



# Expert Laser Services – a Managed Print Services veteran

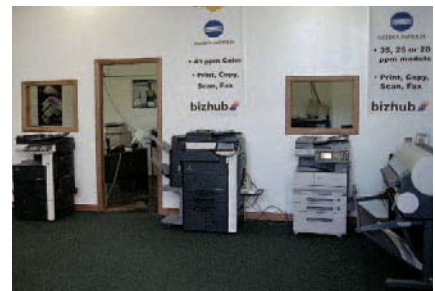
**Expert Laser Services, based in New England in the USA, provides its own managed print services program (PrintDOME) as well as its own line of top quality, fully remanufactured toner cartridges. MPS has become a hot topic of late, but this company has been doing it for 15 years. This is their story...**

The company was founded by CEO Luke Carpentier, and was started in the basement of his home in 1990. Luke would remanufacture toner cartridges by hand one at a time and sell his product door-to-door, while also offering printer repair service to his potential customers. Slowly Luke was able to build a clientele by standing behind his product and services, building a network of satisfied customers as a database of references to gain new clients.

In 1994 Luke landed his first “service and supplies” contract, or as he called it the Expert Laser Services “Partnership Program” with accounting firm Bollus Lynch of Worcester, Massachusetts. The company’s current PrintDOME managed print services program slowly evolved to what it is today, with each additional service and supplies contract garnered by Luke and what eventually became the sales team over the

years. Today, the company boasts over 2000 customers, of which several hundred are contract customers who have signed on to the PrintDOME managed print services program.

During the year of 1994, as Luke started to accumulate a larger customer base, he moved his operation from his basement to an old mill building at 100 Foster Street in Southbridge, Massachusetts. Upon doing so he hired several employees including Production Manager Richard L’Heureux, who took over the toner remanufacturing responsibilities along with his first employees Judy Tryba and Ritchie Vallee. At this same time Luke brought on Don Anglim and Keith Lapierre, to help with the additional sales and service calls coming in from the company’s growing customer base. Shortly thereafter Luke hired copier and printer service manager Kevin Moroz to



**The showroom**

handle the majority of service calls, so that Luke could concentrate on growing the customer base even further. In the same year, Luke invested in a full scale remanufacturing facility. The heart of which is a series of work stations all linked to a giant vacuum system that is used to pull away toner particles, as the remanufacturing team cleans out the used cartridges. The system was custom built by employee Ritchie Vallee who would eventually be known as the resident handy man and construction guru at Expert Laser Services.

By the year 2000, Expert Laser Services had gained so many new customers that Luke decided to move the company to a larger portion of the building, 1 North Street in Southbridge Massachusetts which is also the company’s current day location. With this move came major growth within all the areas of the business. The cleaning system was moved from the second floor to the first floor of the building, to a larger space where Ritchie added and networked additional work stations to the cleaning system. At this same time Luke brought on Graphic Artist Bob Chernisky Sr. as head of Expert Laser Services’ brand new marketing department. This development came with Luke’s decision to become a full fledged printer and copier dealer, calling for even more additional space for the location of the show room where the company has several lines of equipment on display.

In the spring of 2006, Luke funded the creation of a DVD outlining Expert Laser Services’ products and services. The DVD featured short and entertaining skits, pertaining to specific areas of the kind of



**Cameraman working on the set of Expert Laser Services DVD**

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Christmas 2009

company that they were targeting as potential customers. Each skit was scripted by Bob Chernisky Sr.

Expert Laser Services' employees worked as "actors" in the film's several skits. "All things considered, the film provides an excellent balance between humor and education, and is probably one of the best examples of educational managed print services film currently available" comments Nathan Dube.

The end result was originally used by the company's sales team as they would hand deliver copies of the DVD to potential clients. The content of the DVD can also be found on the company's youtube channel and various posts on the company's "Adventures in Office Imaging" Blog.

**Making social media work for you**

"In 2009 we launched our social media program out of which came our infamous Destroy Your Printer Contest", Nathan adds. The contest invited people to make videos of themselves destroying their printers in creative and humorous ways, promising that the winning video would gain the creator two free toner cartridges.

"Through the company blog and in conjunction with our presence on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn we promoted the contest for 30 days, eventually receiving five submissions with content ranging from printers being run over by tractors, destroyed with explosives or hacked into pieces with machetes" Nathan tells Recycler.

The contest and its video submissions were featured in several marketing blogs as one of the first examples of a successful B2B social media campaign, in addition to being featured in a class on social media at Pelissippi State College in Knoxville, Tennessee (taught by Mark Schaefer, author/owner of the GROW Marketing Blog). The contest was also covered by Recycler Magazine's internet television channel "Recycler TV".



Founder Luke Carpentier on the set of the company's DVD

Due to the success of the contest it will now be an annual event at Expert Laser Services.


Today Expert Laser Services has 30 employees, six of whom work in production, which produces about 10,000 remanufactured toner cartridges annually. "As a B2B, we sell our toners directly to our customers, mainly as part of our PrintDOME managed print services program, which is currently provided to a customer base of about a 42 mile radius around the city of Boston, Massachusetts" Nathan continues.

**Setting themselves apart in the MPS market**

"What really separates us from our competitors in the MPS industry is experience." Says Nathan. "We have been providing dynamic service contracts based upon today's definition of managed print services for 15 years. We were in the field developing our MPS program long before the term 'managed print services' even existed. Our earliest service contracts were preludes to what a managed print services contract is commonly understood to be today".

