end up in phones, you end up in security, you end up in a variety of different things."

**Miceli:** "When it comes to technology, I think there's so much stuff out there that you need to be involved in and make money at. We've been in IT forever ... And now we're in management services and that brings a whole onslaught of products: cybersecurity, all kinds of things you can sell ... Our biggest growth has been in A/V."

What advice did the panelists have for other dealers looking to diversify their businesses?

**Houser:** "I would definitely say whatever you choose to diversify in, have the infrastructure to support that initiative. I think diversification long term is paramount to the continued growth of your organization, but it is vital to build out the infrastructure to support that."

**Renegar:** "First and foremost, don't take off on a big diversification strategy if your core business isn't solid; it's an investment at the beginning ... The new piece is going to struggle at first and it's easy to get discouraged if it doesn't take off ... You've got to find people who are successful at it to talk to. That's really key. They'll tell you how to do it, where they've made mistakes and how to be successful more quickly."

**Miceli:** "The core secret to any of this stuff is if you don't have the infrastructure inside, you have to partner with someone to do that. We just put a scoreboard into a baseball stadium and we partnered with [a variety of people to do it] ... Once we got them all together, we managed the project like a contractor. So we brought everybody together. We made a lot of money by just being a managing partner ... Before you venture off into something, do your research. Is it a core product that's going to make you money? Is it going to have recurring revenue? Can you handle it?" ■

— Elizabeth Marvel