Thriving in Today's Market
Three ways to do more than just survive

by: Caty Di Maggio, Brother International

Due to hybrid work, market uncertainty and rapid AI transformation, the traditional office environment as we know it remains unclear. Demand for print services needs to be stabilized as the working environment continues to iron itself out. That said, reimagining business is a real thing and, therefore, today's channels are challenged with the ultimate question: Will today's A-game be enough for customers? New value-added solutions that enhance customer value and long-term profitability should be a key focus to succeed in this evolving market.

With the persistent trend of labor shortages and supply chain disruptions coupled with the abundance of information available at our fingertips, channel partners must cut through the noise to be successful. Yes, a distributed workforce is our reality and has led us to wonder: What does it take to thrive — not survive — in this ever-changing market, and how can unanticipated industry challenges be successfully overcome?

Think of business as a spider's web. If one piece of the web changes suddenly and the rest of it cannot adapt, the whole web will fall apart. Adaptability, readiness and flexibility are necessary to survive. As the web becomes more complex and pieces change, ask yourself: What will it take to make this web work? You are only as strong as your weakest link; thus, agility is the key to a successful, thriving business. Below are three ways for office technology dealerships to not only survive — but thrive — in today's complex business web.

Readiness Is the Key to Success

When navigating channel consolidation, labor shortages and uncertain markets, the keys to success are adaptability and flexibility. Gone are the days of being device-centric. Customers are looking for digital workflows, systems and hardware. Dealers must be ready for curveballs that come their way and be prepared to transform their businesses quickly.

Swap out (in some cases) outdated office equipment and refresh with devices that have smaller footprints, new security features and faster speeds. Today, we see an increase in decentralized office environments and distributed workforces. Those businesses that can adapt and provide customers with cloud-based solutions, mobile printing options and document management systems that keep them connected, efficient and productive are the ones that will flourish.

Act Locally, But Think Globally

Acting and upholding a solid presence in your state or local community is essential for growing your business. However, it's important not to get too comfortable in just one area without thinking about ways to improve or expand your business in the future. Manage your fleet, managed print services (MPS) offerings and contracts with local players, but start thinking about what will be needed tomorrow because you will have a stronger value proposition when responding from a broader perspective.

Don't get me wrong, acting within local areas where you are most comfortable is critical. Still, the difference between a surviving versus a thriving business is one that demonstrates that growth mindset — especially where there is potential to improve or expand into other vertical areas.

For example, in both the health-care and government sectors, tools such as device security are of the utmost importance for practices and institutions to ensure confidential data is protected. A cloud-enabled document workflow is one example of a tool that allows employees to securely access, send and edit documents from any location. Employees can easily collaborate on documents and streamline workflows from phones, laptops, copier/MFPs or scanners. Utilizing the cloud allows documents to be securely stored and accessed by authorized personnel from any location. Encryption and multifactor authentication within the cloud ensure that confidential, sensitive information is always protected.

Fewer Words, More Color

The demand for color laser printing continues to grow. This is no surprise, given that the world has been so black and white for the past few years. But now we're finally starting to see some color. Color creates impactful statements, breaking up the dull uniformity of black-and-white text for a more engaging and memorable reading experience for your customers. Gone are the days of people having the luxury of time or patience to read long-form black-and-white articles.

Imagine education is a target vertical for your business. In this case, color plays a significant role as it can serve as a visual aid and improve student engagement and retention more than black-and-white handouts. Color supports creativity and innovation, and offers a better learning experience.

As a channel, you have survived the highs and lows in the industry and are used to going the extra mile for customers and distributors to keep up with changing demands and expectations. As the markets stabilize, it is time to put the

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pieces of the puzzle back together. There is no one solution or an easy fix, so stay agile, have a growth mindset and recognize the product features that meet the needs of today's users. Don't let your web fall apart. The printing industry is bright (and colorful), so what do you say? Are you ready to thrive? ∎

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