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SERVICE AREA:

Complete Office

WHITE PAPER

RICOH VENDOR VISION SMART WORKPLACE INTERVIEW

North America

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Introduction

The traditional work environment is going through fundamental transformation. Artificial intelligence, robotics, and data are automating many activities that workers used to perform and are creating new jobs for those who can produce these automation tools as well as the services to manage these devices. As the workforce transitions and automation increases, the fundamental work environment must shift as well.

Like mobile phones and the consumerization of IT, the consumerization of “smart” things has already started in the home with smart devices. The technology has been evolving, starting with the combination of the Internet, mobility, cloud, sensors, and the Internet of things—which has led to products such as smart light bulbs, thermostats, doorbells and security cameras. These things are all edging their way into businesses. At the same time, the smart office is not just about intelligent devices or physical spaces; in fact, work no longer means being tied to a desk or a central/single location where people congregate to work and collaborate.

Today, work is being performed anywhere at any time—no longer are we confined to the four walls of a cube or office, tethered to a PC or workplace. Work, today, is where work can get done and that is virtually anywhere. The difference between the smart home and the smart office is people. People are still required to transact, communicate, collaborate, and make decisions to get work done. And although devices, tools, and robots may be taking away physical jobs, at the end of the day, people can leverage and use these tools to work more productively and efficiently.

To better segment and organize the “smart workplace,” Keypoint Intelligence has created a taxonomy of services related to our industry that helps define and categorize these disparate technologies and services into a more concrete and comprehensive view of smart workplace solutions and services.



Figure 1: Smart Workplace Segments



When it comes to the office equipment industry, many vendors are participating in the smart workplace in their own way—including automation solutions that simplify workflows surrounding the digital MFP, as well as devices, solutions and services outside of the traditional office equipment space. This document will provide insight into efforts by seven North American OEMs.



Ricoh

Below is a summary of an interview with Glenn Lavery, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Ricoh Americas; President and Chief Executive Officer, Ricoh Canada, Inc.

Figure 6: Ricoh's Glenn Lavery



Interview Summary

Ricoh uses different terms to describe the workplace of the future, including the new world of work, changing workstyles, and changing lifestyles. Essentially these terms represent the same thing: the quest to expand Ricoh's reach beyond the traditional office.

"Our customers are working differently," Ricoh's Glenn Lavery said. "They're working in a new digital environment in fundamentally different ways—always on with access to information from anywhere and anytime. They're transforming in the way they work and ultimately looking for greater levels of collaboration, productivity, and innovation, and our job is to empower that digital workplace and help them drive effectiveness and efficiencies."

According to Lavery, Ricoh's value proposition is all about empowering digital workplaces that enable customers to achieve greater levels of innovative thinking as well as work smarter. This is facilitated through a wide range of technologies and services from Ricoh and its channels including offerings around document management, collaboration services, IT services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and different workflows in cameras.

"Our focus is intended to drive a strong foundational approach to innovation and customer experience, and we'll continue to be committed to the things our customers care about," Lavery said.



Ricoh continues to spend between 5 and 6 percent of its total sales in research and development, continually finding new ways to add value to its customers and society. It is clear that customers will need the right tools to work how they want.

"It's connecting the physical to a digital experience where we can connect the people wherever they are, whenever they need to be connected," Lavery said.

Game-changing technologies and approaches include mobile apps on existing products like interactive flat-panel displays, projectors and print devices; artificial intelligence (AI) that is leveraged to enhance how people work; and reworked processes that better fulfil customer requirements. For instance, in the mailing and packaging space Ricoh is using lockers to dispatch products or tools to people in retail and healthcare environments.

"Our job is to ensure we shift the meaning of the brand in the minds of our customer to one where in fact they see a whole series of products, technology, and services all focused on delivering in that new smart office of the future," Lavery said.

As Ricoh moves towards the office of the future, it is focused on not selling products and services for the sake of selling them but rather serving real issues and challenges customers have in their marketplace or with their customers. It just completed an extensive amount of internal training over the last 18 months to drive home this point.

"By playing a big part in those solutions then we become an important partner to our customer and our channel members," Lavery said.

A key challenge for many customers is enabling their global workforces and networks to collaborate and communicate across great distances, different cultures, and different languages. Ricoh can help them overcome this challenge by consulting with them on ways to better use current technology. New technology from Ricoh may also be helpful, such as the upcoming ability for intelligent whiteboard collaborators to view written words in a language they understand.

"In doing that you are furthering the level of clarity and collaboration available to customers' employees wherever they may be working," Lavery said.

Another Ricoh initiative is the ability for customers to convert incoming mail and checks to digital format, move them to the intended destination, and better analyze the bits and pieces of information coming in from customers. A related project is a RICOH Return Mail Service offering that would help customers understand what is wrong with their current customer data, and how they can fix the problem through scan technology and cloud-based information access.



Ricoh is also fine-tuning augmented reality technology for virtual reception of guests, as well as analytics capabilities for designing physical meeting spaces under a new smart office paradigm. For instance, Ricoh is increasingly able to help companies determine how to divvy up and equip space for meetings between just two, three, or four people.

"The technology enables people to work collaboratively, including for example to do the scheduling, follow-ups, communication, and coordination of who would be involved in activities relative to that meeting," he said.

Lavery mentioned other ongoing services and initiatives to push Ricoh further into smart office territory, including cloud-based print device management and the ability for new workflows to be created and placed right on devices themselves (upcoming smart integration platform)—enabling data collection, processing, analysis, and distribution based on customer requirements.

Ricoh will continue to work closely with partners like IBM, collaborating to understand which office of the future technologies it should prioritize, Lavery said.

"With so much on the go, prioritization is always a great challenge, but it's positive in that we maintain an edge on innovation while listening to what customers need today, while telling us what they're going to need in the future..." he added.



opinion

InfoTrends' Opinion

Office technology vendors recognize that trends like mobility, the cloud, and artificial intelligence are changing the nature of the workplace as well as how people work. While they are using this knowledge to design innovations in office printing, they are also expanding into adjacent or even very new areas that respond to new customer requirements and preferences. OEMs are also playing a proactive role in helping redefine the workplace of the future through risk-taking technologies as well as thought leadership that paves the way forward.



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