[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:00.6] DC: Today, on The Print Report, revisiting Ricoh after drupa.

[0:00:04.2] PM: What are the trends and what does the future hold?

[0:00:09.0] DC: Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew, all the print that's good for news.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:17.1] DC: Hey everybody, welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse, more specifically, The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. I am Deborah Corn, which means?

[0:00:26.2] PM: I must be Pat McGrew.

[0:00:28.0] DC: Today, you can be Pat McGrew, I bestow it upon you.

[0:00:29.7] PM: Thank you.

[0:00:31.1] DC: Pat, I'm really excited, we have two of our favorite Girls Who Print with us today, Linnea Wolken and Lisa Oakleaf from Ricoh Global Software. We had a lovely conversation with them in their freaking fantastic booth at drupa, and now we're going to carry on that conversation.

[0:00:51.8] PM: Right? So, look, this is a chance to kind of revisit some of the things we talked about but also bring the hindsight point of view, right? We all were together for a beautiful 11 days in Germany and we saw a lot of things, we saw a lot of announcements. We saw Ricoh, just the stand was incredibly crowded the whole time but there was a lot of really interesting innovation that was brought to bear and I think, as we start to look at Ricoh software moving forward that there are a lot of really cool stories to tell.

So, it is important, I think, for Ricoh to have a voice about what the current trends are that they took away, the things that they want to make sure they're incorporating into their future product solutions, and how their customers reacted to the story they brought to the big show, not just for that 11 days but for the next few years to come. What are the influences that you saw and heard from the people that you had a chance to talk to? So, Linnea, what was cool?

[0:02:04.2] LW: Goodness. First off, hi, ladies. Thanks for having us again.

[0:02:07.3] PM: You bet.

[0:02:08.8] LW: And I was so proud, to be honest, I think that's the best word I can use, proud of the Ricoh booth and how it stood out, and really, we highlighted the co-innovation story. How we have partnered with existing customers and come up with a variety of different solutions to answer challenges that happened, and then ideas for the future, and that's what I figured would be really good today is I wanted to highlight some key trends that we saw at drupa as drupa being a 24-year that will continue on into the future.

And some of these trends, I think are important to highlight both to know, "Hey, Ricoh is working on these and have been already." As well as customers being aware of them because it's so important to know the trends, to remain relevant and competitive and actually grow by knowing these trends and adopting them to really drive efficiency and us, as a vendor partner, to be accountable and really be a long-term strategic partner to customers. So, I know that was a lot to answer your question but I'm very excited to talk about it and dig deeper.

[0:03:17.3] PM: So, Linnea, one of the things that was so remarkable about the Ricoh stand, I mean, it was an amazing – as you said, it was an amazing stand and they had Henkaku story, the co-innovation story was really brilliant, and I like the way workflow was laid out throughout the stand. You could have a workflow conversation pretty much anywhere in that stand and it was a big stand.

But, as you were listening to people and as you talk to your colleagues who were listening to people, did something stand out about what they were asking for? Because we know that a lot

of them came with needs, they came with a shopping list, "I'm doing stuff but I'm having problems here, here and here." What did you hear?

[0:03:56.5] LW: Well, I heard a lot about AI, machine learning, how are those being used and are you using those? And to be honest, Lisa and I walked the show a lot and saw a lot of different avenues of robotics for example, but most of the time, seeing robotics, which to be honest, we did not have in the Ricoh stand because we didn't have something we were ready to sell to people.

So, what we were able to talk about specifically around artificial intelligence for example, is the optimization of workflows, and how it can help reduce manual intervention, streamline resource allocation, and how do we do that. It's really a combination of the Internet of things, technology, that we have to monitor devices and performance, as well as we heard a lot of questions around predictive maintenance.

And using machine learning algorithms to monitor equipment and performance, and the real critical piece that people got really excited about was the ability to predict maintenance needs, which avoids that downtime that all of a sudden, something crashes, you can't use it anymore and you're like, "Where am I going to move this job to?"

