

## Vendor's Marketing Tactics Questioned

Dear Editor:

During my time as a volunteer on the parents association of my son's public school, I discovered and remedied a marketing scheme by the Xerox Corporation aimed against unsuspecting educators, administrators, and parents in the New York City school system.

Principals, administrators, business managers, and parents are not familiar with the billing process, cost per copy, and general business expenses in running copying equipment. As a result of this shortcoming in the school system, Xerox marketing professionals are recommending Xerox equipment too sophisticated—and subsequently far too expensive—for their particular copying needs.

What is even more appalling is the manner in which the Xerox representative extracts educational dollars out of an already overburdened school system. These representatives, knowing full well that there is little or no money for copying equipment, research various departments, projects, individuals, associations, and any other professional group within the school jurisdiction to find out who has money, and how much they have to spend. Then, armed with this information, the Xerox representative markets "concepts" in copying to these people and groups, and draws out what he needs from each source to help him meet his marketing goals, whether the school needs the equipment or not.

In our particular situation, we did not need additional equipment, yet the salesman convinced the principal, special education, school-based management, the district office, and the parents association that we were behind the times, and could improve our productivity. We did somewhat in going from 7,250 copies a month on a Xerox 1040, all the way to 12,000 copies a month with the addition of the Xerox 1050 and the Xerox 1075. What the salesman failed to tell anyone was the expense for this increase in productivity. Our expenses jumped from \$137 a month to \$1,800 a month. Not one of the people

or groups knew the ultimate expense of obtaining the additional Xerox copiers that were placed in my child's school. At my suggestion, the equipment was removed from the school, and a credit was given by Xerox for the excessive charge.

Every company is in business to make money. However, in call after call to other schools in New York City, and nationwide, I discovered that Xerox consistently oversells whenever possible, with the admonition of "buyer beware." Frankly, I never would have gotten involved in this except that the problem landed right on my doorstep. With all the talk about giving something back to our schools in the public sector, Xerox is conducting what I feel is an unethical marketing campaign to grab all the dollars it can at the expense of our children's education.

I am currently on a nationwide campaign with public schools around the country to make them aware of what has happened in our school, and help them with any problems with Xerox they might have. Through the Greater Council of Schools I was able to talk to superintendents of the 48 largest school districts in the United States, and with the exception of one district, all have had, or currently have, problems with Xerox in their school system.

Take it upon yourself to look at this letter and, if need be, get involved with your local public school. The monies you can save today for these schools can probably add countless benefits to our children's education—and what better reason can you have than helping our children, and improving their future.

Very truly yours,

**MATTHEW R. SMITH**

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New York, NY

## Letters to the Editor Welcome

IPMA will publish letters to the editor which address *Perspectives* articles, the in-plant industry or Association activities. All letters must be signed, although names will be withheld upon request. Send your letter to IPMA, 1205 W. College Street, Liberty, MO 64068-3733.

5 ■ Are vendors who prey on your lack of knowledge at fault if you become disenchanted with their equipment? Or does the buyer have a responsibility to educate its employees so they will not be taken advantage of? Learn why the buyer should be aware.

6 ■ COM 92 is over, but the memories will linger on. Conference activities are highlighted.

9 ■ IPMA issues its *Call for Presentations* for COM 93. Should you wish to submit a written proposal for a conference seminar, complete the entry form by October 2.

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18 ■ The Association's financial future is solid. Figures from the headquarters audit this spring are provided.

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*Perspectives* is printed on 70lb. Simpson-Recycled White Offset with soybean based ink.