



ECS: A Powerful Start to the Year Ahead

Held Feb. 8-10 in Scottsdale, Arizona, the 2026 Executive Connection Summit (ECS) brought together the best of our industry — dealers, OEMs, solution providers, consultants and emerging leaders. With record attendance and wonderful collaboration opportunities, ECS kicked off what promises to be a tremendous year of industry events. This year's themes of imagination and initiative were evident throughout the summit — in the panels, the sessions and especially in the hallway conversations where real collaboration happens.



and I was proud to highlight the value BTA continues to deliver to its members.

Despite the economic turbulence of 2025, the manufacturers demonstrated continued commitment to the dealer channel. Leaders from Fujifilm, Konica Minolta, Kyocera, Sharp, Toshiba and Xerox shared insights around services growth, A4 expansion, production print innovation and strategic alignment. The conversations were transparent and challenges were acknowledged, but the overall message was optimistic: the dealer/manufacturer relationship is stronger and more collaborative than ever.

The Breakaway Team's presence made it clear that the next generation of leadership is already influencing strategy. Created by The Consortium in 2024, the group of young leaders held discussions around digital identity, AI fluency, compensation evolution and culture, underscoring a major shift. The business has changed, and dealers who adapt thoughtfully will win.

Managed IT was discussed not as a trend, but as a commitment. Dealers who have made the transition emphasized that MSP success requires operational maturity, adjusted margin expectations, strong vendor partnerships and patience. It is achievable by those who approach it as a strategic evolution, not an add-on.

Agentic AI led conversations across sessions. Leaders shared early wins and real ROI from internal AI initiatives, while emphasizing governance and readiness. The message was balanced: the opportunity is massive, but discipline matters.

ECS did not just deliver insight — it energized the industry. It served as the official launchpad for what is shaping up to be a strong year of collaboration, innovation and forward momentum. Here's to a year of imagination, initiative and industry growth. ■

— Debra Dennis

There could not have been a more meaningful way to begin the event than with the keynote from Jim "Doc" McCloughan. His story of courage and selflessness during the Vietnam War immediately grounded the room. Before discussions around tariffs, managed IT or artificial intelligence (AI) began, we were reminded that leadership is ultimately about service.

One of the highlights of the week for me was the opportunity to represent the Business Technology Association (BTA) alongside BTA General Counsel Greg Goldberg on the association and peer group panel. It was an honor to share the stage with leaders from International Business Products Inc. (IBPI), the Copier Dealers Association (CDA) and the Business Products Council Association (BPCA) to discuss how peer groups and associations strengthen our channel.

The discussion reinforced something I firmly believe: dealers who actively engage in industry associations and peer groups navigate challenges more effectively and build stronger, more resilient businesses. These organizations create trusted environments for collaboration, accountability and growth,

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