So, that's some of the technology and questioning and conversations that we really had a lot of focus on is using data and learning and machine learning especially to really optimize quality and innovation and how we're doing that, lots of questions around that, and it was exciting to share where we're going with it and what we have today.

[0:05:30.8] PM: So, one of the things that we've talked about and both on previous podcasts and kind of just in general conversations is that many printers are feeling like, they need more accountability and they look to their workflow partners for help with getting that accountability into their overall workflow and it's accountability at so many stages. It's not just data capture and the ability to analyze it to make better decisions.

The predictive maintenance that you talked about but we're also seeing a trend among printers to demand accountability for the efficiency vendors are promising. So, what kind of trends kind of bubble up not only from within your own stand but just generally, what you saw?

[0:06:18.4] LO: I'll take that one. This is Lisa. Thank you, ladies, as well, and Pat, that's a great question. I felt like, from the show perspective, the trends around AI and around automation robotics, it was pervasive across every hall at the show, but I also feel that customers are really – because of the resource challenge that we have as an industry as a whole, right? People are leaving the industry.

We're trying to backfill those positions with less talented skillsets, talented people but not in the industry knowledge, and all the great conversations that we've had were really around, "I hear you, I see you promoting stuff that you're doing around automation and AI but how does that help me? How is that going to help me with my challenge?" And so, they were looking for those meaningful conversations.

And Ricoh as a whole, obviously some of the investments that we've made, we were able to articulate how some of the touch points we've removed from the processes, how some of the visibility around data and what people can actually gain insight around will really help them to pinpoint other areas of focus. I think, to me, that was kind of the catch-all, was automation was everywhere but how does it help our customers?

How are they benefiting from that was a real conversation and it was great to see those conversations happen because traditionally, we focus on the more tangible items and workflow is now starting to become more at the forefront of what people need. They know they need it, they aren't sure. So, they are looking to their partners, to the vendors, to help go on that journey with them.

They're expecting us to provide predictability, they're expecting us to help them remove tasks, they're expecting us to give them smarter tools because that's what they truly need as a whole, and that's what we're striving to do with our solutions.

[0:08:16.5] PM: And that seems to be table stakes now, right, Linnea? I mean, you've got to do that.

[0:08:20.8] LW: A hundred percent. I think, if you don't have that visibility, there's something wrong and you shouldn't be using that vendor to be quite honest and direct with everybody here, and I was going to say, as something that just resonated when you were speaking, Lisa, was, you know, we have a customer there in the UK and they were using our Ricoh supervisor, our analytics tool.

And they thought they were at capacity and they were really surprised to learn that I don't want to throw out too harsh a number here, but we'll say, under 25% utilization of their equipment. Yes, big mouth opened, they were very surprised and to look at ways to really improve that was very easy by having that data, and for example, it's when are you doing your maintenance on your machines, don't interrupt.

You know, it seems common thought but you never know what's happening in your shop until you look at the data. You know, don't interrupt when you should be productive doing that at less busy times for example. So, there's one of many.

[0:09:22.2] DC: I just want to throw in a print customer perspective on this accountability thing, which I love. I love being accountable and I love being able to hold people accountable because I think it makes – someone just say, it's a very – you have very clear roles in that relationship, right?

[0:09:37.6] LW: It's important.

[0:09:38.8] DC: If printers are going to market, that they're going to help their customers get to the market faster, then they had better be accountable and they had better do that as efficiently, as effectively as possible, so they're not messing up their margins and their profits on these individual jobs by having any issues along the way. So, I love this accountability conversation but I just wanted to share that it's not just within the print shop.

It's how your print customers are going to differentiate between the vendors that they use. This one does what it says it's going to do and this one doesn't, and you know what? The one who says they're going to do what they want to do, it might cost me a little more money but I can sleep at night and I have to say, as a print customer, I try to tell printers this all the time, there is no amount of money that I won't pay to be calm about my job and be able to have answers for people in a timely manner and always be moving forward.

