BLI BUYERS LAB

Spring 2009

Xerox ColorQube 9200 Series

Outstanding Achievement Award, Spring 2009

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The innovative pricing structure and product design of Xerox's new ColorQube 9200 Series has earned the family a Spring 2009 BLI "Outstanding Achievement Award."

The new ColorQube Series models are the first fully-featured workgroup MFPs utilizing Xerox's proprietary solid ink marking technology. It combines the ink and printhead technology of Xerox's solid ink Phaser line with hardware modules and the next-generation Xerox SMART Controller common to Xerox's workgroup MFPs. Designed for office workgroups looking to lower their color run costs or for a cost effective way to adopt color into their work environment, the ColorQube 9201, 9202 and 9203 feature an innovative pricing structure that allows users to get useful color output for the same cost as black and white. In fact, Xerox estimates that under its unique pricing structure, approximately 75 percent of all color prints will cost either 1 or 3 cents, greatly reducing the cost of color printing.

The models create images by printing tiny spots (called pixels) of black and color on a page. The machines automatically count how many color pixels are used to produce each printed page and each page is tallied on the appropriate meter. For example, an office document with a logo and small graphic will count as a black-only page and be charged accordingly—1 cent on average. Documents with moderate color coverage, like a Web page or brochure, will cost approximately 3 cents, while those printed pages with heavy color, such as a real estate flyer, will cost an average of 8 cents.

The units' unique technology contributes to their exceptional ease of use. "In addition to offering excellent ease of programming jobs from both their well-designed control panel and print drivers, the units' ease of user maintenance far outshines the toner-based products they compete with in this speed range," said BLI Assignments Editor George Mikolay. Each solid ink stick is uniquely shaped to fit in its correct slot—cyan, magenta, yellow or black—and is very easy to load. The machines hold six sticks per color, greatly increasing the ink yields and thus reducing downtime. In addition, when ink is running low, users can simply top off inks to avoid having to interrupt any jobs. The devices' inks are cartridge-free, so there's no cartridge to remove, which greatly reduces waste. "Other than the ink sticks, the devices feature only one customer-replaceable component, a long-life cleaning unit with an average yield of 200,000 prints," said BLI Manager of Laboratory Testing Pete Emory. "In contrast, the ColorQube Series' toner-based competitors require much more user intervention, requiring not only replacement of four toner cartridges, but sometimes four

drums and developer as well." The ColorQube 9201, 9202 and 9203 also feature embedded help videos that offer quick troubleshooting assistance for situations such as loading staples or clearing paper jams, right at the user interface. In addition, the paper path is illuminated with blue LEDs making access less intimidating.

The ColorQube Series is also EIP-enabled, allowing the device to integrate easily with third-party workflow applications to simplify tasks such as accounting and document management.

"Meeting the needs of the customer is always at the core of Xerox innovation, and this 'Outstanding Achievement Award' reflects our dedication to delivering on that promise," said Jeff Blank, vice president, Solid Ink Business, Xerox Corporation. "The ColorQube 9200 Series cuts the cost of color prints by up to 62 percent and generates 90 percent less waste without sacrificing performance or print quality."

About BLI's Picks

Twice a year with its "Pick" and "Outstanding Achievement" awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category to those products that provided the most outstanding performances in BLI's exhaustive lab tests, as well as to products and capabilities that stand out for their innovation, usefulness or value.

BLI's awards stand alone in that they are based on a rigorous battery of lab tests that takes approximately two months to complete and includes an extensive durability test, during which each unit is run at the manufacturer's maximum recommended volume. BLI's durability test is unique among office product evaluations and uniquely qualifies BLI to assess reliability, which is a critical factor for buyers and IT directors, given that virtually all of the products are designed for use on networks.

In addition to assessing reliability, in terms of the number of service calls and PM (preventive maintenance) calls required, as well as misfeed frequency, BLI's comprehensive evaluation includes an assessment of copy and print quality, productivity, ease of use and economy, as well as connectivity issues such as feedback to workstations, administrative utilities, print drivers, multitasking and scanning solutions. Each product that successfully passes BLI's lab test earns BLI's "Recommended" or "Highly Recommended" seal and a BLI "Certificate of Reliability" and qualifies as a "Pick" award contender. Consequently, a BLI "Pick" is a hard-earned award that buyers and IT directors can trust to better guide them in their acquisition decisions.

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