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## Xerox ColorQube: The First Truly Universal Color MFP?

Industry observers have long speculated on the appearance of a tabloid/A3-sized solid ink MFP. After all, Xerox seemingly had all of the necessary ingredients—a tabloid/A3-sized solid ink engine platform, an MFP controller, and loyal and knowledgeable distribution channels. The evolution of Xerox's solid ink product line, established under Tektronix, has marked the milestones of this technology with 21 solid ink products introduced since 1991, including a series of tabloid/A3-sized printers, like the Phaser 380 (*Observer*, 9/97), and the WorkCentre C2424, Xerox's first solid ink MFP (*Observer*, 4/05). During a briefing with analysts, Jeff Blank, vice president of solid ink product development for Xerox's Global Product Delivery Group, declared, "Innovation changes everything," and he asserted that with each new solid ink introduction, Xerox has increased the speed and overall performance of the machines and driven down cost.

More recently, Xerox has been making veiled references to a tabloid/A3-sized solid ink MFP, and the noise level increased considerably in November when Anne Mulcahy, Xerox chairman and CEO, shared a few de-



*While quite ordinary looking, the ColorQube 9200 Series features a modular print-head design that consists of four print heads that jet 150 million drops per second to achieve a maximum output speed of 85 ppm for color and monochrome pages*

tails of the product with attendees at the firm's annual investor's conference. On May 7, Xerox finally raised the curtain on its A3 solid ink MFP offering, dubbed the ColorQube 9200 Series, which the firm says is the latest development in its mission to make color as easy as black and white.

According to Herve Chauveau, vice president of worldwide marketing for Xerox's Global Business and Strategic Marketing Group, the ColorQube 9200 Series addresses five challenges that face customers who want to print in color. First, customers need the cost of color closer to that of black and white to give more users access to color. "The perceived benefits must outweigh the fear of cost," he explained. Second, Chauveau said that the vast majority of customers are concerned about green issues and want their partners and suppliers to be part of a green solution.

Moreover, customers are concerned that a green solution will be more expensive or lack functionality. He said that printer vendors must demonstrate the key benefits of their products to enable customers to make better choices.

"A no-compromise color MFP" is the third challenge. Chauveau explained that this statement translates into providing break-

through color and real-life productivity to achieve better and smarter workflows. Understanding the customer's printing culture and enabling users to adopt a more responsible printing behavior is another key challenge. Chauveau described this as the "hassle factor" and asserted that educating the IT staff and the end user will help reduce the cost of color printing, and providing tools to help users see their savings will help eliminate irresponsible printing behavior.

Finally, customers need to be able to reap all the benefits of color printing and produce "rich and vibrant color" regardless of the media. "Initial feedback confirms our initial sets of assumptions," maintained Chauveau.

According to David Bates, vice president of office marketing programs for Xerox's Global Business and Strategic Marketing Group, three core tenets support the firm's mission and address the five challenges listed above. Xerox's ColorQube 9200 Series offers great color for a great price, is easy to use, and the MFPs' solid-ink technology is cartridge free and environmentally responsible. Bates maintained that price is the biggest barrier to color printing, while ease of use or "living with the product" is also a top concern. Regarding the environment, Bates said, "Solid ink has always had a great environmental advantage. The market has not been willing to look at that as a primary buying concern until recently. We have a great story there."

### Color For the Cost of B/W

The ColorQube 9200 Series is not Xerox's first solid ink product to take on the high cost of color printing. In September 2007, Xerox introduced the Phaser 8860 Series, which consists of the letter/A4-sized Phaser 8860DN and Phaser 8860MFP/D and offers color printing for the cost of black and white (*Observer*, 10/07). To achieve this objective, Xerox priced the Phaser 8860 Series' color ink sticks at

### Quick Look

#### "Business Unusual: A Bold and Innovative Play"

- *Combining the best of its WorkCentre and Phaser products, the ColorQube 9200 Series is the only output device you will ever need, says Xerox.*
- *Xerox's new tabloid/A3-sized solid ink MFP series is the result of a cross organizational development effort by the firm's geographically dispersed locations.*
- *Xerox says that the ColorQube 9200 Series launch is its biggest marketing investment in the office space in many years, despite challenging economic times.*

one-third the price of the black ink sticks, which effectively reduced the cost of printing a color page to the same as printing that same page in black.