[0:10:45.7] LW: Yeah, that's a great point, Deb, and I wanted to say something because I am responsible for doing marketing for Ricoh and to be honest, Ricoh is a very conservative company and when we publish for example, Speeds and Feeds and other things, oftentimes, it's like, "Wait, this is the number we're able to hit." But they don't publish that number, they actually would be more conservative in what they publish because they want to foster that culture of accountability.

And we will deliver what we say we're going to deliver, which is often, I've seen the opposite in other companies. So, it's something else that I pride myself on.

[0:11:22.0] PM: But I think that comes into play in the software space as well, Linnea. One of the things we always relied on, on Ricoh software, we always rely on Ricoh software for is that when you say it does something, that is what it does and that is what it delivers, and I think one of the nice things that I've really been excited about as Ricoh continues to add new software solutions into the marketplace and build modules is that you're focusing on that accountability aspect of the entire print workflow.

But you're also focusing on the useability aspect of it, and I think one of the trends that sort of hit me in the face, not just in a drupa year but it has been building over the last several years is that printers don't have a lot of patience for difficult to use software. That in the past, they sort of felt that if it was difficult, it must be better, right? If I have to do a lot of things and twiddle with a lot of things, that must make it, you know, bigger, it must give it superpowers.

But I think that the tide turned, maybe during the pandemic, that as a breakpoint, that, "Wait a minute, I only have time to be adjusting eight million, you know, levers and knobs in my workflow software in order to gain, you know, five minutes of efficiency. I really need my

software to be more intuitive and smarter." And so, when I go into the marketplace with my shopping list and my checkbook, I'm going to start doing my due diligence.

And actually asking my vendors how they're going to make this easier for me and one of the things we saw not just in the drupa stand but we see this when Ricoh does [inaudible 0:13:14.6] that you're able to demonstrate that, how you make it easier, how you make accountability easier to access. So, as you look forward and as you start to look at what your customers are asking you for, are they bringing specific kinds of bottlenecks and things that they're experiencing that they're looking for your help to make more efficient?

[0:13:40.0] LO: Pat, that's a great question. I would say, the answer is yes. It's an interesting dialog when you get to workflow because a lot of times, they don't want to talk about it, and a lot of that is because they don't know but it boils down to, I'll say the three P's: product, process and people, and not necessarily in any specific order but you have to have products that help your people.

And you have to have people that are accountable and you have to have a process that allows them to do their job successfully, and we often find that within those three categories, they're not imbalanced. They might be missing a product that could help them drive efficiency. They might have the wrong people or their people are undertrained or their processes in general might be kind of out of date, not really working for their environment anymore.

And so, we find often, that those discussions serve three purposes. We have some great consulting teams that we work with in Ricoh that actually have those sit-down conversations, map the workflow, talk through the processes, understand even down to the usage of their space, like, how are they utilizing their floor plan, and are there any ways that we can improve that efficiency?

Is there a direct line people can walk versus kind of a puzzle piece? What products are you using? And it's interesting because, we're human, right? So, we buy something, we use it for a slice and we don't ever get the full benefit out of the products that we buy. So, that's part of the discussion too is, are you actually using what you have? Maybe you have some great function at your fingertips, you just don't know it's there.

And so, we like to kind of do that holistic approach with our customers and we love to sell them our products but we also want to make sure that they have that balance between those three P's because otherwise, you might spend a lot of money or a little bit of money on a product but you're still not going to get the optimal results if you're not looking at the whole picture.

[0:15:44.6] PM: It is something I've noticed about working with Ricoh professional services consultants. Their immediate thought process is not, "What can I sell you to plug a hole?" It really is an assessment-based approach that says, "Let me look at your workflow, let me see what you're doing, let me see how your people are working." As you said, "Is the floor plan even right? Are people turning in circles a lot," right? Because we've seen that.

But how do I map you for efficiency? How do I help you use what you already have most efficiently? And then if we've got things that will actually make you even more efficient, then, let's have that conversation. Let's get you as efficient as you can be with what you have, and I've always appreciated that about them because you don't feel like you're in a car lot, you know, being upsold the next model.

[0:16:39.4] DC: Yeah.

