



EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

Q&A WITH MARK SINANIAN

SENIOR DIRECTOR, SOLUTIONS MARKETING
CANON SOLUTIONS AMERICA

By Patricia Ames



.....
During a recent interview Mark Sinanian, senior director of marketing at Canon Solutions America, we learned what lawyers don't like, what BMW dealerships have too much of and why people in business are embracing technology more quickly these days — it's those five year olds! Join me in the SpeakEasy.



.....
Let's talk about industry trends. What are you seeing?

Cloud is a big trend. A lot of organizations are seeing the value of cloud, understanding the impact on the organization by not only moving things to a central location but also the positive benefit of the reduced support burden that is then placed on their IT resources. You're not going to hear an organization say, "We have plenty of bandwidth in IT." Most of the time, IT is overwhelmed with projects. Cloud lifts a lot of burden off them. They don't have to build up infrastructure; that infrastructure already exists with cloud — you can leverage it and give your knowledge workers access to it without having to build in-house data centers or post applications on-premise.

Another benefit of cloud is that you're always working with the latest software versions, which is not always the case with on-premise software. Updating a new version of on-premise software can be a pretty big undertaking, and companies are usually way behind whenever new versions come out. Once customers embrace the cloud, we're able to bring up a lot of new technology to them.

Sustainability is also trending. Canon has a long history relative to sustainability. It's woven into everything we do — our U.S. corporate headquarters is the largest LEED Gold Certified building on Long Island, and equally as important is sustainability relative to our products. We design our products with sustainability in mind, working to reduce their overall carbon footprint on as many levels as possible — from what we use in the construction of the devices, to how they are shipped, to how they consume energy when they are in use or just standing by. We look at the life cycle of the product holistically, not just one aspect of it.

.....
What kind of response from your clients are you getting when you talk about the sustainability measures that Canon has implemented? Are you getting any resonance?

We're seeing that companies actually do care. A lot of companies used to say, "We need to make sure you're sustainable," and then some have moved

on to price. Now they have a strategy, they have teams of people that are focused on this and they're genuinely interested in what Canon does and how it can help them because they can leverage whatever we do for their sustainability goals as well. It's more than just talking the talk, many are starting to walk the walk too, which is encouraging.

Another trend is **mobile**. Organizations have been slow to embrace it. BYOD is something we hear about all the time but there are a lot of enterprises that didn't have policies and processes established to handle BYOD. We're starting now to see more and more organizations that are embracing mobile, not just from a printing perspective but also integrating mobile into business processes. Previously, you had to go to your desk to do much of your work, and now you can do a lot of that using a mobile device so it doesn't matter where you are. Canon has a number of technologies both from the output as well as input and processing standpoint that allow us to address those requirements.

We're also seeing a lot of focus on **content management**. This is something that's been in our portfolio for a while but a lot of organizations have been reluctant to pursue it. But now, customers are looking at more than just the output side of the equation whenever we're meeting with them. They're genuinely interested in business process optimization. I think a lot of our clients are starting to connect the dots on the capabilities of multi-functional devices and how they could impact the rest of the organization. They are realizing that our equipment can be used as on-ramps to automated business processes and as an input and output device from an information management system.

This can also be said about **managed print services**. We're seeing more clients starting to understand it. Our customers are beginning to come to us and say, "I want to develop a print strategy leveraging managed print as the underlying theme." It's shifting from a push to a pull. That's encouraging, and we have a very robust program so we're able to support the customers who just want the tools and the underlying infrastructure, as well as the customers who want us to take care of everything. We have programs that address both needs.

“A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY NOW. IT USED TO BE THIS BIG SCARY THING, AND NOW, YOU HAVE FIVE YEAR OLDS USING IPADS.”

.....
Why do you think the conversation has changed so dramatically in the past few years?

