

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:00] DC: Today on The Print Report, we are at drupa live at the Ricoh Henkaku booth.

[0:00:05] PM: And we are here with Ricoh software. We're going to talk workflow, and we're going to talk, co-innovation, which is what Henkaku means.

[0:00:14] DC: Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. All the print that's fit for news.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:21] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. More specifically, we are here with The Print Report, which means, I'm here with my very knowledgeable co-host, Patricia McGrew. Hello, Patricia.

[0:00:38] PM: Hello, Deborah. How are you?

[0:00:39] DC: I'm good, Patricia from the Internet.

[0:00:41] PM: For sure, from the Internet, I guess.

[0:00:44] DC: First of all, before we start with our guests, can we just discuss this spectacle of this booth and how gorgeous it is.

[0:00:51] PM: Yes, it's great. You have to know that Ricoh spends a lot of time thinking about this booth in advance. When you come to a show as big as drupa, you want to stand out, you want to bring innovation, and you want to bring a story that's going to resonate with printers because that's what we're all about here. Henkaku is co-innovation, and it's part of the philosophy Ricoh will explain as you walk around the stand, how they want to partner with printers, not just sell stuff to them, which is kind of cool.

[0:01:23] DC: We have two guests with us today.

[0:01:24] PM: We do.

[0:01:25] DC: Who you work with very closely. Why don't you introduce.

[0:01:27] PM: So, let me introduce my friends at Ricoh software. Linnea Wolken and Lisa Oakleaf, they're Girls Who Print by the way, just to kind of bring it all in full circle. Linnea and Lisa have the interesting task of lifting Ricoh software. If you know Ricoh for only its hardware, you're missing, I think the best piece because there's so much innovation in Ricoh Software. One of the things we want to make sure everyone understands is that Ricoh Software isn't only for driving Ricoh hardware.

[0:02:04] DC: Yes, which I just found out, and I'm like, "Why?"

[0:02:05] PM: It's pretty cool.

[0:02:06] DC: I'm really glad we're doing this podcast, because if I just found out, then there's a lot of people out there who don't know because I actually hang out with you guys.

[0:02:13] PM: Yes. Linnea, explain a little bit about the Ricoh philosophy of being vendor-neutral.

[0:02:20] LW: Definitely. Thanks, Pat, so much for having us today, as well, Deb. For Ricoh, it's so critical for us to be vendor agnostic, meaning vendor-neutral. We are able to connect with a variety of different software systems, hardware as well as even finishing. That is the point. We know there is not typically a shop that has just one vendor in it. So, that is so critical to us, as having the open architecture in order to really be able to connect end-to-end workflow and provide visibility into shop operations with data and other insights.

[0:02:58] PM: Right. Lisa, you've got the fun task of trying to figure out how to get Ricoh workflow products prepared and ready to go to market. There's such a long tradition of production software, that is part of the Ricoh history, going back to IBM printing systems. That,

it's got to be a bit challenging as you're talking to the internal teams about modernizing workflows to meet what modern printers are looking for.

[0:03:30] LO: Yes. It is definitely a challenge, Pat. We spend a lot of time doing, I'll say, validation with our customers. When I say customers, it's both our internal, so the people that sell our solutions, both hardware and software, as well as our customers. My team is solely responsible for ensuring that what we develop and what we bring to our regions within Ricoh fits the market need, and also, something that our people can get behind. We do have, as you mentioned, a long legacy of solutions that do come over from IBM. But we also know that coming into a lot of the different markets, and the different products, the different multi-vendor situations, that as Linnea mentioned, we have to be agnostic. We cannot support our customers if we only service our own products.

[0:04:25] PM: I think the days of printers only owning one vendor's hardware are behind us going forward. They buy what helps them innovate and grow their business. It doesn't matter whose label is on it. They're looking for differentiation. While the hardware is part of that story without superpowers that you get with workflow, it's really hard to differentiate yourself.

[0:04:53] DC: Just a point of clarification. Can you define modern printer for me?

[0:04:59] LO: Modern printer? That's a great question, Deb. I think the modern printer is a company that looks at the traditional value that they've always served but looks forward to what is the next step. They have to have a level of insight about what their customers are expecting, and they have to be able to support that. So, it's important from a long-term perspective to not only live in the moment and be reactive but be proactive. So, a modern company to me is someone that probably has a traditional legacy, mindset, and technologies, but they're also down that path of investing in the digital future. They already have digital, but that is an evolution that is continuously evolving and growing. The companies that are being successful are the ones that are looking at their customers, the communications challenges in the past. And especially with COVID, that really shifted the dynamic, and the companies are thriving, believe it or not, even after the pandemic, and during.

