



LOFFLER

Diamond Award Earned Only by Top 5% of Dealers in Country

As Loffler Companies in Bloomington, MN has expanded into new business segments such as Managed IT, MPS, and onsite managed services to complement their legacy hardware business, the one constant that's kept them on an upward trajectory and remains a companywide passion is providing great service.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, we've all heard that one before, but Loffler lives it, not just talks the talk. That's why they're being acknowledged with a Diamond level BEI Services and ENX magazine's Office Technology Service Excellence Award, ranking in the top five percent overall.

Eight years ago Loffler implemented BEI Services because of the service metrics the program provides. "I'm an operations person and very analytical," Nelson explains. "They brought data to me that I had never seen before, which gave me the ability to look at our service organization in a different way."



One strategy that's helped Loffler achieve its service goals over the years is a simple one—hiring only the best and brightest in the industry—people committed to the Loffler philosophy of exceeding expectations with clients, partners, and the community.

Of course anyone in the document imaging industry that has ever made a hire understands that's not as simple as it sounds, but Loffler has been fortunate, particularly in their service department.



Vice President of Operations, Joel Nelson, left, and President and CEO, Jim Loffler.

One of the best and brightest employees at Loffler is Vice President of Operations Joel Nelson who joined the dealership 18 years ago. He oversees a department of 120+ employees. 80 of them work in the service department and care for the equipment of 7,250+ customers covering Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

Nelson has seen plenty of evolutionary changes on the technology front during his tenure at Loffler, changes that have had a significant impact on service and how it's delivered. "With the change from analog to fully connected digital devices, we're now much more involved in the customer's processes so when a device goes down their process stops," states Nelson. "That's why it's so critical to make sure their uptime is at the highest peak."

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"Before BEI Services, and one of the things we laugh about now, is we thought our best technicians were the ones that made the most service calls and were the fastest," recalls President Jim Loffler. "Only after we were able to look at the data from BEI—first call effectiveness, fixing it right the first time—we discovered the technicians we thought were our best were actually our least productive. It's powerful information for sure."



While the service Loffler was providing its customers was already pretty darn good, Nelson knew there was still room for improvement. However, things didn't change overnight. That too was an evolution, as was getting service techs to embrace a new way of doing things. "Some service techs like to do things their way," acknowledges Nelson. "There was a little resistance at first, but the bonus part really helped—showing them that not only will the customer be happier, but you also have the ability to make more money."

Within six months the dealership started seeing improvements. During the first three months of implementation he and his colleagues were in awe looking at the overall service statistics available to them. "It took us that long to get our arms around it and understand the areas we wanted to focus on," he says. "BEI is a wonderful tool in regards to the information it provides, but you have to take one bite at a time."

The most beneficial information to Nelson and one of the reasons that Loffler has achieved Diamond level status is first call effectiveness (FCE). "That's obviously what we hone in on," says Nelson. "Some of the other metrics are critical and important, but the first thing is to make sure your customers are happy."

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"FCE changes the whole focus of the call," adds Loffler. "The focus of the call is to fix the machine so that it runs for a long period of time maximizing copies between calls. Technicians earn a bonus for time between calls. Now, not only are they going to fix the problem, they're going to go over everything that could go wrong. That means we don't have to roll a truck in 30 days, and maybe we can wait 70 days. Everyone wins—the customer, the technician and the company. That's the effectiveness of FCE; you actually see your service calls go down when the team is running efficiently."



One metric that places Loffler among the top tier of service providers in the dealer community is that techs have the correct parts 89 percent of the time. Yes, 89 percent.

“That goes back to the organization itself,” states Nelson. “We really have a team environment. Technicians are not going to be good technicians if they don’t have the infrastructure behind them. You need the proper inventory levels, the proper restock levels, the proper software infrastructure for tracking calls and so forth, and that goes back to the team environment.”

Taking service to the next level has resulted in even more appreciative customers.

“I can’t recall what our statistics were eight years ago, but where we are today, we get a lot of rave reviews from our customers,” says Nelson.

Nowhere is that more evident than when the occasional Loffler customer goes to a competitor only to realize they never had it so good as when they were being serviced by Loffler. It’s not unusual for Nelson or Loffler to hear from small accounts all the way up to big national accounts, ‘You guys have raised the bar in this industry.’

“When we get a customer, we tend to keep the customer. That speaks a lot to the service we provide,” says Loffler. “When you’re trying to get new business, it’s so competitive out there and all our competitors are bragging about how great their service is too. Using the Diamond award to promote our quality of service shows that we truly have an elite team of people serving our customers.”

It’s not surprising that Loffler ranks among the Top 5 in the nation when one looks at all of BEI’s service metrics. “I go back to the infrastructure along with the people and tools,” responds Nelson when asked why. “They go hand in hand. You need to have all three to achieve greatness.” If I can quote Marcus Lemonis from *The Profit*, “The 3 Keys to Business Success...People, Process, Products”—it’s the foundation for success.

Loffler credits the entire Loffler team. “Whether it’s sales or the front desk, warehouse, service people, admin, we’ve built a culture of pride in doing great work and exceeding customers’ expectations. It sounds like a cliché, but we eat, drink, and breathe it all the time and look for ways to improve.”

Last year Loffler earned the number one ranking in FCE on multiple occasions based on monthly metrics. “It’s the culture, surrounding ourselves with people that generally enjoy serving other people and getting the right people on the bus,” emphasizes Loffler.

Being acknowledged this year by BEI Services and ENX validates Loffler’s service excellence.

It doesn’t hurt either that Loffler offers ongoing technical training. Training on new technology takes place in Loffler’s corporate center in Minneapolis. “People talk about training, but our people are trained on every single machine,” reports Loffler. “A lot of small dealers say our guys are factory trained, but the guy was trained by the manufacturer



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six years ago on a machine that's been discontinued. What they're telling the customer is true, but they're not up to date. Joel and his team are focused on training everybody on everything. It's a huge investment, but it comes back to first call effectiveness. The better we are at that the more cost effective we are to operate this business. It's powerful to have that kind of efficiency."

Despite ranking so high on the BEI metrics, Loffler has no plans to stick to the service status quo. During a recent kick-off meeting, one of two companywide meetings held each year, Nelson emphasized his yearly objective of raising the bar. "Obviously we have to continue to be competitive and continue to improve." That might encompass raising first

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Loffler also sends its top service professionals on an expense-paid trip for two to sunny climates for exceeding customer expectations.

As one of the top five dealers in the country according to BEI Services' metrics, does Nelson have any advice for his peers who might also be looking to improve their service operations?

"Make sure you have the proper infrastructure, a defined process, proper inventory levels, a structure that supports both the customer and the technician, and lastly, the right people in the right roles, or you're not going to improve."



At a Glance:

- **Lines Serviced:**
Canon, Konica Minolta, Xerox, Océ, HP, Lexmark
- **Number of service techs:** 80
- **Territory Covered:**
125-mile radius around the Twin Cities

Why They Stand Out:

- **Ranks in Top 5 percent of nation using BEI Services' metrics**
- **More than one third of their technicians are BEI Services award recipients**
- **Techs have the correct parts for servicing customer machines 89 percent of the time**

Loffler Companies received the BEI Diamond Level Service Award in 2015, 2016 & 2017.
This article was reprinted from the April 2015 issue of ENX magazine.

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ND: Fargo; Grand Forks | SD: Aberdeen; Sioux Falls

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