

IBM SureMark Printer surpasses one million units milestone

In late 2003, the IBM SureMark Printer achieved a feat unlike any other point-of-sale (POS) product in the IBM portfolio: one million units shipped. On a recent trip to the Asia Pacific geography, IBM Retail Store Solutions General Manager Tom Peterson received a gold-plated IBM SureMark Printer from manufacturing partner TEC to commemorate the event.

"The IBM SureMark Printer has consistently contributed to the success of IBM Retail Store Solutions, especially in fiscal 2003 when it exceeded plan by more than 60,000 units," Peterson said. "These additional sales garnered \$22 million in revenue, which is an absolutely outstanding result. All the credit goes to the RSS and ISC organizations, and their excellent teamwork. When sales turned up the heat to bring in these orders, the ISC accomplished the impossible by building and shipping them in record time."

In fact, the SureMark Printer has exceeded sales expectations year after year, providing exceptionally high profitability. Very few peripherals ever sell one million units, and the SureMark Printer achieved it sooner than anyone in Retail Store Solutions predicted.

"One million units sold is impressive on its own," Peterson said. "But perhaps even more so for the SureMark Printer, because each of these sales was hotly contested and hard-won. This printer faces extremely competitive price pressure and depends heavily on high-quality integration services and support. Reaching the one million unit milestone could not have happened without flawless collaboration among our sales, marketing, development, manufacturing, services and support teams."

According to Product Marketing Manager David Stanhope, the IBM SureMark Printer has been successful with retailers for many reasons.

"It has a unique combination of a small footprint, high print speed, check printing and flipping capabilities, excellent reliability, and best-of-breed functionality, including logo printing, bar code printing, and color printing," he said. "When you add its competitive price, the strength of the IBM brand, and the fact that we position it as part of a total POS solution, it adds up to a very successful, highly sought-after printer."

Stanhope continued:

"What's more, its capabilities help retailers improve operational efficiency and build customer loyalty. These printers also help improve transaction speed, which makes it easy for consumers to do business with a retailer who has them at the POS. Fast, easy checkout keeps consumers coming back, and that keeps retailers coming back to the SureMark Printer."

Stanhope also cited continuous improvement of the printer as a strong driver of demand. Specifically, IBM is the only provider that allows current printer customers to add new capabilities — such as color printing or PDF 417 bar codes — to installed printers via free firmware upgrades.

On the manufacturing side, Peterson complimented the ISC for the printer's ongoing success.

"ISC has done a remarkable job satisfying demand for SureMark Printers in an environment where certain parts are often unexpectedly difficult to procure," he said. "Typically, the printer configuration is not known until very late in the sales cycle, which make fast manufacturing critical to success. Plus, ISC's focus on continuous quality improvement helped the SureMark Printer build a reputation for very high reliability."

Today, the SureMark Printer continues to evolve in its quest for two million units sold. According to Stanhope, current plans will extend the SureMark Printer into new sectors for ticket printing and other applications. The new Model T18, which supports electronic check imaging, will help a growing number of retailers reduce check transaction costs. Finally, upcoming fiscal models of the SureMark Printer will enable multi-national retailers to use the same POS printer platform worldwide.

For more information about the IBM SureMark Printer, please contact your local IBM representative, or visit ibm.com/industries/retail/store.