[0:06:04] PM: I know what a not modern printer is, right? A not modern printer is someone who's still selling print as a commodity. They're striving for the lowest cost, the lowest minimum product that they can sell. There are a lot of people who are still in that mode. As long as they're making a living, God bless them. But going forward, it's going to be harder and harder to make a living as a commodity printer, you're going to have to find differentiation.

[0:06:33] DC: Yes. There's also the aspect of the customers on the other end, even in the advertising agencies where I come from, they're not ushering people up the ladder anymore, like they used to when I was there. I mean, I look back in my beginning advertising days. Now, it's like, I had an apprenticeship. I might have been getting a paycheck, but I wasn't allowed to talk to anybody, I wasn't allowed to touch anything, and people just say, "Come here, let me tell you what they're talking about." Until I was able to go on my own. But I had 30 people teaching me that. Now, with people being remote. Now, especially printers dealing with online design tools that are creating some sort of file for them to manage, there's a real need for that modern printer to understand that they're going to be facing different obstacles for files coming in and knowledge of customers.

[0:07:35] PM: Linnea, when you start talking to the customers, both your internal and your external customers about how you can help them develop and grow their business. Think of someone like Deb who's on the buying side, who was on the buying side. How do you communicate the differentiation you can help them bring?

[0:07:59] LW: That's a great question. I appreciate what you were saying. Because I come from that world. I used to be from the brand side, externally from Ricoh. I'd be at the end of the press going, "Why does it look like this? Can you fix it?"

[0:08:14] DC: Welcome to my world. Oh my God. We should have drink sometimes, to talk about those.

[0:08:18] LW: Yes, definitely. We'd love to. Looking at that, and wondering how can we help a customer? There's so many different ways, but at the end of the day, think of the word, automation. That is the keyword here. Automation can provide so many benefits to a printer as well as their customer. That's what I really want to make sure, is understood here, is because

thinking, first off, just getting the file in. Instead of, "Oh, I get a file in, and then your CSR is the one who's opening the email." Well, what if your CSR is on vacation? Who opens that email then?

[0:08:56] DC: What if they're the owner's nephew or niece and has no idea what a file is supposed to look like or what the specs are?

[0:09:01] LW: That's a great point, a great point.

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[0:09:06] DC: Print Media Centr provides printspiration and resources to our vast network of global print and marketing professionals. Whether you are an industry supplier, print service provider, print customer, or consultant, we have you covered, by providing resources and strategies that enable business marketing and creative success, reporting from global events, these podcasts, Project Peacock TV, and an array of community lifting initiatives. We also work with OEMs, suppliers, industry organizations, and event producers, helping you connect and engage with our vast audience, and achieve success with your sales, marketing, and conference endeavors. Visit Print Media Centr and connect with the Printerverse. Links in the show notes. Print long and prosper.

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[0:10:00] LW: With automation and the solutions that Ricoh can provide, we actually can take files from SFTP sites, emails, web-to-print system, bring them into one portal, one cloud-based location, and being able to view the shop's jobs across, and even multiple locations. And being able to determine what is the best place for this to print depending on how it is set up. So, that's just the very beginning of what we're able to do and the benefits it can provide. You don't have to worry about vacation or skill level, it's all brought together. Then, they can be actually malware scanned is one, preflight, automatic preflight, as well as in position. There's a lot that can be done that truly is touchless. That is the amazing part that a lot of people don't realize, the labor savings, also efficiency, less waste because it's done right the first time.

[0:10:59] DC: Linnea, I completely agree with you that it's a customer convenience to be able to submit a file a million different ways. It's certainly a convenience for the printer to have them no matter how many ways it comes into a one space where they can manage them. But the next step of that is, I've still sent a file into a void.

[0:11:19] LW: Yes. A black hole, maybe.

[0:11:20] DC: Into the black hole of hell, where I don't know if it's received. I don't know if it's okay. I don't know if somebody needs something else from me, is the job the right size. You know, as a brand person, you're not sleeping at night until you know that that file is okay. So, what sort of notifications are available for your product?

