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OFFICE IMAGING PRODUCTS 2004: BLI'S PICKS OF THE YEAR

During the testing period for this year's awards, which ran from the summer of 2003 to the late spring of 2004, more than 130 multifunctional products, fax machines and printers were subjected to BLI's rigorous in-house evaluation. The battery of tests includes an extensive durability test during which each unit is run at the manufacturer's maximum recommended monthly volume. In addition to assessing reliability, the tests are designed to evaluate such critical factors as misfeed frequency, copy and print quality, copy and print productivity, ease of use and economy, as well as connectivity issues such as feedback to workstations, administrative utilities, print drivers and multitasking.

As is the case every year, some models performed below the bar in one or more areas, while others clearly excelled. While many products performed well this past year, a number stood out from the rest as clearly superior to their competition. Twice each year, with its "Pick of the Year" awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category to the products that provided the most outstanding performances in the laboratory (of course, only units tested by BLI are eligible to receive awards). The purpose of these awards is to better guide equipment buyers in their acquisition decisions.

Among the winners is...

Xerox Phaser 8400DP

Outstanding Critical Color Printer, Spring 2004

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Xerox Phaser 8400DP

Producing color output that's among the best observed by BLI technicians to date, the Xerox Phaser 8400DP (\$1,699, SRP) solid-ink printer has earned BLI's Spring 2004 "Pick of the Year" award for "Outstanding Critical Color Printer." Providing a stellar overall performance during its three-month evaluation, the Xerox Phaser 8400DP demonstrated flawless reliability, requiring no service of any kind and not misfeeding even a single time during its 42,500-impression test period. Remarkably, the Phaser 8400DP's exceptional performance comes at a price that is significantly lower than competitive legal-size color laser and LED printers that offer similar features, and its supplies cost per page is about eight and a half cents less than

the average for competitive inkjet devices tested by BLI to date.

"The Xerox Phaser 8400DP is offers superb color and outstanding ease of use." said Rich Holloway, BLI's direc-

tor of technical operations. “Solid ink technology produces print quality superior to other technologies and the design of this printer, with its top-loading supplies, is one of the best-engineered I’ve seen in a printer to date.”

Supporting various color standards, including PANTONE-approved solid-color simulations, Adobe PostScript device-independent color and CIE international color standards, as well as ICC and Apple ColorSync color management systems, the unit received BLI’s highest image quality rating for both color business graphics and color photographs, as well as for all types of monochrome output. Colors produced remained extremely consistent throughout BLI’s three-month evaluation.

Accommodating up to legal-size media, the Phaser 8400DP demonstrated excellent productivity in both

fast color mode and enhanced mode, with simplex and duplex efficiency rates in both monochrome and color that are well above average when compared to that of other tested color printers. The unit also recorded first-page times for all file types used in testing that were among the fastest for tested color printers.

BLI technicians found the Phaser 8400DP to be very user-friendly. The unit’s solid ink sticks, which are about 1.25 square inches in size and have the texture of a crayon, are extremely easy to replace—they need only be dropped into the unit’s ink loader underneath the top cover; ink sticks may even be replaced while the Phaser 8400DP is printing.

The Xerox Phaser 8400DP is highly recommended by BLI for critical color environments with color print volumes of up to 30,000 impressions per month.

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