



# Sharp's Opportunity

## OEM hosts 2022 Dealer Roadshow Series

by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

Sharp Imaging and Information Company of America will soon wrap up its October and November dealer meetings, with “Opportunity” as the theme, as part of its Sharp 2022 Dealer Roadshow Series. The schedule includes meetings held in: Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; Houston, Texas; Anaheim, California; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The attendees include dealership principals, sales personnel and service managers.

The meetings’ agenda includes presentations by Sharp executives, dealer panels and presentations by Dynabook, a subsidiary of Sharp, and Sharp NEC Display Solutions, a Sharp and NEC joint venture. Through the two companies, Sharp makes laptops and displays available for resale through its dealers. The agenda also includes several breakouts, such as “MFP Hands-On Training” and “Service Roundtable Discussion.”

John Sheehan, Sharp’s senior vice president of channel sales, opened the Chicago meeting, attended by Office Technology magazine, by recalling the successes of 2019. “We finished our roadshows, we finished our dealer meeting, we had a nice dealer trip,” he said. “Then the pandemic hit and everything changed. But I have a good story to tell. We changed as a company.”

Once Sharp made sure its employees were doing well, “we went to our dealers,” Sheehan said. “We said, ‘If our dealers can’t move forward, if our dealers are going to struggle, can’t survive or can’t pay their people, how are we going to handle that?’ That really changed the culture of our company.”

Sharp “put every effort into making sure that you had everything you needed to get through the pandemic,” Sheehan told the dealer attendees. “You saw webinars, the Summer of Sharp, trainings, and [Sharp] paying people for taking trainings and for getting on the phone talking to us — talking about opportunities. So, it really changed Sharp as a company. Hopefully, you saw the effort we made for the dealer community. Fast forward to now ... You’re going to see everything that has paid off over that time to where we are in a good position.”



*John Sheehan*



*Mike Marusic*

In his presentation, Mike Marusic, Sharp’s president and CEO, quickly emphasized that Sharp is in a good position — not only with its dealers, but as a company. “We have had a great two or three years; Sharp has done well as a corporation,” he said. “Our document business has done great and I’ve also seen the interest in Sharp Corp. in the overall ‘business of the office.’”

Marusic provided an overview of Sharp’s strengths and successes, noting, in part, that the company “is already a diversified company.” That reality helped Sharp endure the challenges of the pandemic, he said. “We were so diversified that segments of our business that struggled a little bit — like the office [technology business] — were subsidized by groups that were doing really well. We had other groups that took off, like home appliances; a lot of consumer electronics did very well ... we actually maintained very good profit, [although] we did have a bottom-line profit dip at the end of fiscal year 2019.”

Marusic also explained to attendees how Sharp was able to assist dealers during the worst of the supply-chain crisis, pointing in particular to chip availability. In December 2020, “I told our direct branches that they were not allowed to sell any fax boards; they were not allowed to sign off on any quotes that had a fax board,” he said, noting that Sharp foresaw the looming chip shortage, including the chips used in the fax boards (instead, the boards were made available to dealers). “I said, ‘We’ve got to redesign our boards.’ That took a couple of months. ‘If I don’t have my branches sell [the fax boards] for four or five months ... the dealers will never know.’ You never knew we didn’t have fax boards. We didn’t make fax boards for four months, but you never knew.”

In addition, Marusic took the opportunity to encourage attendees to take a closer look at selling Dynabook laptops and NEC displays. “As print buy-in slowly declines, you’re getting more and more revenue out of your customer with other technologies; that is really the opportunity I want you to walk away with,” he said, then referencing the two foam puzzle pieces each attendee received from Sharp at the meeting, with the word “Opportunity” printed on one and “Sharp” printed on the other. “You can’t finish a puzzle until you have all of the pieces ... the [MFP] hardware, laptops, printers and collaboration displays.” ■

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