[0:16:39.7] LW: Every business is different, and to your point Pat, and it is something, and we haven't said the word but I always like to say this, my favorite word for Ricoh is agnostic, and that's what our software is, and just to make sure everybody is on that same page for the definition is, it's open architecture. It is designed to play with other software, other hardware and integrate.

So, you get that full picture from a customer to understand what's coming in, giving that accountability of jobs and making sure they're allocating the printing cost correctly to getting the full visibility, really critical.

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[0:17:17.0] DC: Are you looking to elevate your game, take your bottom-line customer relationships, and events to the next level? Then, I want to work with you. I'm Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. I engage with a vast, global audience of print and marketing professionals across all stages of their careers. They are seeking topical information and resources, new ways to serve their customers and connect with them, optimize processes for their communications and operations, and they need the products and services and partnership you offer to get to their next level.

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:18:20.0] PM: Deborah always wants to know about how you're helping the printers, right? And how the printers really are going to manifest the use of your software, and Lisa, I know I interrupted you but could you help us understand how you've helped people?

[0:18:35.3] LO: Yeah, I was actually going to jump in with the – a great use case and we've used it a lot over the years but we work with a smaller printer company called Your Chat Printing, and it was a great example of one of these holistic approaches where we went in, we walked through their workflow, we talked to them about how do orders come into their production, what types of MIS-type tools do they use, what type of prepress tools do they use. How do they get to production, how do they track it through production?

And we looked at all of those pieces as well as the process and what the people were doing, all the touch points that they had, and we use third-party tools as well as tools like our own, Ricoh TotalFlow BatchBuilder product, and we basically glued all of it together. So, we didn't go in and create some magical product that solved everything but we were able to place some of our solutions along with our services, to take the products they have, streamline those together, as well as input additional function that automated some of those prepress tasks that they had.

And then, gave them through our solution, the visibility. So, once it got to production, they were able to track through barcode scanning, so everybody does that, but they were able to track in the system where the jobs were at, what was going on, they could initiate reprints, they could produce tickets to track. It was so much easier that they've been using the system for years. So, it was a great use case for us and a great way of how we look at it.

We're not necessarily – many customers have multiple different workflow streams. So, the reality is, how do we give them visibility to what's going on in those streams and how do we take those workflow streams and make them more efficient, and if their solutions or product like I mentioned, Batch Filter that we can put in there, that's great. If there are services that we could provide to put some glue in there and kind of pull those disparate solutions together a little bit more, then that's also great.

So, we hope that our customers appreciate that approach but we're very proud of our portfolio and our team.

[0:20:41.1] PM: I think that one of the things you've mentioned that really resonates with me is that by gluing things together, you are able to give them a better view into all the processes, and that delivers more accountability from all the team members as well. Now, they actually know what they're trying to do, and whether they're accomplishing it because I think, in a lot of print shops, I know when we walk into them, everybody thinks they're doing the best job they can possibly do.

They don't realize, maybe that they're going in circles, right? Because they're just doing the job maybe the way they were taught to do it by the previous holder of that position, and no one has ever taken a couple of steps back to say, "Well, you know, if you did this instead of this, or if you did this before that, all of a sudden, you'd find that you had 10 more minutes in every hour." right? And – which is an amazing amount of time to give back to anybody who is in a manufacturing role.

So, those are the things that I think people really need to understand to talk to you about, that there are these things that you can help them with. Are there cases where you've been able to

help a customer actually drive better ROI in terms of the investments that they've made with you by helping them adjust their workflow?

[0:22:00.7] LO: I'll give you a couple other – maybe one other use case, a little bit of a legacy use case but we do have customers that we work with. I'm thinking of one in particular, which is a large financial customer and when you think about mail, I know that that's changing and evolving year over year but there are so many dollars that are left on the table just from mail alone.

Like, how are these businesses able to get the best ROI out of that process, and many of them don't know or they outsource it to third-party, and it really takes some insight through workflow tools, to be able to understand how you could get a better ROI from your mail cost, where your shipping costs are going, so maybe you can adjust that or use different areas, just use different locations to ship to or from and we've actually seen some great results through our Ricoh Process Director platform because of that.