A lot of people are embracing technology now. It used to be this big scary thing, and now, you have five year olds using iPads. I think as a society, we've embraced some of these technologies that just a few years ago seemed threatening to people and that is starting to impact behavior in the business world as well. Keep in mind that there are also now a lot of organizations that have grown up with advanced technology — their businesses were created with automation. So in some cases we're not afraid of the technology anymore, and in other cases, we've got to find a way to better compete, and the way we do that is by automating some of the legacy processes that we've had in the past.

.....
What are some of the problems and the opportunities that your customers are most interested in right now?

Security is a key area. There is a lot of focus on compliance these days, regardless of whether it's corporate environments or particular verticals like education with the FERPA regulations or health care with HIPAA compliance. Canon has a lot of technologies that we can bring to our clients to help them in that regard. While there's no such thing as a HIPAA-certified product, we have technologies and services that help people become compliant when they use them properly. As we increasingly pursue opportunities in the vertical markets, we're having more and more of these conversations, which affords us the opportunity to share some of the unique technologies that we have in our portfolio.

.....
How do you help your customers assimilate new technologies and business processes?

Whenever you're changing an organization's workflow, whether you're changing it slightly or changing it significantly, it's difficult. People don't like change and in certain industries, they really don't like change. Take the legal vertical for example — if you're installing a solution at a law firm, attorneys typically don't want anything different, so if you're automating workflow, you need to do it in a way that doesn't change how they interact with it. You have to understand the industry you're working in and what the business challenges are in order to put together a solution that meets the ultimate goal while providing minimal disruption to the users.

.....
You really do have to know your client, don't you? You need to have a deep understanding of who they are and how they operate in order to suggest the right solutions and then get them deployed.

Absolutely. You could have a solution that changes the world for a particular law firm, but if it is not well received by the attorneys, it doesn't matter. Even if you've saved the firm \$1 million, if their impression is that you've made their life more difficult, it will become an obstacle for you. You need to know the client; you need to know what their pain points are. What are the changes the users will experience with the new process? How much change do they have an appetite for? Both the back-end processes that are hidden from end users and the pieces that the users see need to be considered. We address all these issues.

We also have to consider how we help our clients with change management after the solution is deployed. Is it training? Do we phase new processes in slowly or bring in new features all at once? We take this really seriously. We design the deployment to meet the specific needs of the client and to cause minimal disruption. We look carefully at how and when we deploy - all of these factors go into designing the solution for the customer. We have lots of resources to help us do that - from trainers, system engineers and analysts to our national help desk.



.....
How do your solutions differentiate you from your competitors' and why?

We have a lot of unique solutions that are developed hand-in-hand with the hardware. For example, there are a lot of print management solutions out in the marketplace. What makes Canon's solution unique is that we sit the engineers that are developing the print management solution alongside the engineers that are developing the hardware solutions and the hardware products. That allows for very tight integration — while the print management solution is device agnostic, when you use it with Canon engines, the solution has advantages through features embedded in that hardware that may not be available in other competitive offerings.

One of the unique solutions we have is our uniFLOW solution, which brings print management, scan management and CRD management together into one platform and provides a single user experience. Normally, you would have to cobble together three different solutions in order to achieve this amount of functionality, and that means you have to consider licensing, the support burden and the user experience. You would have three different interfaces, three different programs to train people on, IT would have to support three separate systems, three servers, three SQL databases.

Another unique technology that we have in our portfolio is an add-on option for uniFLOW that provides document security. Regardless of whether you print, copy, fax or scan, the solution analyzes the document to see if it contains any control words and if it does, it can alert a security officer or an IT director. For certain workflows, it can actually prevent the dissemination of the information — it will stop the process from happening. The system will also store the image so there is an audit trail; an image of exactly what was being sent, where it was being sent and to whom.

Everybody has access to document distribution, document management and print management solutions off the shelf, but it's the combination of innovative Canon and partner technologies that are integrated into the engine that make us unique. Then you layer Canon Solutions America's professional services organization on top of that and what we do to effectively perform the discovery and

deploy and support our customers that really sets us apart.

.....
What do you see as some of the biggest opportunities for Canon in the next three to five years?

