

Independent South Florida Canon dealer expands into Brevard as Omni Business Solutions, opens standalone facility and warehouse in Melbourne — operated by local team of industry professionals

By Ken Datzman

Omni Business Solutions has opened a 4,000-square-foot full-service office in Melbourne. The business is new to the area but not the people who run it.

The move into this market positions the growing 14-year-old South Florida company to use its local presence to provide service and support to its customer base in the county after the sale, something that is disappearing as more copier businesses centralize their operations to cut expenses.

A division of Copycorp Inc. of Miami, Florida's largest independent authorized dealer of Canon business and document systems, Omni Business Solutions (www.yes-omni.com) occupies a standalone facility at 2870 Harper Road. The sales, service and technical-support office has been open for about four or five weeks. But the Omni team has been working the Brevard market for three months now.

"We felt the timing was right for a small, independent dealer like ourselves to enter the Brevard market," said Frank Maribona, vice president and general manager of Copycorp, whose company operates in South Florida under the Delta Business Solutions brand. "A lot of big-can distributors have centralized their customer-service operations, such as their billing, their dispatch for technical service and repair, and their warehousing, for instance. Quite frankly, when you do this you lose that local reach, making it difficult to give your customers the service they deserve."

Copycorp posted sales of more than \$6 million in 2003 and sees strong growth coming from Brevard as Omni enters the market as a total business systems solution provider.

Maribona said when he first got into the business the major players in his industry were on an acquisition binge, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

"And as these companies grew they started centralizing their operations, leaving customers without a local solution for sales, service and support. The problem with centralization is that this type of business solution is complex — no two systems or situations are the same. Therefore, acquiring equipment is just a small part of the total scope of the solution. Customers need to analyze their office processes and constantly monitor their equipment needs, usage and expenses."

Today, there is much discussion in his industry about document workflow, needs analysis and solution sales.

Maribona has assembled a team here that includes many former staffers that once worked for Omni Business Systems in Melbourne, one of the area's most successful companies. It operated in Brevard for some 25 years, before businessman Gene Boyd, president and founder, sold it in the late 1990s and retired. Maribona himself was with that company for 10 years as was Donald Piercy Jr., who today is the chief financial officer for Omni Business Solutions.

"Since many of us came from that company we decided to go with the Omni name in Brevard. We were in Brevard for many years and still have a lot of contacts. We really like the business climate. The Omni name is very recognizable, but along with the name comes the people that stood behind that name," Maribona said.

Omni Business Solutions, an exclusive Canon dealership that also sells, services and supports Hewlett Packard printers, has an eight-person team in Brevard and plans to expand its work force as the company grows. The corporation as a whole has 33 people. In South Florida, it occupies a 12,000-square-foot office.

"Having local customer service is what differentiates us," says Piercy, a certified public accountant. "We're attracting new customers because of our experience in the day-to-day management of our solutions — like getting the billing right. Our equipment, emergency response and replacement guarantees are designed to set us apart in the marketplace."

Omni's replacement guarantee means that if the equipment is "down for more than 24 hours" a loaner machine will be provided to the customer. "We can do that because we are local," Maribona said, "and have the equipment in our warehouse. Our goal is to build Omni Business Solutions by providing those things that our competitors cannot provide."

Whether it's supplies, parts, getting a loaner machine or looking at new equipment, Omni dedicates a sales and service-account team to each customer so that they find the most economical and efficient business-document solution, Maribona said. "If we do our job right, then our customers will become more profitable because their documentation expenses are lower and better managed."

Canon U.S.A. Inc., a subsidiary of Canon Inc. (NYSE: CAJ), is the nation's market



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Omni Business Solutions, a division of 14-year-old Copycorp Inc. of Miami, Florida's largest independent authorized dealer of Canon business and document systems, has opened a 4,000-square-foot facility at 2870 Harper Road in Melbourne. Frank Maribona, right, is vice president and general manager. Donald Piercy, a CPA, is the firm's chief financial officer. Both of them once worked for Omni Business Systems of Melbourne, a company that operated in Brevard for some 25 years before it was sold.

share brand leader in black-and-white and color laser copier/printer solutions.

"PC World," a magazine with a readership of more than 7 million people, unveiled the winners of its World Class Awards last month and Canon prominently occupied five spots on the list that features the finest products and services of 2003, from advanced digital cameras to workgroup printers.

In the Digital Imaging competition, Canon captured three of the seven categories. It won Best Photo Printer (Canon i960), Best Scanner (CanoScan 9900F) and Best Digital SLR Camera (EOS Digital Rebel). In the Printing and Publishing run-off, Canon had the Best Inkjet Printer (i455) and the Best Multifunction Printer (MultiPass MP 730).

A study released by research firm Gartner Dataquest in April of 2003 also showed that Canon was No. 1 in every speed segment of the market.

Maribona says his company has no ambitions of aligning itself with other brands to widen its product portfolio.

"When you represent the premier manufacturer there is no reason to take on any other dealerships. For the 20th time in the last 21 years, Canon has held the No. 1 position in the U.S., in back-and-white copiers. And for the 16th consecutive year, they've held the top spot for color copiers. That is quite impressive."

With the introduction of Canon's newest technology — the color-enabled imageRunner C3100 Series and C6800 — Omni Business Solutions is poised help more Brevard companies improve their document capabilities and become more efficient. Both products received Bertl's Best for Spring 2004 Awards. Bertl does independent product evaluation reports and comparative analysis on digital-imaging devices and software.