



The Ricoh Advantage

OEM hosts Dealer Partner Summit Oct. 27-29

by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

Attended by most of its top 100 dealers, Ricoh USA Inc. hosted The Ricoh Advantage Dealer Partner Summit Oct. 27-29 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee. The summit provided a wide range of educational offerings in addition to opportunities for Ricoh senior management to express a new level of commitment to the company's relationship with its dealer channel.

While the summit provided breakout sessions focused on traditional product categories, such as "Unlocking Growth Through A4 Expansion" and "Navigating the Future of Production: Strategic Insights & Driving Profitable Growth," it also provided sessions reflective of the changing business landscape, such as "Workflow to Cash Flow: Practical AI for Dealers" and "The Balanced Growth Blueprint: Retain/Acquire/Thrive." In addition, the summit featured the Office and Production Expo, providing attendees dedicated time to explore Ricoh offerings through its products, portfolio and alliance partners.

In the opening General Session, Jim Coriddi, chief dealer officer (CDO), Ricoh USA Inc., commented on the changing business landscape and the resulting opportunities in the industry, while also emphasizing the need for dealers to more actively pursue net-new growth. "When we look at the business, we've really seen a tremendous amount of change," he said. "Think about technology — not just the technology that you sell and support, but the technology that's all around us that's influencing our customers and their decisions, the acceleration of cloud applications, AI [which is] going to change the world. [There is also the] generational shift. More and more, the millennials are not only influencing the decisions that need to be made, but they're making the decisions now, and they have a different way of going about it."

There are also the hybrid work environment and the uncertainty of the economy in "our very mature industry," Coriddi said. "When we look at all that, it could be a little bit daunting,



Jim Coriddi



Carsten Bruhn

but ... we see opportunity because you have got to remember, your competitors are dealing with the same challenges. We see that very much as an opportunity. It's an opportunity for us to take advantage of these changes."

Coriddi referenced John Hey, one of the presenters at the summit and co-founder of Strategic Business Associates (SBA), a consultancy that tracks the revenue of about 130 of "the best dealerships in the United States," totaling about \$3.6 billion. Among the benchmarks taught by SBA, several focus on net-new business, he said. "If you want to grow, you have to achieve 20%-plus net-new revenue," he explained. "That's something that we have built into how we are planning."

That planning includes changes to "some of our program structures to enhance the aggressiveness in the programs," Coriddi said. "We also established a new business development group, not only to improve the efficiency of how we go to market, but also to build in more automation so that we can operate more efficiently in our relationship with you. Now, when it's all said and done, everything that we are planning, everything that we are doing is all about one thing — taking share. That's what it's going to come down to ... We just have to take more share. We have got to help you grow your net new."

Coriddi shared more about the changes underway at Ricoh. "We recently added an advisory group of key dealers; the focus is to better leverage and integrate Ricoh and dealer resources and capabilities," he said. "When it's all said and done, the main goal is to improve profit efficiency for our dealers and for Ricoh. It's a long-term play, but it's an absolute game changer. It also reflects our commitment to and the importance that we place on our dealer business."

Among the other presenters in the opening General Session was Carsten Bruhn, president and CEO, Ricoh North America. He shared, in part, his philosophy on how to find the best path forward. "A lot of us are wondering, 'What the heck is going to happen [next]?' he said. "Let's not predict the future ... We have to wait for the answers to come to us." With all of the technology changes that are occurring, such as the rise of AI, "it is so important to stay calm," he later added. "You know, a lot of people are panicked, a lot of people are reacting. Of course, we have to react, but we also need to make sure whatever we do for the future will be right."

Like Coriddi, Bruhn highlighted changes that have taken place at Ricoh, including the creation of multiple business

units just over a year ago. “When I came here [four-and-a-half years ago] we were just operating with one big P&L; it was very difficult to get visibility of the different performances of the business,” he said. “So, we created five business units and one of them is for the dealer channel, meaning we now have a dedicated organization.”

Today, there are marketing, finance, HR and supply-chain personnel serving the dealer business unit who have the same “mindset” of how Ricoh can best serve the dealer channel, Bruhn said. “In a lot of corporations, the front line understands the customer [dealers], but really, a lot of people in the back office ... [are] totally disconnected. I wanted to make sure we brought everybody to the front.”

Bruhn also noted that Ricoh corporate personnel are now more focused on the dealer channel. “Even in Japan, they are starting to organize themselves into channel divisions,” he said. “So, there are dedicated people just for the dealer business, meaning they work every day with Jim’s team and Scott Dabice’s [vice president, commercial strategy and operations, Ricoh North America] team to make sure we — more and more — stay relevant by communicating ... For the first time in a long time, I feel that the corporate organization is getting closer to the

“Change is inevitable now ... We need to welcome new talent. We need to welcome people with a skill set that is very different from the skill set of yesterday.”

customer [dealers] ... I think that is going to help a lot of us going forward.”

Concluding his remarks, Bruhn emphasized the importance of a Ricoh and dealer operating model that provides for more agility and the ability to more readily react to change. “Change is inevitable now; it will never stop,” he said, adding that both Ricoh and its dealers need to refresh talent. “I don’t mean fire people, but get new people; we need to welcome new talent. We need to welcome people with a skill set that

is very different from the skill set of yesterday.”

Both Ricoh personnel and dealers need to have an attitude of “this is the moment,” Bruhn said. “But I don’t think we should do it alone. I think we should work together on that journey ... We do want to hurry up and we do want to get it right, but we don’t want to make mistakes that hurt this great business that you have built over many years. So, stay calm, be focused and let’s make sure we build that operating model where we’ll have a very agile mindset.” ■

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