



Secure AI

The easiest sale your reps will ever make

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For years, many office technology dealers have been expanding beyond copier/MFPs, printers and document management into broader technology services. Managed IT, cybersecurity, phones, cloud services, A/V, surveillance and workflow automation are all becoming natural extensions of the customer relationship.

The challenge for office technology dealers is how to start those conversations without making everything feel complicated, intimidating or overly technical. That has been an obstacle, but it is exactly why secure artificial intelligence (AI) may be one of the easiest entry points office technology providers have right now.

Your Customers Are Already Using AI

Most businesses are already using AI tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Grok and other platforms. Employees are using AI to write emails, summarize documents, analyze spreadsheets, draft proposals, create reports, troubleshoot problems and speed up daily work. From a productivity standpoint, that is a great thing, but from a cybersecurity standpoint, it creates a major blind spot.

When employees paste customer information, contracts, pricing, financial data, HR documents, internal processes or proprietary information into public AI tools like ChatGPT (even some paid consumer versions), that information may leave the company's controlled IT environment.

That is the part many business owners have not fully considered. The button on many public AI tools might as well say: "Make Public Knowledge." That is a simple, memorable way to help customers understand the risk.

Secure AI Gives You a Reason to Call Every Customer

This is where the opportunity for new revenue becomes clear for office technology providers. Secure AI is a standalone sale that gives you a timely, relevant, low-effort reason to reach out to your existing customer base.

You can start with one simple question that opens the door: "Are your employees using ChatGPT or other AI tools?" From there, the conversation becomes very natural:

- "Do you know what information they are putting into those tools?"
- "Do you have a policy for how AI should be used?"
- "Would it help to give your employees access to AI in a more secure, controlled environment?"



■ "Would you like to consolidate multiple AI subscriptions into one governed platform at a lower cost?"

These questions are simple, direct and meaningful — and that is exactly why they work.

You Do Not Need Managed IT to Sell Secure AI

One of the biggest advantages of secure AI is that it is easy for customers to understand. Their employees are already using AI. Public AI tools may expose sensitive data. A secure AI platform gives their teams AI access in a safer, more controlled way.

That is a very different starting point than trying to explain an entire managed IT stack and communicate its value. For office technology dealers whose companies are still early in their managed IT journeys, this creates an accessible way to establish credibility. You are not asking the customer to immediately hand over his (or her) entire network. You are educating him on a real, current business risk that every company must deal with, giving him a practical solution that builds trust and plants a seed for him to come back and ask your opinion on the next technology service he considers purchasing. That is how you anticipate your client's needs. You secure that position.

For Managed IT Providers, This Opens the Door to the Network

For dealers already selling managed IT services, secure AI

becomes even more valuable. Once a customer understands that AI usage creates data security concerns, it naturally leads to broader questions:

- Who manages your network?
- How are employees accessing sensitive information?
- What cybersecurity policies are currently in place?
- Are your devices, users and systems properly protected?
- Do you have visibility into where your company data is going?

This is why secure AI can become a front-door conversation for managed IT. It gives you a specific, timely and easy-to-understand topic that can lead to a much larger conversation about the customer's overall technology environment. You are not forcing the managed IT conversation — you are earning it.

Secure AI Should Be Part of Every Quarterly Copier/MFP Business Review

Every quarterly business review should include a conversation about AI because it is already affecting how employees work, how company data is handled and how businesses think about productivity.

By addressing the AI conversation that is already happening in your customer's head, you position yourself as more than a copier/MFP provider or equipment vendor. You become the person helping him think through the next layer of his company's office technology.

This Also Opens the Door to Cybersecurity

Secure AI is not just an AI conversation. It is a cybersecurity conversation. Once a customer understands that sensitive data may be exposed through public AI tools, it becomes easier to discuss other areas of risk. That can lead to conversations about:

- Data security
- Endpoint protection
- Email security
- Microsoft 365 security
- Backup and disaster recovery
- Multifactor authentication
- Network monitoring
- User permissions
- Cybersecurity policies
- Managed IT support

In other words, secure AI can be the easiest first domino. It gives you a simple business issue that customers care about right now and opens the door to the larger security conversation they may have been avoiding.

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Office Technology Is Connected to Cybersecurity

This is especially important for office technology providers because the line between office equipment and cybersecurity has already blurred. Copier/MFPs are not just machines in the corner anymore. They sit on the network, scan documents, connect to business systems and touch sensitive data. That means cybersecurity belongs in the office technology conversation.

If you are already talking to customers about printers, copier/MFPs, scanning, document workflows, communications and productivity, secure AI is a natural next step. It allows you to expand the conversation without making a giant leap.

The Real Value is the Conversation

The biggest value of secure AI is it gives you a great consultative excuse to talk to your customers. For dealers with thousands of existing customers, that is a major opportunity. Most customers do not want to be overwhelmed with technical jargon. They want someone they trust to say: "Here is something important that is changing. Here is where the risk is. Here is a simple way to address it."

That is the role office technology providers step into so they are positioned to benefit from all other subsequent technology decisions.

The Time to Act is Now

If you do not sell secure AI to your customers, someone else will and you may lose out on more than AI sales — you could lose customers forever. Secure AI adds another substantial revenue stream to your organization and gives you the opportunity to sell more of your solutions. This is a profitable opportunity worth acting on today, not tomorrow. ■

Brian Suerth is president of Technology Assurance Group (TAG), an organization of managed technology services providers (MTSPs). Collectively, TAG's members do \$1 billion per year in IT, cybersecurity, telecommunications, video surveillance/access control, and copier/MFPs and managed print. They are located in 150 cities across the United States and Canada, and are presently serving more than 780,000 SMBs. He is responsible for directing TAG's executive team in its pursuit of ever-improving advice, support and counseling in the technology arena, and the expansion of TAG's membership and strategic partnerships. In addition, Suerth is a partner at TAG's MTSP, i-NETT.

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