So, that is a complete workflow backbone that will integrate to many different solutions that can take in data streams. It can work with tools like Quadient BCC and it will basically give and receive data all day long and jobs and it marries it together, it can scrub files. What it does in the end though is it helps to comingle, it helps to housekeep all of that data. So, when you get to the mail side, you might have comingled a bunch of different records together.

But it tracks every single piece and it knows where they're at and it allows you to get the best price from a postal output. So, there's just some used cases like that where we have used our solutions to help really implement an ROI value for the customer and save them some dollars so that they can invest in other areas as well.

[0:23:51.2] LW: I was going to jump in on that one Lisa, because I just – another used case came to mind for me and you mentioned Ricoh Process Director as the backbone and a new area, a market of logistics has really come to light lately with Ricoh Process Director and how it can help. So, I am thinking about a use case, it's a large retailer based in the UK that had over like 700 different locations and a growing online business.

But they were struggling with, "How late can we go in a day and still guarantee next-day delivery?" And so, what they were able to do with Ricoh Process Director is being really to transition more from a centralized printing model to a distributed one for critical order documentation. So, what that allowed was more printing on demand at the most appropriate location. So, that was something that was slowing them down.

Also, the other thing was they re-engineered documents with the help of our professional services teams to reduce the cost and waste and create a brand new self-service e-statement portal, say that twice, and what that really enabled them to do was automatically process the dispatch notes and they had, I think it was over a million per week they were doing for that and still meet, this is the key piece with process director, is regulatory compliance for storage and retrieval if they ever need to track and trace something.

So, this is a retail environment that was – be able to implement with Ricoh and our services and our, you know, process director solution a next day delivery. They could place the order up to 11 PM at night, which was significantly later than where they were before. They simplified their order workflow and that saved them over a million pounds, I believe it was, and also the key point on the self-service portal was customers could now access statements online versus calling the call center, and that reduced call center volume by 40%.

[0:25:57.2] PM: Which means it reduced costs by probably even more than that, right? And I think one of the things that Linnea, I think it's important for people to take away from this podcast is that you may have heard the name Ricoh Process Director and if you're not from the sort of legacy transaction world where I spend a lot of years, you may not know the name but that process director piece of the name is really telling.

And so, it's not just for bank statements and proxy statements, and insurance policies. Ricoh Process Director can help anybody who runs a data-driven print output environment. So, print mail for direct mail, absolutely in the wheelhouse and there are a lot of other applications that it could be used for as well. So, if you think you know Ricoh and you think you know Ricoh Process Director, you actually might be wrong.

[0:26:48.9] LW: That is a great point, Pat because one of the things we've been really trying to talk more about is our role in helping with critical communications and it doesn't always have to be print. It could be digital communications or a combination of them both. They can live together and need to live together and so, this is something we've been able to help a lot of businesses with driver's license agencies.

Newest one that we talked about at drupa was HelloFresh and really being able to help there is inserting recipe cards into their shipments and making sure everything is going to the right person, the right food so there's no allergy concerns, things like that.

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[0:27:29.4] PM: McGrewGroup helps printers and the vendors who support them with strategy, product triage, print sample assessments, education, and consultation. We help our clients with assessment reviews, workshops, research, and education. After all, understanding the capabilities you have isn't always intuitive. Let us help you polish and shine your processes to enhance your road to long-term growth. McGrewGroup is ready to help you grow, expand, optimize, and thrive. Drop us a note on LinkedIn or at our website, McGrewGroup.com.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:28:08.5] PM: And we forget that's all data-driven, right Deb?

[0:28:10.5] DC: Yeah, and honestly, I want to kind of chime in with another point here or a question. So, when I – as coming from the world that I come in, the advertising creative world, you know, when I hear transactional stuff, I'm thinking gigantic volumes, lots of data, lots of information in the way that I used to think about it. Now, I don't think about it that much.