When we asked Bates about the success of the Phaser 8860 Series for our annual year-in-review issue (*Observer*, 12/08), he said that it has been valuable in bringing other business to Xerox. More recently, Bates revealed that the Phaser 8860 Series has “opened up some very large opportunities” for Xerox, especially in managed print services environments. He acknowledged that shipment volumes, while meeting expectations, are “not huge” but maintained that color ink usage is three times that of Xerox’s previous Phaser solid ink products.

And higher ink usage feeds directly into Xerox’s color strategy. Offering a crash course in ColorQube economics, Bates instructed us on the finer points of Xerox’s plan for this new solid ink MFP series: incremental placements, more color pages, higher color coverage, and no price premium on the hardware. He said that today, the penetration of color pages in the office is 70 percent on letter/A4-sized machines but only 30 percent on tabloid/A3-sized machines. “We want 70 percent in both categories,” proclaimed Bates.

To that end, the ColorQube 9200 Series introduces a new hybrid pricing scheme for color pages that Bates said will result in dramatic cost savings for users and enable them to use color for their everyday documents. “Our industry has been selling pages based on two click charges—monochrome and color—no matter how much color is on the page,” explained Bates. He proclaimed that Xerox is “breaking that paradigm” by offering a variety of color modes and a number of tiered pricing plans. The three color modes are Useful Color, Everyday Color, and Expressive Color and can be defined in terms of number of pixels (spots printed to create an image) or percent coverage. Pixel counts may sound too technically oriented for the average business customer, but Xerox executives said that after describing the different color modes to users during the past year, the absolute pixel count is “much more understandable to customers.”

Moreover, the number of color pixels is constant on all sizes of media. Conversely, percent coverage is affected by media size and the exact colors produced, and so this



*The ColorQube 9200 Series uses the same next-generation inks as the Phaser 8860 series. As with other Xerox solid ink jet printers, the ink is sold in “sticks” that are inserted directly into the device, a strategy that minimizes packaging compared to other printers. The new ink has a lower melting point, which reduces the printer’s operating temperature and lowers energy consumption. The new inks also offer greater color stability than previous Xerox inks.*

definition is difficult for people to understand. We provide both descriptions here for completeness. Each page is tallied on the appropriate meter, as described below. Black pixels do not go against the meter pixel limits.

- Useful Color describes pages with up to 286,000 color pixels (~1.2 percent coverage on letter-sized paper), is tallied on the “Black + Color Level 1” meter, and will cost users the same as a monochrome page: approximately 1 cent.
- Everyday Color describes pages with more than 286,000 and up to 1,900,000 color pixels (between ~1.2 percent and 8 percent coverage on letter-sized paper), is tallied on the Color Level 2 meter, and will cost approximately 3 cents.
- Expressive Color describes pages with more than 1,900,000 color pixels (~8 percent coverage on letter-sized paper), is tallied on the Color Level 3 meter, and will cost “the market price” or approximately 8 cents.

Xerox executives claimed that Useful Color and Everyday Color are significant amounts of color, and the firm’s studies show that approximately 75 percent of office documents fall into these two categories. Bates

said that Xerox will use print samples to show examples of different coverage amounts that fall into the three color modes. “It is our design intent that more than half the pages that a typical office worker will produce will be Useful or Everyday Color,” asserted Bates.

A choice of Hybrid Color pricing plans will allow customers to select a plan that best fits their color printing environment. Bates said that Xerox’s research shows that not everybody wants the same pricing plan, so Xerox puts the choice in the hands of the user to help satisfy their “hunger for choice.” A three-tiered billing plan will keep track of (1) monochrome and Useful Color pages, (2) Everyday Color pages, and (3) Expressive Color pages. Bates said that this plan is the most unique and the one that Xerox expects the majority of customers to choose. A two-tiered billing plan will be better than today’s dual click charge programs with one price for monochrome pages and Useful Color pages (approximately 1 cent) and one price for the rest of the color pages. Xerox will also offer a supplies-out model where customers can purchase ink sticks outright. The firm said it is working on other usage-based plans.