[0:11:40] LW: That is the wonderful thing about the solution that we have, is the ability to see, okay, the files been sent in, it's been accepted. The nice thing is, the printer can set up different notification options. It doesn't have to be, I want it, somebody read it, somebody did this, or maybe you want every single step, I want to be notified and get lots of emails. That is up to you as the printer to determine that. But at the end of the day, the bidirectional communication is there and available to take advantage of, "No, this file was received. It's been accepted. "Oh, it got sent back. There's some comments on it that need to be addressed. Can they do it or do you need help doing it?"

Those email chains – and the nice thing about it is in the system, no matter who's viewing it has the ability to see because someone could, again, go on vacation or be sick one day. So, you have that chain of custody to really track and trace what's taking place.

[0:12:38] PM: So, it doesn't get lost in the system, because somebody went home early.

[0:12:41] LW: Correct.

[0:12:43] PM: Right. When you're on deadline. that can be pretty deadly.

[0:12:46] DC: Yes. Or the art director is going on vacation, and all of a sudden, they're not there anymore. They didn't tell anybody.

[0:12:52] PM: Yes, there's that.

[0:12:53] LW: There's lots of different things, but we can definitely catch those things and make sure there is no void, the communication's there.

[0:13:00] DC: If everything's okay, is the notification process also automated, like we've received your file, everything is fine, or is a human typing those things.

[0:13:10] LW: Again, it's all how it's set up, you can determine, "I want to be notified at every step or at the certain milestones." So, it is automated though.

[0:13:19] DC: I love that because one of the major objections I hear from printers all the time is that they don't want their customers to know exactly how the sausage is made. I'm always like, either do I. I just want to know, you have my file, it's okay, it's printed, it's in finishing.

[0:13:36] LW: Yes, it's shipped.

[0:13:38] DC: It's shipped as you're tracking the thing, and here's your bill. Have a nice day.

[0:13:42] LW: Yes. You can set those milestones.

[0:13:44] DC: Excellent.

[0:13:45] PM: Lisa, can I handshake all the way out to like a common carrier system so I could get a notification that UPS picked it up?

[0:13:55] LO: I will say yes, Pat, and I will say, we accomplish a lot of what we do in our workflow solutions by our own teams, but also by our partnerships. So, some of our partnerships help us to facilitate more of that end-to-end flow solution. As Linnea mentioned, getting everything in, and being able to automate some of those human touch points, so that your team can focus really where they need to be being agnostic so that we can support those multi-vendor environments. Then, through our partnerships, being able to track all of the jobs

that go through production. So that at the end of the day, you have – I'll call it an audit trail so that you can see what happened when it happened, and that it was successful. So, there's no missing pieces or there isn't that black hole that you might see in some solutions.

[0:14:52] PM: Will this work whether I'm printing invoices, insurance policies, direct mail, charitable solicitation letters, or books, or magazines.

[0:15:04] LO: It will work with any application. I'll say, it's application-agnostic as well. I always liked the term data agnostic too, because data is data. The solutions are meant to serve that data up for the consumer so that they can analyze, gain insight, make better business decisions. The same applies to applications. Whatever you're producing, you have to produce, you have to meet your deadlines. They're all going to be various quantities, various paper, different finishing capabilities. It becomes really important to be able to organize that work efficiently. So that, as it flows through production, you are doing the best you can to minimize waste, and save cost, and be profitable when that job is done.

[0:15:48] PM: How much programming do I have to do as a printer? This sounds like magic, and we know that magic isn't real, it has to do with a lot of really smart people doing things in the background. How much, if I'm a printer, what do I expect to have to do to integrate with you?

[0:16:05] LO: So, we have a couple of different types of customers that we work with. One is, I would say, I'm not going to say more sophisticated, but they may have programmers on staff and they kind of like to do a little bit of it their own. They like to own it, they like to get their fingers in the mix and get dirty, and we do support that. But we also support customers that don't have that sort of background, or knowledge, or staff. We have a great group of people within Ricoh that help us to not only implement but customize solutions if there's a need. So, it can be a basic implementation support, where we're just helping you get the solution stood up and running, and train your people. But if you need additional support, you need additional solutions to wrap around that or customization, we can also support that.