Some of the key components of Expert Laser Services' program, that they feel you simply do not see in any of their competitors' offerings, include the following:

- The company has its own "green" toner cartridge remanufacturing facility. Each cartridge can be remanufactured to "brand new condition" about seven times. At the end of each cartridge's life span the cartridge is broken down and fully recycled. Their toner cartridges offer significant savings to our customers over the cost of OEM cartridges.
- Expert Laser Services' service techs make scheduled routine visits to all of its customers' locations. This ensures that every piece of equipment under contract is always running at optimum performance levels, with little to zero downtime.
- The company has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars of inventory on-site at its customers' locations. "While our competitors may offer you emergency toner deliveries in the nick of the time, our customers can simply go to their supplies closet and get one of the spare toners we have left for them as part of our program" say ELS.
- Expert Laser Services' response time for contract customers is often less than four hours.
- They have seven certified techs and delivery personnel on the road daily. "The fact of the matter is that our major competitors do not offer these components as part of their MPS programs" says Nathan. "Recently, we have added our own custom monitoring software to our PrintDOME program, which gives us the ability to monitor our customer's printers and copiers. This allows us to further minimize and often times eliminate our customers' downtime" he adds.

The company has experienced several major successes in the past couple of years, including new contracts with AAA of Southern New England, AAA of Connecticut and the The Small Business Service Bureau, Inc. Each of these customers has hundreds of printers and copiers under a PrintDOME managed print services contract. 



Production team from left: Debby Szczypien, Ritchie Vallee, Mike Vallee, Judy Triba, Gail Cockoros

## Interview with Expert Laser Services CEO Mike Carpentier



### **How would you describe your experience of MPS? Was it difficult to begin with? Have you changed the type of MPS offering that you provide over the years?**

As an MPS provider that grew out of remanufacturing toner 20 years ago, we developed our services easier than a copier dealer. We started with providing service as a cost lumped in with the toner cartridges, so the cartridge would cost more than retail, but all service was covered. This was back in 1994, and we still have a few clients on that model today. A few years after that program started, we became very confident in pricing our toners, since we manufactured them (still do), so we started our cost per print Partnership Program. These offerings were not difficult to start, because they grew with the company. Our cartridge customers had a need that we saw, earlier than most, how to fill. Now this program has combined with the monitoring software advantages to become our PrintDome product. Most of our business overall is this MPS offering.

### **What are the benefits of aftermarket managed print compared to OEM managed print?**

Our benefit is that we can control cost, and give great service and coverage, and have it cost around the price of just buying OEM toner. We have the added advantage of being able to manufacture our own cartridges, which allows us to quality control our product. We also have a better message when it comes to recycling, which we do locally, and employ local people to do. Our customers can take pride in the fact that they are helping recycle.

### **What do you think of the OEMs getting more into managed print in 2009?**

This is something we watch, but so far it has not been a big concern. They will have to figure it out first, and probably bleed money. They are still more interested in selling product than servicing customers, so I expect them to have problems with this approach.

### **What is the most positive thing about the remanufacturing industry?**

The industry is saving a lot of usable parts from going into landfills, and it is giving consumers a cost saving.

### **What changes do you expect to see in the industry over the next few years?**

The businesses that are small and local, that only do retail toner and ink cartridges, will have a very hard time. Some sort of MPS, where the toner that you remanufacture is a means to an end for your MPS system, will be the only way to survive. The larger remanufacturers will probably do fine and expand without that type of offering. What they may do is offer some sort of template MPS to go with their toner.

### **What frustrates you about the business?**

The main problem with being a business that has a focus on remanufactured toner, is other people who have made terrible remanufactured toner. Sometimes you can walk into great accounts, and you know the relationship will be mutually beneficial. Unfortunately, they had someone else's bad toner. Or, the IT guy's previous company had someone else's bad toner. Sometimes the IT guy has just heard of remanufactured toner being bad. In this economy, there have been some drill and fill internet companies that have put really bad, dirt cheap product out there, and that can sour folks before they see how good remanufactured toner can be.

### **What single piece of new legislation would make your life easier at work?**

It does sound like the President will try to give some tax breaks for small businesses. That would be nice. We are also an ESOP company, which means that our employees are all owners of a portion of the company, and gain in shares every year. The government has been talking about putting more restrictions on ESOPs, so I suppose no change in the current regulations would make our company's life easier.

### **What do you do in your spare time?**

I am a big music fan, and I play a number of instruments. My wife and I took a five year anniversary trip to Hawaii, and she got me a ukulele. I play guitar and sing, but this little ukulele has been taking up a lot of my time.

### **Best ever "brain wave"?**

I'll give this to my dad, who started this business. Back in 1990, he came home one day after working a construction shift, and started cleaning out the room next to mine down in the basement. All of a sudden, I'm hearing blowers and routers going at 4:00 in the morning. What I was hearing was the beginnings of Expert Laser Services. He was struggling with HP 1 toners and Canon A10 toners, and made the business into the growing company it is today.

#### **About the author**

**Nathan Dube** has been with Expert Laser Services for almost four years. His primary duties are social media marketing, blogging, web and graphic design and SEO/SEM. He is a guitarist with 15 years' experience and was self employed for a year as a guitar and bass teacher prior to joining the Expert Laser Services' team.

