

Celebrating BTA's 1st Century

BTA hosts educational & networking events Sept. 1-3

by: Elizabeth Marvel, Office Technology Magazine

More than 450 people gathered Sept. 1-3 in the Business Technology Association's (BTA's) hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, for BTA IGNITE Kansas City and BTA at 100: A Celebration. IGNITE kicked off on Sept. 1 with a reception at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, followed by the educational portion of the event Sept. 2-3 at the Westin Kansas City at Crown Center. On the night of Sept. 2, attendees gathered at Union Station Kansas City to celebrate BTA's 100th anniversary, featuring a stand-up performance by the legendary Jay Leno.

The IGNITE event included four main-stage sessions: "Master Your Mind & Memory," presented by Jim Kwik, Kwik Brain Universe; "Innovate or Die Trying," presented by hacker, inventor and technology futurist Pablos Holman; "Future-Proofing Your Dealership: Technology Investments That Pay Off," presented by Arvind Rao, Great-America; and a dealer panel, "Who Needs Print Management Now That We Have WMPP, MUP & WPP?" moderated by Deborah Hawkins, Keypoint Intelligence. There were also four breakout sessions: "The Information Imbalance: How to Sell to Today's Younger, Better-Informed Buyer," presented by Troy Harrison, Troy Harrison & Associates; "Modernizing Prospecting Leadership: Drive More Net-New Meetings Without Burning Out Your Sales Managers," presented by Kate Kingston, Kingston Training Group; "AI in the Dealer Channel: What's Working, What's Missing & What Must Change Before 2027," presented by West McDonald, GoWest.ai; and "The Future of Office Printing Hardware & the Role of the AI MFP," presented by Robert Palmer, IDC. The event also included time to network with fellow dealers and 58 exhibiting sponsors.

BTA's next event, the Fall Colors Retreat, will be held Oct. 29-30 at the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. For more information, see the ad on page two and visit www.bta.org/BTAAsheville to register. ■

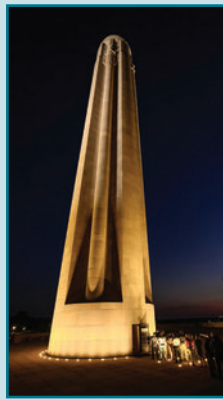
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Clockwise from top: More than 450 people gather for BTA IGNITE Kansas City and BTA at 100: A Celebration; Holman presents the featured speaker session; and Kwik presents the keynote address.



Above: Several BTA and industry leaders give opening comments at BTA IGNITE Kansas City, including (left to right) 2026-27 BTA President Mike Boyle; 2026-27 IBPI President Rob Richardson (the IBPI Connect meeting was held in conjunction with BTA IGNITE Kansas City); 2026-27 BTA Immediate Past President Debra Dennis; and 2026-27 BTA West Representative on the BTA Board of Directors Richard Van Dyke. Left: Attendees had the opportunity to visit with 58 exhibiting sponsors during the event.



Above photos: Attendees enjoyed an evening at the National WWI Museum and Memorial on Sept. 1, where they had the opportunity to network with their fellow dealers, walk through the museum, and take an elevator to the top of the Liberty Memorial Tower, which offers amazing views of the Kansas City skyline.



Above photos: The breakout sessions were presented by (clockwise from top left) Harrison, Kingston, McDonald and Palmer.



Above left: Rao presents his main-stage session. Above right: Hawkins (left) moderates the dealer panel with panelists (left to right) Russell Kromminga, print management expert; Sarah Henderson, director of managed service intelligence, Pacific Office Automation, Beaverton, Oregon; and Chip Miceli, president, Pulse Technology, Schaumburg, Illinois.

The Technology Future

With concerns about the rapid pace of technology innovation top of mind for many attendees, the featured speaker session at BTA IGNITE Kansas City, “Innovate or Die Trying,” attempted to assuage their concerns. Hacker, inventor and technology futurist Pablos Holman started the session by explaining that things are better today than they were 10 years ago and will continue to improve. “There’s no reason to believe that in the future, 10 years from now, things are going to be worse than they are today,” Holman said. “You can hardly find anything that’s worse today than it was decades ago when we were born — or try a hundred years ... Almost nothing. And, so, in spite of all the general malaise ... the future is actually [going to be] pretty awesome.”

He supported this claim by showing that human civilization has always been on an upward trajectory — in population growth, in medical advances so “survival of the fittest” no longer applies, in the evolution of technology, and in energy production, where although we have made great strides, we actually need 10 times more production to satisfy the needs of everyone on Earth. “In the last century, we humans have increased global energy production tenfold,” Holman said. “And we did it mostly by burning more coal, oil, gas and trees. But hopefully we learned our lesson ... We want to figure out if there is a cleaner way, a cheaper way, an easier way.”

The solution: new nuclear reactors that operate at the bottom of mile-deep boreholes where “literally nothing could go wrong, and if it did, there would be no radioactivity at the surface,” Holman said. “One of these things can produce enough energy for a neighborhood or a skyscraper or a data center. And if you need more energy, just drill more holes ...” He then shared that a stockpile of nuclear waste in Kentucky containing 700,000 metric tons of depleted uranium has enough energy left in it to power the entire planet for the next 1,000 years using these types of reactors.