[0:16:58] DC: Before you guys were talking about portals. When I hear portals, I kind of switch to a digital asset management system. Because those were my favorite printers that I worked with, that allowed me to keep certain files on the server, so that we knew that those were the

printable files, by the way. We just wanted to make some tweaks, sometimes a copy change, sometimes a day change, sometimes an art change, but nothing major that a new file would have to be resubmitted. How does your product handle that?

[0:17:34] LW: It's another fantastic way, and you're giving me flashbacks to when you'd write big letters, FINAL, or Editable, Final, things like that.

[0:17:43] DC: Or Test, Don't Print.

[0:17:45] LW: Yes, exactly. What's wonderful is, our solution allows files to be stored in the cloud, so there's access across sites, whoever you can give permissions to, to do that. But in addition to that, you can make sure with those files are setting up, different architecture within it so you know, okay. This is the latest version, and this is when it was done versus other ones that are not. You can pull those down. So, you have that flexibility, and also the ability to integrate with different digital asset management systems to really ensure that the brand is kept consistent and within standard.

[0:18:27] DC: Yes. I mean, as you're speaking, I'm thinking car dealerships, regional chains of car washes, even restaurants that do marketing for everybody to have the right logo, the right image of the car that came from the car maker. Then, only the local is, the most local person is changing that information, the address, that particular phone number of that place that deal in that thing. That is what is customer convenience. If I'm the production manager, I'm the account manager, or I'm even the client, I'm like, "Thank God. I don't have to worry about they have last year's car, or the wrong color in these direct mail pieces."

[0:19:15] LW: Or the wrong offer, even.

[0:19:16] DC: Or the wrong offer, or the wrong legal, or the wrong year in the copyright, which is something that kills me. When you have the wrong legal blurbs that just keep going on. So, just as a – we're talking about a modern print shop that is serving the needs of the modern customer who really needs a lot of additional help right now. If we just look at the way that the world works, the people 50, 40 and younger, they're used to going online to getting their photos. They're used to going online to getting – maybe they have a file on the computer where they

keep all their family information, whatever it is. This is a familiar process to them, and it makes life so much easier.

[0:20:02] LW: I love it.

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[0:20:04] PM: If what you're doing isn't helping you grow, let McGrewGroup help you fix that. Better sales talk tracks, more compelling print samples, and winning workflow strategies can be yours. With decades of experience in transaction, direct mail, and commercial print, as well as years of marketing expertise, we can help with business and production strategies, CCM advice, and develop your content. McGrewGroup is ready to help you grow, expand, optimize, and thrive. Drop us a note on LinkedIn or at our website, mcgrewgroup.com.

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:20:43] LW: You mentioned something that I want to hit home on is personalization. That is something that is so critical, and being able to take your file that has specific details like you mentioned, but still say it's from farm town USA, or wherever it's from, and being able to personalize it. That is something else that we're able to do with our solutions, and have that connected experience, ensuring also that that print item is sent to the right location, or neighborhood, area, et cetera. Those are important points.

[0:21:15] DC: Just the last thing I want to say about it is that that doesn't address the "Dear Deborah" thing, but that's a separate thing. This is making sure that I get the right information for where I live, and the place that the business wants me to go based on the education, information, sales, or marketing that I'm getting at my house.

[0:21:38] PM: Yes, absolutely. One of the things I love about working with this team is that, because they're software-focused, they're having all those conversations with customers about what they need to be able to sell. So, software is only useful to you if it can help you produce a differentiated product for the clients you're trying to serve. Lisa, talk to me a little bit about the

kinds of conversations that printers come to you with because I know they pose challenges to you on a daily basis. What are some of the big challenges they're facing?

[0:22:17] LO: That is a great question. I will start by saying, in many of the conversations, when workflow comes, many of the customers kind of glaze over, and they don't honestly know what to say or where to go, because it is a non-tangible thing. They don't understand how to build an ROI case. So, part of our conversations really revolves around getting them to start talking about workflow and getting them to understand that maybe their workflow isn't as efficient as they thought. Usually, once you turn on the faucet, it becomes a waterfall of information. From there, you start to see some of the bottlenecks, and the cracks, or the chinks in the armor. Those always revolve around certain key areas.

Linnea mentioned onboarding earlier, and that was getting jobs into production and minimizing touch points. Then, you have the actual preparation to get it to the printer. Then, you have potential variable, which Deb and Linnea talked about. Then, you have post-press, how does it get finished? How does it get shipped? So really, I would say, we come across conversations where all of those areas are impacted. I would say, still getting the jobs into production, and processed into print, and then tracking things are the biggest ones that we hear over and over, but it's a journey.