For those customers that opt for the latter approach, a minority to be sure, Xerox

has priced the color sticks at one third the price of the black sticks so that printing a page in color will cost the same as printing that same page in black. Each black ink stick yields 10,000 pages, and a four-stick box of black ink sticks sells for \$570.

Each color ink stick yields 9,250 pages, and a four-stick box of color ink sticks sells for \$176. The ColorQube 9200 Series also uses a cleaning unit that has to be replaced after 200,000 pages and the cost is included in all service contracts. In addition, two components of the paper pick systems are replaceable items. The duplexing automatic document feeder (DADF) roller has a projected life of 150,000 feeds, and the pick rollers in the trays have a projected life of 600,000 feeds. The cost of these rollers is also included in all service contracts. Xerox says that everything else in the marking engine is designed to last the life of product.

In the event that these color modes and pricing plans seem complicated for the average business user, especially with the acknowledged lack of understanding about page coverage percentages, Xerox has created a tool to help customers better understand the color coverage of their documents. This tool will be available on Xerox's Web site and will analyze the uploaded document to determine under which color mode it will fall.

In addition, a ColorQube cost savings calculator will analyze a customer's printing environment, including percent of pages printed in color and types of color coverage, and show how much a customer can save in supplies costs by printing to a ColorQube machine instead of a comparable color laser MFP if the customer goes with the three-tiered pricing plan. Both of these tools are available at [www.finallycolorisless.com](http://www.finallycolorisless.com) or [www.xerox.com/finallycolorisless](http://www.xerox.com/finallycolorisless). For more complex printing environments and for cost comparisons that involve the cost of the hardware, Xerox will offer analysis through its Xerox Office Printing Assessment (XOPA) service and the new Xerox Print Services, a set of services and tools that is delivered through the firm's network of channel partners to help small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) better manage their printing infrastructure and reduce costs.

## Been There, Done That

If these pricing plans sound familiar, it

may be because HP implemented something similar when the firm introduced the CM8050 and CM8060 color MFPs, two ink jet machines based on the firm's Edgeline technology, which incorporates HP's scalable printing technology (SPT) print heads into a page-wide array (*Observer*, 5/07). HP's usage-based leases included monochrome costs of a penny a page, an accent color printing mode with costs of about a penny a page, a general-office color printing mode with costs of between 4.5 and 6.5 cents a page, and a professional color printing mode with costs of about 6 to 8 cents per page.

When asked how Xerox's tiered pricing plans compare to those of HP, Xerox executives avoided a direct comparison to their rival's pricing model and focused on the benefits of Xerox's Hybrid Color pricing plans, including a significant reduction in the cost of color pages and the elimination of a "one-size-fits-all" pricing model where the cost of a full page of color, such as a photo, is the same as the cost of a page with a small logo on it. These are the same benefits that HP espoused as the firm predicted savings of up to 30 percent in operating costs and a usage-based pricing model that offers different page costs according to the color printing mode.

Upon closer examination, we found two differences between the HP and Xerox pricing plans. First, the ColorQube 9200 Series automatically detects the color mode for each page and increments the counter accordingly. If a customer wants to use the general-office color mode that is available on the HP CM8050 and CM8060, the user must select this mode in the print driver or control panel, and this mode provides lower color saturation, like a draft mode, in order to reduce printing costs. HP's accent color mode is automatically invoked when printed or copied pages contain a small predefined amount of color.

As a result, Xerox claims, "Xerox's Hybrid Color Plan delivers lower prices without compromising quality," as users simply select "Print" in the print driver and the ColorQube 9200 Series automatically measures how many pixels are used to produce each page.

Xerox's choice of metered plans is the second distinction from HP's usage-based pricing plan. According to the firm, offering a choice of metered plans allows cus-

tomers to "get the plan that best fits their environment."

