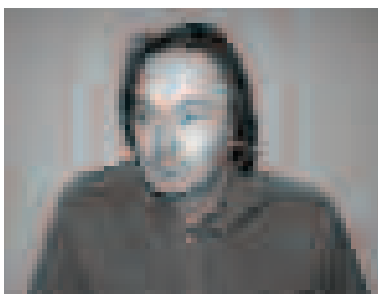


HOW TO... BUNDLE

Soothe the cost of consumables.

**BILL HARRISON,
MD, IDS DIRECT**



Leading printer manufacturers continually vie for position with claim and counter claim on the real cost of printer ownership. These manufacturers have had lots of bad press in recent years over the cost of consumables and subsequent printer running costs.

It is well documented that the cost of the inks and toners over the life of the printer will far and away exceed the initial capital outlay. What is not as widely known however, is that in an increasing number of cases, the initial outlay on consumables is now greater than the cost of the printer itself.

As the cost of colour printers continues to tumble, certain manufacturers now face a major dilemma. They must remain competitive on the hardware but the consumables cost either discourages the customer from making the purchase or creates immense dissatisfaction when they discover the cost subsequently.

Oki, for example, is having to rethink its entry level printer strategy for this very reason.

Dealers who are in regular contact with end users must hear first hand the justifiable moaning that goes on regarding the relative cost of the consumables: "If I'd known how much the inks/toners cost I would never have bought the damn thing", is a comment often heard.

Generally, manufacturers have been slow to respond. Could this have anything to do with the fact that it's the consumables generating most of their profit?

Some have recognised the benefits of packaging or bundling consumables into multipacks to offer serious discounts to the user, in some cases in excess of 20%. Although the range of bundled products is reasonably limited they are being added to regularly by the major printer companies.

There are an increasing number of options on colour laser and LED products, usually in the form of rainbow packs. Twin and multi pack mono toners are also more available than before. Epson has probably led the way in terms of ink bundling but others have closely followed and this is a growing trend.

It doesn't solve all the problems associated with printer running costs. The available options are a little limited but if a dealer offers a cost saving solution to the user, that will only increase loyalty and add some value to the relationship.

The key is to get a list of all available bundles and multipacks from the respective wholesalers handling the brands. This may need some persistence and pressure as in some quarters the phrases 'double stocking' and 'less pounds margin' may be heard muttered. Dealers should persevere – it is potentially something new to mention in every call. ■

TOP TIPS

**>> 1.
OFFER A COST SAVING
OPTION TO YOUR CUSTOMER.
IF ANYTHING, IT WILL INCREASE
LOYALTY AND ADD SOME VALUE
TO THE RELATIONSHIP.**

**>> 2.
GET A LIST OF ALL AVAILABLE
BUNDLES AND MULTIPACKS
FROM THE RESPECTIVE
WHOLESALEERS HANDLING
THE BRANDS.**

**>> 3.
PERSEVERE WITH TIP
NUMBER 2 – IT IS POTENTIALLY
SOMETHING NEW TO MENTION
IN EVERY CALL.**