

Q&A: Karl Boissonneault

Xerox leader shares vision for the future

by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

Recently, Office Technology magazine interviewed Karl Boissonneault, president of North America Channels at Xerox Corp. He is responsible for growth strategies and programs related to Xerox's network of channel partners. Previously, he was senior vice president for the North American Channels and SMB business.

Boissonneault has more than 20 years of experience in sales and marketing in the technology industry and 10 years in senior leadership roles. He joined Xerox in 2014 leading the Canadian Eastern and Central Agent Operations.

The following are six of the questions asked of Boissonneault and his responses.

OT: During the Xerox Global Partner Summit in March, there was an emphasis on the “reinvention of Xerox.” What changes are underway at Xerox?

Boissonneault: The first is getting to a point where about 30% or more of our total revenue is not related to print directly — being able to capture new total addressable markets beyond print, with those being IT services and digital services. And then, within print, declaring again that it's at the core of our strategy.

Within print, we also want to see a shift in how we go to market. We are investing in our channels business to have it deliver more of our print business. Right now, we are much more of a direct-focused company. We believe our best shot at grabbing share, which is really the game, is through our partner community.

We are also “rewiring” the company, making sure that our back-office systems are streamlined. That's not just about an ERP; it's about the processes, the people, everything — the tools that we have to make us a much more efficient company in order to support some of these new offerings, such as digital services and IT services, which come with things like licensing software renewals — things for



which our current systems are not necessarily designed.

We're also making sure we have the relevant offerings that the economic buyer wants to buy. That is, making sure that our product portfolio remains up to date and that everything we're bringing to market continues to provide more value to end users and, obviously, to our partners as well.

OT: Xerox has sold direct and through agents against the independent dealer channel for many years. What is Xerox doing to ease the concerns among dealers in terms of Xerox's long history of selling against them?

Boissonneault: What we're doing right now is working to redefine the rules of engagement or principles of engagement — ensuring that they are much more neutral. I think we could agree that, historically, they were much more direct focused. We're not looking to bring them to be completely indirect focused, but to make them more neutral so that, ultimately, we want to let end users decide who they want to buy from. Historically, we would reserve accounts for specific routes to market. We're trying to move away from that while also protecting price points and not engaging in a spiral where, ultimately, we're just bringing prices down.

OT: How will Xerox manage territories that have Xerox direct, Global locations, agents, dealers and, with the acquisition of Lexmark, any legacy Lexmark dealers?

Boissonneault: We're going to let people compete. Right now, we have our direct sales force, which is mostly what we call Xerox Business Solutions. We do have some enterprise reps as well, who are focused on the enterprise segments, so think of the Fortune 500 companies. Most of our agents have now become dealers, which means they're no longer restricted to selling in specific territories because, like any

dealer, they can sell where they want.

The name of the game is to make sure that we grab more market share. Again, what we don't want to do is have that become a price war. So, obviously, whether it be through different tier certifications or different schemes that we have around our partner programs, those may or may not provide some of our partners preferred pricing, volume pricing or things like that to position them based on how they want to go to market. We truly believe that having them partner with us in bringing some of our differentiated offerings is a great way for them to not just win more business, but also be able to get more wallet share with the end user. If you think about it, all of those routes to market do have different value propositions for end users, which really comes back to what I said earlier — ultimately, the end user will decide.

OT: Xerox acquired ITSavvy in 2024. Will the resulting offerings through Xerox be rolled out to your dealers to resell to their customers?

Boissonneault: We are very excited about the acquisition of ITSavvy. The integration is actually ahead of schedule. It's going really well. ITSavvy will become Xerox IT Solutions. That's how we're going to reference it going forward.

The answer is: "Absolutely." In fact, we are in the final stages of launching our first offering through the channels. That will be a Microsoft cloud service provider platform, which will be available either in a storefront model or in a broker model for our partners to leverage. Then we have two other offerings that we're finalizing that we want to bring to market in either late Q2 or early Q3. We will not be providing hardware for them to sell because that's not the purpose.

What we're looking to do is to have specific offerings that they can use. Many dealers have an offering in IT services, right? The reality though is they source portions from various companies, based on what they want to gather in their portfolios. We're going to be one more vendor for them to be able to buy from or lean on when it comes to providing these value-added services to their clients. But the answer is definitely yes, we're bringing offerings to our channel partners.

OT: What can you share at this time about the status of Xerox's acquisition of Lexmark?

Boissonneault: It is progressing the way we expected. As we speak, we have a group of people from Xerox working alongside a group of people from Lexmark and about 10 or so different integration work streams to be able to come up with one-day, 100-day and 365-day plans once we close. We recently announced what the proposed executive committee

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leadership team would look like once the deal closes, which includes bringing two individuals from Lexmark's current senior management team on to our team.

This opens up new doors for us. It helps us accelerate our A4 growth strategy. It helps us penetrate new markets. It gets us back to the manufacturer table. The work continues; the regulatory work is mostly done. We're pushing through to get to the point where we can

close a deal at some point in Q3.

OT: If you owned and managed an independent office technology dealership, what would you primarily be focused on today to optimize your dealership's ongoing level of success?

Boissonneault: There are a number of things, based on the observations I see from traveling quite a bit. First and foremost, you need to have a strategy on how you go to market and bring to your end users your digital transformation platform, which includes print, scanning — things with which we are all very familiar. In addition, you've got to have the right talent, the right people, the right software programs and partnerships to really position yourself as a trusted business advisor when it comes to digital transformation. End users want to hear how we can help them transform their businesses to be future-proofed, which implies things like AI, robotic process automation and all the current technology trends that people want to hear about.

That leads me to the second piece, which is that you need to start instilling a learning culture in your company. Technology is moving at such a rapid rate. We don't have the luxury to just be able to surf on what we've known for 20 years. We need to continue to adapt and learn. That's one of the reasons why we're excited to launch our Learning Central, now opened up to our partners, which has a ton of knowledge for them to leverage for themselves and for their sales teams to stay ahead of the technology curve.

The third thing I would say is people need to think about succession planning. There is a new generation coming into this business. There is an opportunity for a business strategy or business plan to be developed alongside the next generation to help encompass the previous two items I shared in terms of the strategy going forward. How do we bring this new talent or new learnings into our company to make sure we're positioning ourselves as trusted business advisors for our end users going forward? ■

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