## Environmental Friendliness

According to Xerox, the ColorQube 9200 Series is designed to be as easy on the environment as it is on the pocketbook. Solid ink technology has always had an advantage over laser technology in terms of waste reduction. Who can forget that memorable demonstration during Xerox's press conference announcing the Phaser 8400 where the firm dramatically compared the relatively miniscule waste generated by a solid ink machine (small enough to be wheeled onto stage in a red wagon) to the mountain of waste generated by a color laser machine (*Observer*, 2/04)?

Xerox recalled that previous display with a similar visual comparing the waste generated by the ColorQube 9200 Series and a comparable color laser MFP. According to Bates, the ColorQube Series generates 90 percent less waste when producing 22,000 pages per month for four years, and nearly all of the MFPs' waste is locally recyclable. The ink sticks are cartridge free and 100 percent consumed. The packaging contains 45 percent recycled content for the carton and 100 percent recycled content for the plastic ink stick tray.

Xerox has designed the ColorQube 9200 Series to produce high quality output on recycled paper and on Xerox High-Yield Business paper that uses half the trees to produce the same amount of paper. Xerox contracted with the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) for a life cycle analysis that concluded that the ColorQube 9200 Series has a smaller carbon footprint than a comparable laser product. The report is available for download from Xerox's Web site.

## Ease of Use

The ColorQube's ease of use features can be categorized into three areas—supplies, operator interaction, and reliability—each of which ultimately affects productivity. The ColorQube 9200 Series holds up to 6 ink sticks per color, and users can replace the ink while the machine is running. "By definition, the way you get maximum yield out of toner is to run out, and by definition someone's job is interrupted. That is a productivity hit," asserted Bates. Users can view videos on the front panel to help guide them



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through routine maintenance tasks, and the paper path is illuminated inside the machine to help with clearing paper jams.

According to Blank, the ColorQube 9200 Series is one of the most reliable platforms that Xerox has ever developed. “We’re in a fantastic position in terms of reliability in labs and with real customers,” he claimed. “We are seeing reliability on par with second- and third-generation platforms.” Xerox has engaged 49 customer sites as part of its seed program, 20 percent of which are not existing Xerox customers, and Leah Quesada, marketing director for Xerox office products for Xerox’s Global Business and Strategic Marketing Group, boasted, “Customer satisfaction is at the 93 percent level, which is higher than some of our mature products.” Quesada added that there is “extreme excitement” from Xerox’s sales people and service community. “They are not afraid of this clean sheet design,” she asserted.

### ColorQube Series

Xerox’s new tabloid/A3-sized solid ink MFPs use a modular print-head design that consists of four print heads mounted in a staggered array to span the width of a tabloid/A3-sized page. Each print head is about the size of a deck of cards and funnels molten solid ink through a complex network of channels to the nozzles, each of which are 37.5 microns wide and fire at 43 KHz. Each print head contains 880 nozzles (220 nozzles per color) and the machines can lay down more than 150 million drops per second, thanks to twice the number of nozzles per linear inch compared to prior solid ink print heads, which results in a 400 percent increase in ink flow.

According to Blank, solid ink technology is advantaged over water-based ink jet products, because the ink solidifies instantly and there are no issues with drying time or showthrough and cockle on thin papers. The print heads and imaging architecture provide the ability to position pixels within microns, which, along with self-correcting image quality maintenance systems, ensures stellar image quality on a wide range of everyday office media. The ColorQube 9200 Series ink formulations are based on the same ink platform as the Phaser 8860 Series.

The ColorQube 9200 Series consists of three models, which are differentiated by color speed and maximum monthly duty cycle.



*The ColorQube 9200 series print head, which is about the size of deck of cards, packs in 880 nozzles, twice the number per linear inch compared to prior print heads. This enables the head to print 85 pages per minute using molten solid ink. Development of the minuscule nozzles, each only 37.5 microns wide, is considered a major achievement because they deliver higher flow rates—150 million drops of ink per second—despite their reduced size.*

All three MFPs have a maximum monochrome print and copy speed of 50 ppm. The ColorQube 9201, ColorQube 9202, and ColorQube 9203 have maximum color print and copy speeds of 38 ppm, 45 ppm, and 50 ppm, respectively. These output speeds are measured in the default Enhanced mode with a resolution of 450 × 567 dpi, which has output quality equivalent to 600 × 600 dpi laser output.