But the reason I'm saying this is because I feel that anybody that could have serviced those volumes can help printers who are now more than likely looking at their work for the week as more jobs that are printing less quantities versus those five jobs that used to take up their presses for the whole month and that's how they you know, paid their bills.

So, can you speak to that on how you can help printers sort of manage their new normal, which is doing less work for the same or potentially less money and having to do more of it faster? It's a crazy little combination there.

[0:29:20.1] LO: I'll give you a couple of examples, yes. So, one thing that we pride ourselves on is how to handle a larger volume of small-run jobs. There was a point in the industry just as you mentioned it, where they were getting maybe more orders but smaller runs, and now, there's even a – just going back to transactional, there is even kind of emergence, where companies are not transactional or commercial or this or that.

They're all starting to become multifaceted, so they're really starting to go after each other's work, right? It's just the nature of the beast. So, from an efficiency perspective when you're looking at small jobs, it really comes down to how do you organize the work effectively so that you're managing a roll of paper, a drawer of paper, and your finishing equipment. You are not going back and forth.

You are making your people more efficient by not going back and forth and we do have a tool I mentioned earlier called TotalFlow BatchBuilder and that's all about taking those like jobs together, creating rules that allow you to say, "Okay, these jobs should go together because they're doing four hours. These are on the same media, these are the same thickness of book." It really helps to manage a bit of that chaos.

And allows them to drive the work efficiently from step to step in their production and it also gives you some trackability through barcode scan. So, it's a really nice lightweight tool that provides a lot of value.

[0:30:48.8] DC: And accountability because that's all I hear from what you just said is accountability.

[0:30:52.8] LO: Yes, yes.

[0:30:53.4] DC: We can deliver when we say we can deliver at the price we said we could deliver it on the materials that you asked for, which should not be a difficult situation for a printer,

right? But yet – I mean and by the way, that's not against the printers. There's still supply chain issues and things of that nature and certainly, fluctuating costs of things that make estimation sometimes a living hell for a printing company that is doing it manually or has to make phone calls, doesn't have some paper calculator.

You know, tool, API pulled in, and I just want to say that in my LinkedIn group print production professionals once, somebody asked a question on how many days does it take to get an estimate, right? And if I could tell you that a war broke out and in that conversation, I think I personally identified 19 steps that could happen to me before I even get a quote, including the fact that I might have put in a size that isn't so great for me or the equipment, right?

And they're like, "Oh if you just made it a quarter inch shorter, we could get ten more up on." Whatever the reason was but three days at sitting at the estimator's desk then they take it back, then it takes a day and a half before them, and I was like, I was at a week and a half before I was getting an estimate and I was actually also speaking to another, a sales, a print salesperson who actually left her job because they had one estimator left in their place.

And they were told, "If anybody needs an estimate before 30 days, do not accept the work." And she had to leave her job, she couldn't make any sales. Who in God's name is going to wait 30 days for an estimate when no offense, you could go on VistaPrint and know what your print is going to cost in what? Two minutes?

[0:33:00.6] PM: It's one of the things that I think we'll start to see, it's a big trend evolving in the industry is to focus on that estimation piece, Deborah, and I think that you'll start to see more and more of that imbued into products that come from our favorite workflow vendors like Ricoh because you know, when the transaction space for a lot of us grew up, estimates weren't a thing. You never did them because it was all contractual work and it was all the same thing over and over again, right?

It's variable data but variable data into a template, you know, estimates you did it once at the beginning of the contract to figure out what it was going to cost but it wasn't what you got.

[0:33:38.3] DC: Every year.

[0:33:39.3] PM: Or the year, sometimes five years. I mean, back in the old days we used to do five-year transaction contracts but anymore, it's like every job gets estimated, right? Which was the tradition in the commercial print industry and the LNP industry and now, if you're a direct mailer, depending on how much you're changing the nature of the direct mail you're sending out, it may need to be estimated every time.

