

M2M (machine-to-machine) technologies and mobile hardware and software improve office equipment service industry.

# Asset Management Needs Drive Mobile Service Technology

If pressure can turn a lump of coal into a sparkling diamond, can it also transform the technology that will support the successful future of the office equipment service industry? The answer is, quite simply, yes. Why? Let's take a look.

Office equipment buyers and users at all sizes of companies are demanding more from every aspect of their business, especially regarding the technology – e.g. copiers, printers, and fax machines – in which they invest. These people want to know how they can improve their productivity while simultaneously reducing their costs.

Office equipment dealers – such as Xerox, IKON, and other key players – are aggressively seeking differentiation in their product offering, from their field service operations to value-added professional services. They know all the while that if they don't deliver, the dealer down the road surely will.

And, if that weren't enough, engineering and development teams are now bringing to life a full spectrum of hardware and software solutions that were once just brainstormed on a whiteboard. What's more, today's economies of scale are proving that the price is definitely right.

## THE NEW 'PRECIOUS STONES' OF THE OFFICE EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY

The automation of cumbersome human service and maintenance processes with software and turnkey systems presents a tremendous opportunity for growth and improvement in the office equipment industry. Specifically, advancements in M2M communication serve the vested interests of customers and dealers alike. This technology enables the following:

- enterprise-wide fleet management for cost-effective document production
- proactive service strategies for minimized downtime
- sales process optimization for sensible equipment reallocation and timely upgrades.



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M2M integrates people, physical assets, and technologies to deliver business-critical information to the hands of people who need it, when they need it, and where they need it for delivering the best possible customer service. Applications such as automated meter reading of digital imaging or utility assets, automated service call creation from a physical asset under SLA (service-level agreement) into a service automation software application and ERP (enterprise resource planning) system, and proactive parts and usage forecasting will become more dominant than ever.

Indeed, customer demands are being met by dealer capabilities, and business process improvements and real-time access to mission-critical data are available around every corner. But none of this would be possible without IT departments' acceptance of networked solutions and the fast evolution of telemetry technologies. Thanks to a healthy educational push, technology evolution toward simplicity, open-architecture development tools, more cost-effective solutions, and more streamlined embedded/integrated systems with fewer components performing more activities, the adoption of new M2M technology is occurring at a record pace.

And, what does the future hold? As awareness of the M2M space continues, wireless service providers and OEMs alike will race to take part. OEMs will deliver more embedded technologies and will drive mass adoption. Wireless service providers will partner for better alignment with software application providers (sales, service, and supply chain automation applications) and hardware manufacturers for greater market share. Competitive spirit and competition will fuel third party integration, embedded systems, networked and wireless solutions, less hardware-centric solutions, and more hosted environments. The result is more feature-rich applications at more affordable prices. The "diamond" of service and performance is here. □