Four print modes provide users a choice of speed and quality (*see table on page 6 for details*). According to Xerox, the ability to adjust print quality and speed is one of the unique advantages of solid ink and gives users the option of gaining extra print productivity with lower print resolutions and less saturated images. These flexible print modes provide the ColorQube 9200 Series with the ability to print up to 85 ppm when the situation calls for prints in a hurry. For example, users can print short-life or internal-use documents more quickly by selecting Standard or Fast Color mode in the PostScript print driver. Xerox says that its solid ink products have always offered a range of print speeds based on the print quality mode selected and that the firm’s research has shown that customers appreciate the additional print productivity for internal use or short-life documents.

Xerox has set the maximum monthly duty cycle for the ColorQube 9201, ColorQube 9202, and ColorQube 9203 at 150,000 pages, 225,000 pages, and 300,000 pages, respectively, but Quesada expects average monthly print volumes to be 15,000 pages, 17,000 pages, and 21,000 pages, respectively. (*See table on page 5 for more product details.*)

Standard features are fairly run of the mill and include a 100-sheet DADF, a standard paper-input capacity of 3,300 sheets, and an assortment of finishing options, including stapling, saddle-stitching, hole punching, and Z- and C-folding. The finishing options, DADF, and 4,000-sheet high-capacity feeder share the same hardware architecture as those for the WorkCentre 5600 Series, but the firmware is different between the two product families, so the actual stocked accessories are not directly interchangeable.

A gigabit Ethernet interface is standard, and the controller includes a 1 GHz processor, 2 GB of memory, and an 80 GB hard drive. PCL and PostScript printing are included out of the box along with scan to home, mailbox, e-mail, searchable PDF, PDF/A, and XPS. An analog fax modem is optional, but the solid ink MFPs support standard Internet and server fax. The ColorQube 9200 Series supports Xerox’s Extensible In-

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terface Platform, and Blank said that the MFPs are “completely compatible” with everything else in Xerox’s MFP fleet. “From a look-and-feel and workflow standpoint, the ColorQube fits right in,” he confirmed.

## Product Positioning

So where does the ColorQube 9200 Series fit within Xerox’s color MFP portfolio? When asked this question during a briefing with analysts, Xerox executives responded with a number of qualifications. In terms of target customers, Xerox positions the ColorQube 9200 Series for the office, not for graphic arts or print for pay. The ColorQube 9200 Series is “targeted for businesses that have competitive products, that are paying 7–8 cents on a color page, and that are looking to lower color costs,” said Quesada.

The second target customer set consists of businesses that have monochrome devices today and have been reluctant to switch to color because of the cost. “We offer ColorQube as a way of easing into a device that offers monochrome [printing] at the same price they are paying and color better than any other color MFP on the market today,” explained Quesada.

When pressed further on how this positioning is different than that of Xerox’s color WorkCentre products, Quesada explained that the new solid ink ColorQube family takes printing to a new level by reducing the cost of color printing up to 62 percent and waste by 90 percent. If customers desire to add more value by printing more color in their everyday documents, ColorQube will deliver a compelling value proposition. She added that when color print volumes remain low or a color job requires offset type quality, laser remains a good choice. Both laser and solid ink support a wide variety of paper media, according to Quesada, however, laser is better with glossy paper, and solid ink is better with recycled and high-yield paper. Quesada declared that Xerox is best positioned with its innovative technology and services offerings to help manage the right mix of equipment and workflow to achieve its customers’ goals.

