The Future of Work
Xerox announces new products, shares vision

by: Brent Hoskins, Office Technology Magazine

On March 29, at its “The Future of Work” press event held at the Xerox Executive Briefing Center in New York City, Xerox Corp. announced 12 A4 and 17 A3 MFPs, both color and monochrome, with speeds up to 90 pages per minute. It was the largest single product announcement in the company’s 110-year history.

Equipped with ConnectKey—a combination of technology and software for small and medium-sized businesses and workgroups in larger enterprises—the new AltaLink products for larger workgroups and VersaLink products for smaller workgroups have similar user interfaces, as well as common features and functionality. They provide for personalized workflows, one-touch access to the cloud and multilayered security features. In addition, channel partners can use the Xerox App Gallery to download off-the-shelf applications and the Xerox App Studio to develop and sell custom applications, to help them gain “stickiness” with clients. Xerox touts in a corporate press release that the product line, available in the second quarter, will allow partners to “provide a more consistent user experience, which translates to better sales and service margins.”

The announcement represents a “new portfolio that transforms the multifunction printer into a smart workplace assistant to meet the evolving needs of today’s workplace,” said Jeff Jacobson, CEO of Xerox Corp., as he addressed attendees. He said the new products are the “next stage” in a product strategy Xerox started in 2013 when ConnectKey—an ecosystem-based platform initially for A3 workgroup devices only—was launched. “Now, we are increasing the range of ConnectKey-enabled devices to include both entry A3 and workgroup A4, with fleet coherency between A3 and A4 devices,” he said. “Today’s announcement is not just about adding more devices. It is about ensuring that every enterprise in every single workplace, from small to large workgroups, has a secure, mobile, personalized and productive experience.”

Jacobson took the opportunity to comment, too, on the company’s vision and strategy as it relates to its product portfolio. “It’s no longer good enough just to deliver great products,” he said. “People are expecting the experiences they have in their personal lives to cross over to the workplace. Additionally, no one wants to have to make the trade-offs any longer between what’s better, what’s faster or what’s more cost effective... Our customers deserve it all; we are going to do everything humanly possible to give our customers what they deserve.”

Xerox must deliver products and services that are cost effective, while helping people become much more productive, Jacobson explained, noting that to meet the requirements of end users, the company must also enable customization and personalization. “Furthermore, as everything becomes more connected, people expect to be able to move very easily between the physical and digital worlds,” he said. “We think of this as much more than just a digital transformation.”

Jacobson said Xerox is focused on helping customers change the way they communicate, connect and work. “The research and development focus of the new Xerox is on developing and delivering document technology solutions that are both customized and cost-effective, productive and personalized and which, again, bridge the gap between the physical and the digital,” he said. “To do this, we are driving innovations in automation, content management, graphic communications, digital communications, analytics and, of course, printing, for organizations of all sizes.”

The vision he shared reflects a strategy at Xerox “that will positively change the revenue trajectory of our business,” Jacobson said. “As you know, the overall document technology industry has a trend of declining revenues. We’ve mirrored that decline. We plan to reverse our revenue trajectory and, ultimately, outperform the market.”

Jacobson also shared that he believes Xerox will “get there,” in part, by improving its efficiency and changing the way it operates. “We began a three-year strategic transformation program just last year, focused on improving our internal processes and systems to simplify the way we do work,” he said. “We’ve streamlined our go-to-market approach to enhance our relationships with our customers. We’ve delayed our organization to make it easier to get to the leadership within our company and to speed up the decision making. We’ve combined our research organization with product development to accelerate the time it takes to move from innovation to product commercialization to revenue recognition. And, we are targeting our investments in technology to... ensure that we deliver an amazing customer experience.”

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