And I think we've all gotten smarter about the fact that our traditional software workflows have to be smarter about developing estimations that can be as automated as possible because also to your point, we all expected instantly because we can buy something off a web to print site and we get that price instantly. So, why do I have to wait for an estimate? So, Lisa and Linnea, you know, as Ricoh looks across the horizon here, you know, you've always got something in the oven.

There are always elves back in the workshop working on some cool new tools, do you see Ricoh moving in that direction of solving some – more of the common problems that are across the broader printing industry and not just the data-driven direct mail and transactional sites?

[0:34:53.9] LO: I will say yes, for sure. We're actually – the way that Ricoh works is we do create a midterm strategy, so it's a rolling three-year strategy and that's good and bad as you can imagine but the positive of it is the stability as we're working through what we do. We are very concerned about kind of that outlook and I will say in research that I've been doing recently, the two things that come up the most are similar to what we just discussed around normalization of data into a standardized format.

So, my people don't have to know everything, the data comes in, in one way we have a tool that can normalize that data, put it into a format that everybody can see the same thing. Also, kind of a traffic cop sort of thing where it could – it is smart enough to know the status of everything going on in production and it can guide the jobs in the right workflow path, and then that visibility. So, the second thing that bubbles up is always a visual dashboard or a way to see what's happening now and a way to track all of that, all those pieces, right?

They don't want to have to go to all these different reports and different tools, they literally want one place to go to see what's happening, where's the bottlenecks, where potential SLA being jeopardized, and what should they do about it. So, they are looking for smarter tools, they are looking for those tools that can normalize standardized direct and that's definitely everything that Ricoh is looking at right now from an AI perspective.

How can we take some existing IP make it better or potentially spin off into something new, so those are always in our development labs that we're working on and hopefully, we'll have more updates soon.

[0:36:39.9] LW: And just to add on to that Lisa, is a critical piece you know, with all the data integration and the smart technologies that are coming, as we mentioned earlier, it's about the labor and the challenges that we're having there and instead of using somebody to calculate data in a spreadsheet or post-it notes or whatever scenario you might have is being smarter about it.

Let them be more efficient and productive in different ways instead of doing those manual menial tasks. Let's use machine learning for example, and really optimize you know, satisfaction in a printshop, like you mentioned that estimator no longer wanting to work there. Well, there's ways that we can do that through software and automation to bring greater satisfaction to print shops and to employees.

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[0:37:32.4] 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.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:38:05.7] DC: I have one last question that is going to be a quick question, which probably has a long answer but I hope that you can answer it as, you know, in a short version that people could get more information. Let's put to the side right now anybody who's using any tool, even your software tools and they will have to make some you know, either change there, their workflow to use your software or expand the capabilities.

So, let's put them to the side. Let's talk to everybody right now who is not using anything or is using something that might be antiquated or certainly is not tackling the future needs of their customers for whatever reason, you know? They don't have the right people in place. Is there a remedial way to enter into the Ricoh ecosystem without investing a million dollars, without needing an IT person on your staff that can give them some immediate victories in their workflow so that they can grow with your software and partnership?

[0:39:20.9] LW: I'll jump in to start and then I'll pass it over to Lisa. Immediately, when I think that it's not, you always can't just go, "Oh, you need this" without seeing the workflow, walking the workflow. Pat always tells us I think it's critical to really start with an assessment and they're not expensive to do whatsoever. Some of them, we even have online ones that you can self-do yourself to really see, "Hey, where are my big opportunities here?"

But again, with Ricoh consultants and their expertise and ability, they could go into your shop for a day, a day and a half, depending on the size of the shop and the operation, and really help identify your low-hanging fruit and help prioritize and it isn't going to be, "Here, you need to do this." It's a conversation and starting point in determining short-term versus long-term plans. So, there is a science behind that in really looking to experts to help drive that, instead of just throwing money into a solution that ends up being shelf-ware. So, I'll jump to Lisa and let her finish this question.