[0:23:47] PM: Do you hear from printers that they're actively aware that they should be integrating these systems with their business systems? It seems to me like there's such a huge opportunity there.

[0:23:58] LO: Yes, all the time. More than anything, they want data. They not only hope to integrate their workflow, but they want data fed from their production to these systems, because it's their management, it's their business. It tells them if at the end of the day, they're making money. Without data, you're guessing, and you're trying to look at history. History isn't always accurate because it's relying on people.

[0:24:27] DC: I just want to add something to that. Going back to the modern, I like talking about a modern printing business. That data can also be used to strengthen customer relationships. That data can be kicked right back in and said, "You know, last year, looking at

our data of your work coming through here, we probably could have combined two mailings here, saved you some money. Because we're going to save some money, let me show you this new thing we can do. Let's add a marketing technology to it."

[0:25:01] LW: Electronic communication.

[0:25:02] DC: Yes. "Let's add some digital marketing to it. Let's make this a smarter campaign because now we know more information about how you are sending us work and what your needs are."

[0:25:17] PM: One of the things we learned, I was working with a printer in the Midwest, so we started asking these questions about how they were integrating digital with their print. They're all, "Yes, we do that. We do that. Yes, we do that." I said, "Oh. Is that a good revenue producer for you?" He said, "Well, honestly, I won't be able to tell you until February." We were chatting in June. I said, "February, really?" Their answer was, "Well, we don't actually know if we made any money until we do our end-of-year reconciliations." "So, what's the holdup?" He says, "Well, you know, there's all this change management that goes on in my world. A sales guy comes in and tells us, 'Oh, no. The run needs to be longer, or it needs to be shorter, or we need a different paper.' So, all the costing and estimating was done upfront. That's what we're kind of basing our revenue projection on, but then all these changes come through. So, we don't actually know if we made money on a job until February." I think I almost cried that day. I would imagine that as you're talking to customers, some of them may not admit that they don't know what they're making on a job, but it seems like an important conversation.

[0:26:34] LW: I'm surprised they're still in business.

[0:26:36] PM: Honest to God, they are. They're a giant commercial printer.

[0:26:38] DC: How do they estimate if they don't know if they're making money?

[0:26:41] PM: Basically, they use the exact same estimation framework for the entire year, regardless of whether paper prices went up, regardless of whether labor rates went up.

[0:26:54] LW: How much ink is laid?

[0:26:55] DC: Energy, gas prices, my God. Taxes, insurance.

[0:26:57] PM: Energy, all of it. The killer is, they are a hybrid printer, they are printing both –

[0:27:01] DC: Can I have their number because I –

[0:27:03] LW: I want to help them.

[0:27:06] DC: I want to send print there because it sounds like it's going to be very expensive.

[0:27:09] PM: The thing is that they print on both offset and digital equipment.

[0:27:15] LW: But what I want to jump in, though and say, is like hearing that, and I said, we want to go help them. That's one of the things Ricoh has great professional services, consulting services, name it anything. I know it might be a bad word to say. However, there's such value that can be brought there because I love when you say this, walk the workflow, understand what's happening in your shop, where are those pain points or disconnects. They can be helped because it's efficiency and profitability that they're not optimizing, hearing that story.

[0:27:48] PM: That's exactly true, which brings me back to Lisa in integrating with business systems. Because it seems like there's such a huge value.

[0:27:54] DC: We got off that topic very quick.

[0:27:57] PM: Yes, but it seems like it's such a natural if – what do printers complain about? Printers complain about margins and revenue. But if they're leaving it on the table, because they're not actually tracking the data through their workflow, and then they're not feeding data that's available to them back into their business systems, how do they expect to make money?

[0:28:19] LO: I think the reality is the ones that are not are actually realizing that they need to, and the ones that are, are realizing the success from that information. So, it's a race to the bottom for the –

[0:28:31] DC: Yes. But are they really realizing – I mean, when I hear, listen, I hear a lot of people talk about "workflow," and I just did air quotes, which nobody can see here. That means so many different things to so many different people. Everybody thinks that they have this great system for them. So, how do you actually show them that life can be better? Do you show them case studies, you walk the workflow as Pat says, and said, "Okay, let's walk your workflow. And now, let me come back and tell you all these spots that we can help you improve"?