Holman also addressed concerns specific to the office technology industry. “I think there’s a little bit of consternation about what’s happening in this industry and in your businesses,” he said. “I think the only way out is through. You guys should be proud ... This is a history of successes. This is evolution. You guys adapted to the market ... And what I think is missing in the discourse here is, ‘Yeah, looks like people are all using screens. They have laptops. They have phones in their pockets ... Why do they need to print anything anymore? Maybe our business is doomed.’”

“I think you guys are missing the big picture,” Holman continued. “Every single thing in the world will be made the way copies are made right now — on demand, at the point of consumption, by the user who needs it ... Your business is about to get a thousand times bigger in the next generation ... The future is about making the right thing, at the right time, right now ... We need you more than ever because we’re bringing these capabilities into the world.”

He also discussed the use of AI as a tool — not a technology that will doom humanity. “Every technology is a tool,” Holman said. “The hammer is a tool. I can smash your head with it or I can build you a home ... With AI, we’re barely in preschool. With the hammer, we’re in retirement. Everybody gets a hammer; there’s basically no problem. [So with AI] we’re going through these developmental stages. We will learn to wield these tools for mostly positive uses. And even though we’re doing a lot of stupid things with AI ... that’s a temporary condition and we will mature out. So look, I hope you will join me and boycott dystopia ... we’re going to use these tools.” ■

— Elizabeth Marvel



Clockwise from top left: Attendees participate in an activity challenging their beliefs during Kwik's keynote address; Don Risser (left) of DCS Technologies Corp., Franklin, Ohio, visits with (left to right) Harris Eckstrom, Wiley Hutchins and Shelby Clark of LEAF Commercial Capital during exhibit time; Myra Flynn of Source Technologies visits with Richard Piechocki of Digital Business Solutions, Fort Smith, Arkansas, during exhibit time; 2026-27 BTA Mid-America President Jeff Foley serves as emcee during the afternoon of Sept. 2; and (left to right) Emma Bruno and Jucelia Rosseti of CET Group visit with Ingrid Charlton of BXI Consultants Inc., Tonawanda, New York, during exhibit time.

A Look Back at BTA at 100: A Celebration



Left: Attendees gather on the evening of Sept. 2 at Union Station Kansas City for BTA at 100: A Celebration. Above: Boyle toasts to 100 years after his opening comments.

Right: Attendees look at a timeline of 100 years of BTA history during the reception held before dinner. Far right: Avaniko representatives pose in front of a 1926 Ford Model T Roadster Pickup, one of two 1926 vehicles on display (a Model T Coupe was also displayed).



A Look Back at BTA at 100: A Celebration



Above: Current BTA President Mike Boyle (far left) and 16 past BTA presidents were recognized at the event — (left to right) Debra Dennis, Adam Gregory, Don Risser, Tim Renegar, Bob Evans, John Eckstrom, Rob Richardson, Ron Hulett, Todd Fitzsimons, Terry Chapman, Tom Ouellette, Bill James, Mark Naylor, Jeff Jehn, Dennis Hunter and John Kuchta.



Above: Boyle (far right) also recognized 12 of BTA's longest-term members during the celebration. The dealership representatives and their companies (left to right): Art Wagner, Wagner Office Machines, Burr Ridge, Illinois (joined 1941); Mike Nierman, Eakes Office Solutions, Grand Island, Nebraska (1958); Mark Naylor, ABM Automation, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (1958); Scott Leitzel and Steve McMahon, Central Office Service & Supply Inc., Clay Center, Kansas (1959); Chap Breard, MOEbiz, Monroe, Louisiana (1964); Scott Columbia, Plus Inc., Greenville, South Carolina (1969); Johnny Leftwich, Dustin Office Machines, Gainesville, Texas (1970); Samantha and Clint Winchell, Forbes Office Solutions Inc., Newton, Iowa (1971); Debra Dennis, CopyPro Inc., Greenville, North Carolina (1973); Luke Maucher, ABM Office Resources, Fort Wayne, Indiana (1974); and Jeff Jehn, Waltz Business Solutions, Crestview Hills, Kentucky (1956).



Above left: Dennis (left) and Boyle (right) present the 2026 Volunteer of the Year Award to Chip Denlinger, vice president of DCS Technologies Corp., Franklin, Ohio. Above right: Boyle (left) recognizes BTA staff members for their long-term service to the association. From left to right: Brent Hoskins (40 years), Valerie Brisenio (20 years), Elizabeth Marvel (19 years) and Brian Smith (18 years).



Clockwise from top: Attendees pose in the photobooth during the reception; champagne is served from a "ball-gown" between the reception and dinner; BTA Ambassador Bob Goldberg serves as the BTA at 100 emcee; Kansas City's Quixotic, a performance art collective, takes to the rings while a video of BTA's history plays; Jay Leno performs a stand-up comedy set and answers audience questions at the end of the evening; Dennis receives the BTA Past President's Award; and the dinner table setting.