We are pivoting towards more vertical markets. Inside of those vertical markets are some very unique workflows and we'll be developing solutions for them, but also in those industries are some very unique regulations and we are developing specific solutions that are going to enable us to address things like privacy and data protection and help our customers comply with those regulations.

Another big opportunity is ECM. We talked earlier about customers beginning to embrace more complex technologies — we are investing heavily in the infrastructure that's going to allow us to take advantage of that. We have the technologies in our portfolio and we also have our organization structured so we can educate our customers, deploy those solutions and support them going forward.

.....
Do you have specific verticals that you're targeting?

We're building a lot of infrastructure to support verticals such as: legal, education and healthcare. We have a broad portfolio of technologies and a lot of these solutions are packaged as toolkits. If you arrange the pieces one way, they can address business challenges in the education space surrounding student records, then you rearrange the pieces a little bit and now they can address patient records.

One of the things we're doing is building out what those applications look like and validating that we understand the workflow. We're doing this through the use of multi-customer councils — customers come in and outline exactly what they do during the day and where they need help. We then take that information and build our solutions to their needs.

An example of that is what we've done in the automotive space. We had a BMW dealership that came



to us and said, “I’m drowning in paper. The regulations for the automotive industry require that I save documents from a variety of systems to support both warranty claims and also state and federal regulations.”

We went to this dealership and they had cases and cases of customer records that actually created a wall for them — it divided two rooms! They asked if we could help them. We looked at their situation and realized we had all the technologies needed to resolve their issues. We needed to develop a little bit of custom code to do exactly what they asked us to do and we built it for them. Now it’s a solution we market specifically to the automobile dealer industry and it solves a very real business problem for them. It helps them save money and it allows their service technicians to be more productive.

In many industries, the sale of the product makes a certain amount of margin, but the service of the product is where the real money is. Automobile dealers are no different. They make some money selling the cars, but where they make most of their money is in servicing vehicles and in particular, doing warranty service. It’s really critical that they have all the supporting documentation for their warranty claims that are going back to the OEM. Our system allows their technicians to fix more cars because they’re not chasing paper around.

That model is the same one that we’re applying to the other verticals and in the corporate space as well, with departmental workflows. We have a lot of technologies but we’re going to package them up in such a way that they address very specific business challenges and applications.

.....

In what areas within your division will you be investing in 2016?

From a technology standpoint, we’re looking at applications and workflow within some of the verticals. In the corporate space, we’re investing in understanding what the departmental workflows look like so that we can articulate to our customers how we can help them. That requires investments in technology. We may find that we need additional technology as we get deeper into the specific workflows. We’re also investing in the sales orga-

nization so that we get the right people – we need professionals that understand workflow and the verticals from a technical standpoint.

We’re going to continue to expand our professional services organization and increase their knowledge on the workflows in some of these vertical markets. As we look at departmental workflows, we want to make sure that when we go into a corporate environment everybody understands what happens and when. With HR, for example, it’s one thing to put a document in an electronic filing cabinet, it’s something completely different to understand HR onboarding. One of the areas we’re investing in is educating both our sales and professional services team on all the various aspects of a particular application. What happens when an organization brings on a new person — what are all the activities that HR has to perform? What documents need to be processed and what information needs to be collected as a result of that person coming on? Only then, when the total picture is understood, can you determine how to optimize that process through technology.

We have some of that skillset already with our existing resources. We’re looking to expand our knowledge so that more of the organization, both from a sales and a technical standpoint, understand the overall business process. We want to make sure across the board that we’re raising the skill level of the entire organization to be able to first of all understand the workflow and then subsequently understand the technology that applies to those applications.

Our professional services organization is what makes all of this work. Having the technology is one thing, having the people who understand it and can deploy it and support it is something completely different and we’re fortunate that Canon Solutions America has all of these qualities in our arsenal. 

Patricia Ames is a senior analyst at BPO Media. Contact her at patricia@bpomedia.com