[0:29:09] LW: Yes, we definitely do. So, I'm going to jump in there because I'm very close to this area. What Ricoh has been able to do is twofold, depending on what the customer wants to do. Either you can go online and fill out a survey just to get the conversation started. If you don't know where your efficiencies could be optimized more than they are today. There's also the opportunity for someone to come on site, and spend a day to two days ideally too, to really understand the business, dig deep, talk to the operators, and really understand those opportunities. So, that's just the beginning of the conversation though. That's one of the things, honestly, I really love about Ricoh is, it's not just a one-time sale. It's a long-term partnership. We want to understand what's happening today, what are your future goals so we can work together to achieve those, because your success is our success is how we see it.

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[0:30:09] DC: Like what you hear? Leave us a comment. Click a few stars, share this episode, and please subscribe to the show. Are you interested in being the guest and sharing your information with our active and growing global audience? Podcasts are trending as a potent direct marketing and educational channel for brands and businesses who want to provide portable content for customers and consumers. Visit printmediacentr.com, click on podcasts, and request a partner package today. Share long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:30:42] PM: Lisa, I mean, backfill that a little bit for us, because it's not magic. Even once you walk the workflow, you've got to map it to something that's doable. I know the professional services team, they look at it, they try to match the right solution, but they're also feeding back to your gaps. How does that conversation take place internally for you to figure out which gaps you want to fill?

[0:31:10] LO: We have a couple within our solution, we actually have what I'll call an insight portal. When our customers are using the solution and maybe come to a point where they realize there's some function they would love to see developed, they can submit it directly into this portal, which comes directly to my team, which feeds into development. Otherwise, we of course, have built those relationships with our customers, and that can come through our sales channel and our consultancy teams who actually work with our customers. I want to say, one thing through case studies you mentioned earlier, Deb, one thing that we try to do on all the solutions when we deliver them is to build those case studies. But we also learn from our customers, we don't know everything.

I will say, there isn't a magical solution that is easy to use. You don't have to touch, it's inexpensive. It does take a level of commitment, both from the people in the facilities as well as from Ricoh to make that dream come true. So, it's a magical relationship, I will say.

[0:32:20] PM: Yes. The thing is that workflow gives you superpowers. Right?

[0:32:24] DC: Yes. My last question is really, just to help the printers listening here about the skill levels of employees they might have to have in the print shop. Not to integrate, but to use, and ultimately communicate to customers the benefits of their new portals, or workflow, or how it benefits them.

[0:32:49] LO: I will start by saying, at Ricoh, we have a user experience design team. What that means to the general populace is, we have dedicated members that spend their whole days looking at user experience. So, they are walking through the flow of our own tools, and they are looking at it through the lens of a customer. When it comes to implementing solutions, that may take a little more complexity, and that gets into programming and IT, which we can support or the customers can. But when it comes to the general operators that are going to be using your

tools after implementation, we use our user experience design team to help us make those as simplistic as possible, as few steps as possible to achieve the results.

[0:33:41] LW: Lisa, I want to add on to the great points that you've made there regarding user experience. I'll say it now, I am not tech-savvy.

[0:33:51] DC: Because we're brand people. Thank you. You're my people now.

[0:33:55] LW: Exactly. I look at it as, can I do this?

[0:33:59] DC: Thank you. Me too.

[0:34:01] LW: That's kind of my code, like, okay. It that's simple that anybody can use it, including myself a marketer.

[0:34:08] DC: I was actually going to volunteer to test it for you at any time because if I can use it, anyone can do that.

[0:34:14] LW: Exactly.

[0:34:13] LO: We would hold you to that.

[0:34:15] LW: Exactly. I love it. That's something that's really critical to us as we're developing these things. As time has gone on realizing, the workforce is aging out, unfortunately. So, we need to be simpler, less skilled labor to be able to really use our equipment, our software, and our services holistically. It's so critical that we are able to do that whether it's onboarding jobs. One of the things that flashed in my head is our brand-new, it's called Ricoh Auto Color Adjuster.

[0:34:48] DC: Oh, I love that.

[0:34:50] LW: It is fantastic, I will say. It's life-changing, game-changing for a printer because it does not require expertise on the color side. Not someone highly skilled, whatsoever, I can do it.

If that tells you anything, it's easy, and it's fast. You can do precise color matching, also matching to a golden sample, as some like to say, and there's no, literally, no skill required. An easy button.