Xerox’s laser-based color MFPs have prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000, while the ColorQube 9201, ColorQube 9202, and ColorQube 9203 have list prices of \$23,500, \$26,500, and \$29,500, respectively. In terms of color control, Bates asserted that the

## First Look: Xerox Tabloid/A3-Sized Solid Ink MFPs

	Xerox ColorQube 9201	Xerox ColorQube 9202	Xerox ColorQube 9203
<b>How Much and When?</b>			
Street Price/Availability	\$23,500/May	\$26,500/May	\$29,500/May
<b>How Fast and What Image Quality?</b>			
Print/Copy Speed (mono/color)*	50/38 ppm	50/45 ppm	50/50 ppm
Scan Speed (mono/color)	75/51 ipm	75/51 ipm	75/51 ipm
Copy/Scan Resolution	600 × 600 dpi	600 × 600 dpi	600 × 600 dpi
Print Resolution	600 × 600 dpi	600 × 600 dpi	600 × 600 dpi
* Enhanced print mode, 450x567 dpi, equivalent to 600 × 600 dpi laser output			
<b>What Kind of Paper Handling?</b>			
Paper Input (std./max.)	3,300 sheets/ 7,300 sheets	3,300 sheets/ 7,300 sheets	3,300 sheets/ 7,300 sheets
Document Feeder	100-sheet DADF	100-sheet DADF	100-sheet DADF
Auto Duplex	standard	standard	standard
Finishing	stapling, saddle-stitching, hole punching, Z- and C-folding	stapling, saddle-stitching, hole punching, Z- and C-folding	stapling, saddle-stitching, hole punching, Z- and C-folding
Maximum Paper Size	12 x 18 inches	12 x 18 inches	12 x 18 inches
<b>What Are the Controller Features?</b>			
Interfaces	Gigabit Ethernet	Gigabit Ethernet	Gigabit Ethernet
Processor	1 GHz	1 GHz	1 GHz
Memory (std./max.)	2 GB/2 GB; 80 GB HD	2 GB/2 GB; 80 GB HD	2 GB/2 GB; 80 GB HD
<b>What Functionality Does It Offer?</b>			
Print Features	PostScript 3, PCL 5c/6	PostScript 3, PCL 5c/6	PostScript 3, PCL 5c/6
Scan Features	scan to home, mailbox, e-mail, searchable PDF, PDF/A, XPS	scan to home, mailbox, e-mail, searchable PDF, PDF/A, XPS	scan to home, mailbox, e-mail, searchable PDF, PDF/A, XPS
Fax Features	Internet fax, server fax; opt. 33.6 Kbps	Internet fax, server fax; opt. 33.6 Kbps	Internet fax, server fax; opt. 33.6 Kbps
Display	8-inch TFT three quarter WVGA LCD color display with back lighting	8-inch TFT three quarter WVGA LCD color display with back lighting	8-inch TFT three quarter WVGA LCD color display with back lighting
<b>What Are the Supplies and the Maximum Monthly Usage?</b>			
Supplies	10,000-page black ink sticks, 9,250-page color ink sticks	10,000-page black ink sticks, 9,250-page color ink sticks	10,000-page black ink sticks, 9,250-page color ink sticks
Duty Cycle	150,000 pages	225,000 pages	300,000 pages
<b>Positioning:</b>	addition to line	addition to line	addition to line
<b>New features:</b>	photo, enhanced, standard, and fast color output settings	photo, enhanced, standard, and fast color output settings	photo, enhanced, standard, and fast color output settings
<b>Competition</b>	Canon iR C4080i, HP CM8050/CM8060 MFP, Kon. Min. bizhub C352, Ricoh Aficio MP C3500	Canon iR C4580i, HP CM8050/8060 MFP, Kon. Min. bizhub C450, Ricoh Aficio MP C4500	Canon iR C5185i, HP CM8050/8060 MFP, Kon. Min. bizhub C552, Ricoh Aficio MP C5000
Source: Lyra Research, based on information from Xerox			

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ColorQube 9200 Series is not suited for customers that are concerned about not printing in color, rather it is for customers that are printing documents with low color coverage and are not willing to step up to the higher color page costs of color laser. Bates described this class of customer as “the main sweet spot” and claimed, “We believe there are a lot of them out there.”