[0:40:27.5] LO: I will give just a couple thoughts, so if you're really trying to figure out how to improve and enhance, I would say one, talk to your partners, your vendors. If you don't have a vendor of choice, pick a couple, always get a – it's like a doctor, get a second opinion. See, what they're working on because you might be surprised at what they have in their portfolio. The assessments are great because they do –

There are some low-cost-to-entry assessments that will at least help get you started and then, there's also tools like our own Ricoh Supervisor that are very low-cost of entry that are going to give you some quick wins on data. They're going to hook up to your printers, they're going to show you right out of the gate some quick utilization, and you're going to start to see some patterns within a week, right?

So, there are some quick wins that you can do that are really low cost, and then the assessments are really going to help you understand some of those areas of opportunity to invest. It could be in web to print, it could be in replacing some legacy tools, it could just be in some services to help, or it could be in changing some processes. I'm a big fan of starting small, find some small use cases that you can tackle, and once you start to build on those, you'll start to see more and more opportunities come out of that.

[0:41:41.2] DC: It also builds trust and accountability with Ricoh because if you're going to tell me, you're going to come in here, you're not going to drive me crazy, I don't need an IT person and I can get some quick wins out of this, or learn where I can improve, and you deliver on that and the printers then turn around to their customers and say, "We could get you an estimate in the day now."

And they deliver on that, that is an important collaborative relationship that should move forward together as long as everybody is delivering on accountability. I love the accountability aspect of this. Pat, we're going to wrap it up, final words?

[0:42:23.2] PM: I think, the thing to remember as you're coming to the end of this podcast with us is that Ricoh software doesn't only drive Ricoh hardware. Ricoh software is very much a vendor-neutral solution set. So, whether you're sitting there with some, you know, Koenig & Bauer and you know, Heidelberg Presses, and maybe you've got a couple of other vendors digital solutions sitting on the floor, there are solutions that Ricoh can bring to the table for you that will be worth talking to them about.

It doesn't have to be an all Ricoh all the time shop. Although we like those, right? We like those but they don't have to be that way, and anymore, it is hard to find printers that have standardized on a single vendor for their hardware and I think sometimes, that makes them feel

like they're out on an island somewhere and the nice thing is that this is really very vendor-neutral software from the outwards perspective.

[0:43:21.0] LW: I was just going to add in, just Pat, to your comment there is yes, we have Ricoh solutions, proprietary IP that really are proven long-term. They're not new to the market, but I also want to mention that Ricoh does sell third-party software as well, as well as third-party finishing, wide format engines for example. So, we're not just a one-source shop. It's really, we want to be a partner long-term and have a connected ecosystem, no matter who the vendor is that supplied the software or the hardware.

[0:43:56.5] DC: Lisa, any final words before we wrap this up?

[0:43:58.8] LO: I agree with everything. I just wanted to say as well, I know people may not know Ricoh but we do have a wonderful team. We have some wonderful solutions. Pat, Deborah, appreciate the time, and we look forward to working with all you customers out there.

[0:44:15.7] DC: Excellent. Well, everything you need to connect with Linnea and Lisa will be in the show notes. I'm going to put a link to that assessment opportunity in there too. So, if you are looking to just see if you can improve, I love the word "improve." It's a lot better than change. Let's improve everything, be accountable, and print long and prosper. Until next time, everybody. Thanks so much for listening.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:44:45.9] 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]

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Ricoh Global Software Assessment: https://wfa.xmediaservice.com/SelfAssessment

Ricoh USA Production Workflow Business Development & Consulting: https://www.ricoh-usa.com/en/services-and-solutions/commercial-industrial-printing-services/production-workflow-business-development--consulting

Ricoh EU Business Services: https://www.ricoh-europe.com/contact-us/services-enquiry/

Ricoh TotalFlow BatchBuilder: https://www.ricoh-ap.com/products/commercial-industrial-printers/production-printing-software/totalflow-batchbuilder

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'The Print Report: LIVE at drupa 2024 with Linnea Wolken and Lisa Oakleaf, Ricoh Global Software': https://podcastsfromtheprinterverse.com/the-print-report-live-at-drupa-2024-with-linnea-wolken-and-lisa-oakleaf-ricoh-global-software/

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