

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Role of the Printer Redefined

Smaller, faster, mobile—today's printer is more than just a peripheral



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What new printer trends should be top-of-mind for solution providers selling printers?

Solution providers and their clients now have a greater breadth of peripheral options to better engage consumers. Using these printers, as part of the right mix of conventional point-of-sale, mobile, and self-service technologies, helps deliver a better in-store experience, which is critical component for achieving an effective omnichannel strategy.

For conventional POS printers, there have been important advancements in performance, reliability, mechanical design, contemporary aesthetics, and ease-of-use. Higher performance helps retailers provide additional information on the receipt that benefits both parties. Added reliability and more advanced mechanical designs (i.e., smaller printers) means avoiding downtime, simplifying integration, and freeing up crucial real estate at the point of sale. A sleek, more contemporary appearance helps communicate the right brand image. And ease-of-use is always a crucial factor for making employees more efficient.

There have been similar advancements in portable offerings as well, based on the need for very small, lightweight, and reliable wireless devices.

In both cases, lower cost options are now available that match up well with some of the more consumer grade host devices that are being deployed.

Which consumables are spurring sales, and are there any new consumables that should be on solution providers' radars?

Consumables and the systems generating enhanced content for these media are facilitating extensive usage in an array of applications. At the point-of-sale, the receipt no longer functions simply as a receipt. Retailers can use it as a tool to generate incremental revenue by adding coupons that increase in-store sales and enhance the user experience. Receipts are also an effective way to bolster loyalty program participation and drive social media engagement. They can even convey important warranty information, or better yet,

data for extended warranties sold at a premium.

Other verticals, such as healthcare, are experiencing noticeable change as well. Generally the large scale transition to electronic healthcare records is eliminating the use of paper-based records, with the objective of securing greater efficiencies and reduced costs. Obviously, this entails a lot less printing. On the other hand, specific printing applications are seeing growth for the very same reasons. Specifically, the use of barcode labels for asset tracking, sample and specimen management, medication dispensation, security, etc, is growing because these applications yield greater efficiencies, cost reductions, and critical improvements in patient safety. In some of these applications, specialized media offering greater durability and fluid resistance are required to ensure readability.

How has the increased demand for mobile solutions affected the printer market?

Increased mobile adoption has definitely spurred incremental demand for reliable, small-footprint wireless mobile printers, particularly in retail and hospitality applications. Using these peripherals as part of an overall shift to mobile POS is elevating the customer engagement experience by delivering more information to the customer, on the spot, while reducing wait times.

What advice do you have for printer integrators looking to sell adjacent solutions in a particular vertical?

I think the salient point is that customers aren't necessarily looking for "printer integrators" and solution providers don't want to be viewed in that light. I think the key is to demonstrate the ability to help customers tackle real world business challenges, while providing technological expertise, reliable service and support, and even flexible financing options. And for suppliers like Seiko Instruments the key is to deliver the right technology options and partner engagement model to help facilitate this strategy — to be a real partner.