Xerox says that the ColorQube 9200 Series has four key advantages compared to the HP CM8050 and CM8060 color MFPs, and some of these advantages also apply to laser-based color MFPs with similar output speeds. First, the ColorQube 9200 Series is built on proven solid ink technology that was designed from the outset for the rigorous demands of office users. “This is not home ink jet technology,” said company executives. Second, Xerox’s new solid ink MFPs utilize a next-generation Xerox Smart Controller and a scaled-up architecture that offer a number of advantages. The print heads and marking engine are designed to last the life of an A3 office device, speed is not compromised due to image coverage because there is no drying cycle, and solid ink technology has very robust media support so there are no issues with show through, cockling, or curling on thin media.

Xerox says that its Smart Controller is proven in the office market via the firm’s WorkCentre products, which allows the ColorQube to leverage the best of both worlds to deliver solid ink MFPs that fit seamlessly with A3 office customer needs. “We are not trying to force-fit technology by moving it up to a new part of the market,” concludes Xerox. Xerox’s Hybrid Color Plan and the environmental advantages of solid ink technology, both discussed previously, are the ColorQube 9200 Series’ third and fourth advantages that Xerox cites compared to HP’s Edgeline-based color MFPs and comparable color laser MFPs.

## Sales and Marketing

Xerox intends to hit the ground running on May 7. In addition to collecting customer feedback and reliability data from the seed program, Xerox has also won over 10 customers who will provide testimonials for the announcement. Quesada said that Xerox is planning a number of regional events in major metropolitan areas, and local activities are being combined with customer business events. She added that Xerox is also actively

ColorQube Print Modes					
Print Mode	Drum Revolutions	Page Type	ColorQube 9201	ColorQube 9202	ColorQube 9203
High Resolution/Photo (600 x 600 dpi)	8	Color	30 ppm	35 ppm	38 ppm
		Monochrome	38 ppm	38 ppm	38 ppm
Enhanced (default) (450 x 567 dpi)	6	Color	38 ppm	45 ppm	50 ppm
		Monochrome	50 ppm	50 ppm	50 ppm
Standard (300 x 500 dpi)	4	Color	50 ppm	60 ppm	70 ppm
		Monochrome	70 ppm	70 ppm	70 ppm
Fast Color (225 x 450 dpi)	3	Color	60 ppm	70 ppm	85 ppm
		Monochrome	85 ppm	85 ppm	85 ppm

Source: Lyra Research, based on information from Xerox

*Flexible print modes allow users to optimize how their job is printed, either faster but with lower resolution and less saturated images, or slower with the best possible print quality*

engaging the press with its three-pronged message—affordable, environmentally friendly, and easy to use color printing—that positions Xerox as a leader in driving down color print costs. The unique landing site for the product, [www.finallycolorisless.com](http://www.finallycolorisless.com), will provide a virtual demo of the product in addition to the aforementioned color mode analyzer and cost savings calculator. “We will be quite visible in all our marketing activities, using the affordability value proposition, as well as the ease of use value proposition, and sustainability,” asserted Quesada.

While Chauveau declined to quantify the exact amount that Xerox is investing in the ColorQube 9200 Series launch, he said that the level of investment is “the biggest in the office space made for many years, despite the economic challenges we are facing.” He added that this is one of Xerox’s strongest product launch announcements, across channels, market tools, and geographies.

The three core tenets of Xerox’s ColorQube 9200 Series also played a significant part in their branding. The ColorQube designation caused a few raised eyebrows when initially revealed to industry analysts, but Bates explained that the ColorQube brand came out on top of the firm’s brand research and communicates a lot of the values and attributes of the product. He added that it was important to differentiate the firm’s new solid ink MFPs so that customers understand it is a significantly different value proposition from the rest of the line. According to Bates, all of Xerox’s solid ink products will be branded ColorQube going forward, and the Phaser brand will be used for desktop laser devices.

The ColorQube 9200 Series is undoubtedly a horse of a different color for Xerox. Xerox executives said that while all of Xerox’s U.S. distribution channels will have access to this new solid ink MFP series, Xerox direct sales people, agents, and Global Imaging Systems will be the most dominant channels for delivering the ColorQube 9200 Series. “They understand the value proposition,” asserted Quesada. Xerox will start taking orders in the United States and Canada on May 7, with availability in other geographies to follow.

