PROFILE

Name: Pike Business Machines

Location: McComb, MS

Founded: 1971

www.pbminc.org

CHALLENGE

Maintain strong levels of customer satisfaction through quick response times, competitive prices and greater flexibility.

SOLUTION

Add Epson Printers with Replaceable Ink Pack System technology to the product lineup to offer current and new customers higher capacity, lower-cost printing, shorter wait times and improved performance reliability.

All About Trust

Mississippi Office Machine Dealer Offers A Better Customer Experience With Epson Printers

Larry Quin has built his business on trust. "If I know something will work better, I can tell my customers and they will try it. Of course, if it's a new concept, we have to prove it to ourselves before we'll show it to anyone else."

Such was the case when Quin, General Manager of Pike Business Machines in McComb, Mississippi, set up an Epson WorkForce® Pro WF-R5690 printer in his own office. This approach integrates replaceable ink packs into office printing, with a next-generation printing technology that will print up to 50,000 ISO pages without changing the ink packs[1].

"I fell in love with it, and I could see my customers would love it as well," he recalls.

"First, it was fast, and it wouldn't jam. Then too, it just kept running, with no need to do anything except add paper."

When Quin began offering the printers to his customers, they came to love them, too. "Epson is helping us to provide a better experience for our customers, and that's what our business is all about."

A Traditional Copy Machine Business

Quin describes Pike Business Machines as very traditional, offering copiers, printers and computer network installation to business, education and government. They have been doing so for more than 36 years.

The communities Quin serves are small. McComb itself, 80 miles south of Jackson, Mississippi, has a population of just 13,000. He describes his clients as conservative, wanting to buy from someone they know will provide good value and reliable service.

"Our thrust is customer satisfaction, which we achieve through quick response times, competitive prices and greater flexibility – that is, we're willing to sell anything that the application requires, rather than pushing a particular brand. In our small-town environment, that makes us pretty attractive."

Quin offers his customers a service contract that provides equipment, maintenance and supplies at a set price per printed copy. The printers and copiers he sells meter their output and email his staff periodic reports showing their status.

> **"I fell in love with it, and I could see my customers would love it as well."**
>
> — LARRY QUIN, GENERAL MANAGER OF PIKE BUSINESS MACHINES

"That works really well. We can tell when there's a service issue or if they're low on supplies, then visit the client and take care of them."

In this way, Pike Business Machines takes responsibility for the reliability of the equipment they sell. If a machine breaks down frequently, Quin and his staff will have to make it right. Ideally their contract rates would reflect the level of service needed for each type of machine, but he says that the laser printer and copier market has become so competitive that it's difficult to maintain profitability.

Epson commercial printers that integrate Replaceable Ink Pack System technology, he believes, are changing the game in his and his customers' favor. "When we saw the Epson, we thought, here's an excellent concept. We could sell a service contract and not have anything to replace but the ink supply." The question, of course, was whether the technology could live up to its promise.

A Better Than Traditional Printer

The Epson WorkForce Pro WF-R5690 leverages Replaceable Ink Pack System technology, and prints, copies, scans, and faxes in full color, and has a duplex auto document feeder.

The WorkForce Pro WF-R8590 offers a higher capacity, with low-cost printing, and 1830-sheet total paper capacity[2].

Although the WF-R8590 saves up to 40 percent on printing costs vs. color laser,[3] cost is not the main benefit for Quin or his customers.

As good as toner-based technology has been over the last few decades, it has some major drawbacks that the Epson printers overcome.

First, laser is a complex technology, requiring many moving parts, including the laser itself, a photosensitive drum, a charger, fuser, erase lamp, feed rollers, and a large-capacity power supply. The Epson uses a very simple mechanism in comparison, with fewer components.

Then too, the fuser in a laser printer or copier operates at a high temperature, which affects the longevity of all its components plus the reliability of the paper feed. "Here in the South humidity is a major factor," Quin explains. "When you apply heat to a sheet of paper that's been sitting for days in a humid area, it's going to curl and cause jams. With the Epson, you don't experience that much."

Warm-up time is a major drawback for laser as well. Yet, Quin says, "We have learned that the time it takes to print the first copy is what's most important, and I hadn't realized how slow the other machines can be."

When a laser printer or copier goes into sleep mode, he explains, it has to wake up and warm its fuser before it can print. "A cool machine might take 1 ½ or 2 minutes to get a copy, whereas the Epson prints immediately."

The wait time can be extremely frustrating for someone in a high-stress job, and Quin sees the consequences. "People in certain professions just brutalize their machines. We have had two occasions where people have put their fists through copiers' graphic displays because they were so annoyed and aggravated...While on the one hand, it never ceases to amaze me that someone can get so furious with a machine, anything we can do to make their lives a little easier is a major bonus. Epson is supplying an answer."

The Pike service department, Quin says, has grown to love the Epson printers. "They're easy to install and easier to work on than anything we've ever sold. What's not to love?"

Wide applications

Because he has been in business so long, Quin sells to virtually every type of professional user in the greater McComb area, and nearly all have benefited from the Epson commercial printers that leverage Replaceable Ink Pack System technology.

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Many businesses, including the finance departments in local banks, are using the WF-R5690 and especially the WF-R8590 for general use. Because the average document they print is about three to five pages, these machines will often finish the job before a laser printer can warm up.

Then, too, business and financial documents typically use what Quin calls "spot color," mostly black text with a color chart, graph or photo. "A color laser prints the whole page with process color, creating black out of cyan, magenta and yellow toner. With the Epson, black is black." That's important for two reasons. First, pure black text is a little crisper than process black.

The investigations department in the McComb Sheriff's Office also loves their WF-R8590, especially for printing color images of suspects. Some of the color laser printers make really beautiful prints, but in Quin's opinion, the Epson offers more realistic color and more detail. "It's more legible, easier to see the definition on the page."

The McComb School District has four WF-R5690 printers in elementary schools, using them to print wirelessly from student iPads[4]. "That's working really well, and based on that, I've been talking to the purchasing people about the high-speed models Epson will soon introduce. That should be a great educational product because of its lack of warmup time and lack of downtime."

For law firms, the WF-R8590 is ideal, Quin says, because of its multiple printer trays.

The law firms, like his other customers, "simply want something that works, that's cost effective and that we will support. We have been around such a long time because they trust us and know we will take care of them."

Pike Business Machines has installed about 30 WorkForce Pro WF-R5690 and 15 WorkForce Pro WF-R8590 printers, offering them with a three-year warranty extension from Epson. Out of those, they've seen just two service calls, and Epson replaced both machines immediately. "We've been in the laser market so long, but this is a different animal," Quin says.

The printers have allowed Pike Business Machines to serve new customers as well as old. "With laser printers and copiers, you have to be careful how far away you sell. You know they're going to break and then you will have to go out and service them."

"Yet with the Epson, we can go farther. We have a high degree of confidence that they will work for our clients."

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