[0:35:15] DC: I just want to say one last thing about this, which is, because we're talking about the skill level at the print shop. At the same way, this is an attractive proposition for someone coming out of school. I'm using this technology that runs the whole print shop, and I can see, have this visibility versus, "Hi. We manage everything on an Excel file." They will run for the hills. You know what I'm saying? It is so much more attractive for a younger person to really see that if you –

[0:35:47] LW: A modern print shop.

[0:35:49] DC: Yes, a modern print shop that is actually utilizing technology, because that is what they understand.

[0:35:56] PM: One of the things I wanted to jump in on, Linnea and Lisa, one of the things I love about Ricoh is that, so many of the people that I interact with at Ricoh have been printers or brand people. They come into the business with this knowledge, so it's not like, they went to computer programming school, and now they're coming into Ricoh, and they're programming all these things, or they're engineers and they're building presses. They've actually been printers, so they actually understand that somebody has to use this. So, it gets reflected now I think more than ever before in the user interfaces I see on the Ricoh products. I'm always so excited to see when it's easy to use because as Deb was saying, you're not going to win friends and influence people with Excel spreadsheets. That's not something anyone wants to deal with.

[0:36:46] LW: Definitely not. Post-it notes, that's another favorite.

[0:36:48] PM: Post-it notes or the other one. So, I feel like your user experience mindset, how will a customer use it? How will they –

[0:36:58] LW: Customer-centric is really what it's about.

[0:37:01] PM: It really is. Then, because if customers don't like the way they have to use a product, they are amazingly capable of stopping using that product, then going back to Post-it notes and spreadsheets.

[0:37:13] LW: And it becomes shelf wear.

[0:37:14] PM: It does.

[0:37:14] DC: By the way, we all have this example in our pocket. How many apps are on your phone that you don't touch anymore?

[0:37:19] PM: Yes.

[0:37:20] LW: That's a great point.

[0:37:21] PM: Yes. If it's not easy to use, we're not going to use it. We walk away.

[0:37:24] LW: I want to finalize this kind of in a way of talking about the co-innovation and the Henkaku theme that we have here. To me, at the end, I mentioned customer-centric. That's what it's about, is co-innovating, talking with – you printers out there, please, we would love to hear from you, and get one-on-one conversations to understand what it is you're needing, how we can help. That's what it's about at the end of the day.

[0:37:49] DC: It is. I'm just going to jump in on you first. Before you speak to Ricoh, speak to your customers, printers, and say, "How could we make this easier for you?"

[0:38:00] LW: A hundred percent. Couldn't have said it any better.

[0:38:03] LO: Spirit of Henkaku.

[0:38:06] PM: There you go. It is, it's that co-innovation. Work with your partners, work with your printers as partners. Printers, work with your customers as partners, create the best thing you can to differentiate yourself.

[0:38:19] LW: With automation, and really efficiency at the end of the day to drive those printers.

[0:38:24] DC: Yes, a hundred percent. Also, it's repeatable. If you know that you are helping a certain customer with certain problems, you can go to the other customers out there, you can assume they have the same problems and say, "We have resolved this for X, Y and Z, we can do it for you." Ladies, thank you so much for inviting us here to this amazing booth at drupa. This podcast comes out after drupa. There'll be plenty of photos online for everybody to see what has been going on here. Everything you need to know to connect with Linnea, and Lisa, and Ricoh is in the show notes. Pat McGrew, any final words?

[0:39:03] PM: Just please follow up. I don't care who you're working with today, make sure you follow up. Take a look at what is on offer here, because again, as a vendor-agnostic, vendor-neutral, workflow solution, it can help any printer, and I think that's exciting.

[0:39:21] DC: I agree. Until next time, everybody. Collaborate long and prosper.

[0:39:26] LW: Thank you.

[0:39:26] LO: Thank you so much.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:39:31] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through printmediacentr.com. We'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

[END]

Mentioned in This Episode:

drupa: <https://www.drupa.com/>

Ricoh Global Software: <https://global.ricohsoftware.com/>

Linnea Wolken: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/linneawolken/>

Lisa Oakleaf: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisa-oakleaf-6170a526/>

Pat McGrew: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patmcgrew/>

McGrewGroup: <https://www.mcgrewgroup.com>

Deborah Corn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahcorn/>

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