## Our View

Aside from Xerox’s undoubtedly giant sales and marketing investment, the firm has also spent a huge amount of research and development dollars on its tabloid/A3-sized solid ink engine platform. Blank said that Xerox has been working on the ColorQube project for several years, and the cross organizational development effort included team members from England, Malaysia, and the firm’s two U.S. locations: Wilsonville, OR and Rochester, NY. According to Blank, the ColorQube 9200 Series was created from the best of Xerox’s WorkCentre and Phaser technologies, and this collaborative approach, which he described as “business unusual,” resulted in the “first truly universal color MFP.”

The ColorQube 9200 Series is certainly an exciting addition to Xerox’s color MFP line, and it is an interesting development in the firm’s ongoing campaign to migrate color laser users to solid ink. Xerox executives have high hopes for the ColorQube’s ability to compete in today’s color MFP market. Quesada asserted that the ColorQube 9200 Series’ value



## PRODUCTS



*Xerox promotes the environmental benefits of its solid ink jet printers, in particular the reduced packaging associated with the machines' supplies. In the case of the new ColorQube machines, the firm says that the devices only produce 88 pounds of waste over the course of a four-year life in which they print 22,000 pages per month, compared to 815 pounds of waste produced by a "comparable laser MFP." The devices' weakness from an environmental perspective is their energy consumption, not their solid waste, because they must be left on at all times so that their solid ink does not harden, requiring a lengthy warm-up process.*

proposition is one "that the competition will take a while to match," and Bates professed that Xerox's target is for the ColorQube 9200 Series to account for the bulk of Xerox's A3 MFP revenue in the upper end of the workgroup/departmental market it serves, although he did not provide a target date.

With that goal in mind, Quesada said that Xerox will lead with a solution selling approach that enables the sales rep to provide the right solution every time. "This is why we have the broadest product line from desktop printers to advanced multifunction products. The ColorQube 9200 Series offers breakthrough color pricing, huge environmental advantages, and industry leading ease of use. For customers looking for office color in the \$20,000 to \$30,000 range, it will clearly be a compelling product. For those looking for lower entry prices, not desiring the color volumes, or needing higher color speeds, our WorkCentre 7200, 7300, and 7600 families will continue to be the best option. Specific application requirements and customer preferences will also help determine which product is best suited in a particular situation. Our broad portfolio, together with our wide-reaching and highly skilled sales channels will be able to work with our customers to find the solution that best meets their needs."

Chauveau concurred, "ColorQube is a

great innovative offering, and it will help Xerox grow in that space. In our overall portfolio, ColorQube complements our laser portfolio and allows us to leverage solid ink technology in the A3 MFP space. At the end of the day, both technologies will continue to exist for a long time. We will have very strong advocates for both."

Xerox's answers sound eerily similar to the ones we routinely hear from HP when we ask executives at that company about the battle between color laser and ink jet in the office. And Xerox faces a similar battle as HP when it comes to displacing color laser products in the office with solid ink machines. With the ColorQube 9200 Series, it appears that Xerox is following in its competitor's footsteps, certainly the tiered pricing model bears a striking resemblance to that of HP's CM8050 and CM8060 Color MFPs. Yet, Xerox has an advantage over HP in its channels of distribution. While HP has long labored to build up a solid distribution channel for its MFPs, Xerox has the luxury of a knowledgeable direct sales force, loyal agent channel, and Global Imaging Systems. According to Bates, the ColorQube 9200 Series offers Xerox's distribution channels a differentiated product that is "a competitive knockout."

Business gurus far wiser than us have long espoused the four P's of marketing—place,

product, price, and promotion—and Xerox's ColorQube announcement seems to incorporate all of these facets. Broad distribution, a robust feature set, flexible and affordable pricing schemes, and an extensive marketing campaign have come together in a nice shiny package. Will this be the winning combination that moves solid ink beyond the niche it is today? Has Xerox learned enough from previous attempts, by itself and others, to successfully penetrate the hallowed halls of the office world with ink technology? We will undoubtedly track the progress of this innovative product series in the months to come, and our annual December year-in-review issue will give us a chance to check in with Xerox executives and see how the products are measuring up to their expectations. ☞

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## PRODUCTS

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