

Capture the Magic

BTA West hosts event June 9-10 in Denver

by: Elizabeth Marvel, Office Technology Magazine

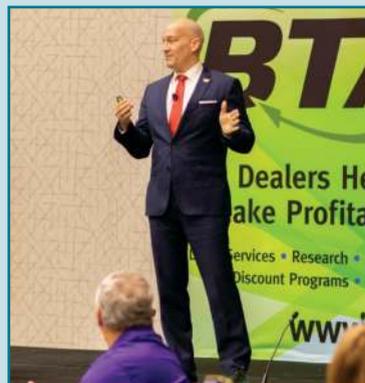
The 2023 Capture the Magic event, hosted by BTA West, was held June 9-10 at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Denver, Colorado. The event featured a pre-event reception at BTA member All Copy Products, a keynote address, a featured speaker session, two additional educational sessions, two dealer panels, six breakout sessions, time to network with peers and exhibiting sponsors and a night at Coors Field.

The keynote, “Building Unstoppable Teams,” was presented by former Navy SEAL Curt Cronin. Anthony Sci of Keypoint Intelligence presented the featured speaker session, “Preparing for the Future: Key Strategies for Success.” The additional educational sessions were “Demystifying AI: Practical Insights & Tools for Business Growth,” by West McDonald, West McDonald Co. and Tigerpaw Software; and “I Heard It Through the Grapevine,” by BTA General Counsel Bob Goldberg.

The dealer panels: “Positioning Your Dealership for Greatness,” moderated by Dan Bombard, Yuma Office Equipment, a Fruth Group Company; and “Meeting the Challenges Faced by Today’s Service Departments,” moderated by Kevin Marshall, Copy Link Inc. The breakout sessions: a sales dealer panel with different panelists each day, “Optimizing Your Dealership’s Sales Team,” moderated by Mark Spears of Amplified Solutions; a mailing dealer panel, “Why Mailing is a Good Fit for BTA Dealers,” moderated by Jim D’Emidio, independent consultant; a service session held both days, “Key Metrics for Service Managers,” by Gary Lavin and Mike Kirkpatrick, CEO Juice; and a mailing session, “Mailing Equipment Decertification & Its Opportunities,” by Phil Landriault, mailing meters decertification expert, and Carrie Witham, GreatAmerica.

The 2023 BTA National Conference will be held Aug. 30-31 in Boston, Massachusetts. To learn more, see the ad on pages two and three or visit www.bta.org/BTABoston. ■

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Clockwise from top: The Capture the Magic event featured a keynote address, a featured speaker session, two additional educational sessions, two dealer panels, six breakout sessions and plenty of networking time; Sci; McDonald; Goldberg; Bombard (left) moderates a dealer panel with panelists (left to right) Chelsey Bode, Pearson-Kelly Technology, Springfield, Missouri, Stephanie Keating Phillips, Advanced Imaging Solutions, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Brad Knepper, All Copy Products, Denver, Colorado; and Cronin presents the keynote.

Exploring AI & ChatGPT

Artificial intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT (an AI-powered language model developed by OpenAI that can answer user questions and much more), has captured the attention of everyone — including office technology dealers who may be trying to find use cases for their businesses. During his session at Capture the Magic, “Demystifying AI: Practical Insights & Tools for Business Growth,” West McDonald explained how AI can be used to enhance efficiency, productivity and customer experiences.

He started the session by explaining a bit about AI itself. “People talk about artificial intelligence; it’s not artificial,” McDonald said. “They should change the name to ‘augmented intelligence,’ because this intelligence [from ChatGPT] has been created based on the information we have shared with it through the internet up to September 2021.”

He referenced Richard Bowman and David Boyle’s book, “Prompt: A practical guide to brand growth using ChatGPT,” which talks about the value AI can bring to its users — without taking their jobs. “ChatGPT and similar technologies are like the electric bike for the mind,” McDonald said, paraphrasing a quote from the book. “It can help you conquer bigger hills. It can help you go a farther distance than you otherwise would have. But you still have to pedal, right? That’s why I say it’s augmented intelligence ... The idea [behind ChatGPT] was: ‘How do we make people better? How do we actually help people do things faster? How do we help people do things more efficiently?’ To me, that sounds like augmentation.”

McDonald gave some examples of how he uses ChatGPT in his business: to summarize a lot of information into short bullet points for PowerPoint presentations; when writing for search engine optimization (SEO; this could be used by a dealership’s marketing team); when writing titles for blogs; to do research; when writing interview questions for industries he might not know much about; and to rewrite emails geared to specific industries (sales reps could use ChatGPT for this purpose).

“We ask our salespeople to be great salespeople, but they’re not always great writers,” he said regarding sales reps using ChatGPT to rewrite their emails. “So what if we could actually get them help to do a better job of writing emails that are more focused on getting customers to open them? ... [ChatGPT] does a few things. It clarifies the language and it brings an excitement to the tone without being too excited — because I directed it that way with the prompt. It cleans it up so that it’s presentable to a professional audience.”

Regarding prompts (what you ask ChatGPT to do), McDonald emphasized the importance of refining them and not settling for the AI’s initial output. “Most people do not realize how important it is to write the correct kind of prompt for the information you’re looking for,” he explained, giving examples of how he’s changed his prompts to produce better results. “... The first [prompt] is never the right one. Anyone who writes for a living ... knows that the first draft is never published ... It has to be edited; it needs that second look ... Don’t ever be happy with the first thing it gives you.”

McDonald told dealers he could guarantee that at least one person in each of their dealerships is using ChatGPT and, as such, they should at least have an understanding of the technology and develop policies for the use of AI. “I would encourage you not to say, ‘Don’t use it,’” he said. “There’s no going back ... Work with [employees] ... to make sure that your data, your people’s personal private information, your NDA information, etc., is safe.” ■

— Elizabeth Marvel



Clockwise from top: Marshall (far left) moderates a dealer panel with panelists (left to right) Juan Maldonado, UBEO Business Services, San Antonio, Texas, Wendy Hagerstrand, Imagine Technology Group, Chandler, Arizona, and Dale Scheuerman, All Copy Products, Denver, Colorado; Witham (seated at left) and Landriault (right) present the breakout mailing session; D'Emidio (far right) moderates the breakout mailing panel with panelists (left to right) Will Champlin, All Copy Products, Patrick Cunningham, Cunningham Business Systems, Alexandria, Louisiana, and Scott Brenton, Pacific Office Automation, Beaverton, Oregon; Lavin (left) and Kirkpatrick present their breakout session.



Clockwise from above left: Sean Foley (left) of Kodak Alaris visits with Mike McKenna of Atlas Reproduction, Casper, Wyoming, during a break; Mark Waththuber (left) of ECI Software Solutions visits with Earl Philpot of Precision Duplicating Solutions Inc., London, Kentucky, during a break; Attendees enjoy the San Diego Padres versus Colorado Rockies game at Coors Field.