

# Copier Buying Tips



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Reprinted from *NACBA Ledger*

**W**hile at the NACBA National Conference last year I was talking with Rob Leacock, Christ Church Fort Worth's business administrator. We were talking about his recent decision to replace their copier, and his process was impressive and effective! Especially how much money he saved! Here are the details.

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## Starting at the Beginning

Rob wasn't happy with his copier, so he set out to find the best replacement copier for his team. The challenge was to get objective information, not opinions offered by marketers who want you to buy the systems they offer.

He started by contacting other church administrators, but found that process to not be very helpful since everyone seemed to love and/ or hate different machines! "I knew there had to be an objective resource out there," Rob said.

He found an organization known as BLI (Buyers Laboratory, Inc., [www.buyerslab.com](http://www.buyerslab.com)) whose website states:

For over 45 years, Buyers Laboratory Inc. (BLI) has been the leading source for unbiased and reliable intelligence for the imaging industry.... BLI is completely independent in all of our testing processes and subsequent reporting. With BLI, you can count on unbiased data and information. All of our product evaluations are conducted by highly experienced em-

ployees in our on-site testing facility where we evaluate and report on hundreds of new copier, printer, fax and multi-function (MFP) products each year.

There are several BLI reports on each copier, and there are also reports that compare manufacturers against each other. Though they were all helpful, he found the most helpful to be the benchmark tests.

A problem, though, was that getting access to BLI's reports was expensive. A one-year license for access to their online database costs \$1495, which is prohibitive for most churches. So Rob contacted the copier manufacturers' distributors and asked them to provide their BLI reports, which they were happy to do at no charge!

## Next: Manufacturer's Distributors

Rob read the BLI reports and narrowed his focus down to three manufacturers. Then he began researching their distributors. What he found was that in his area there were multiple distributors for each manufacturer, and that gave him some leverage. Two even loaned him machines so he

could give them real-world test drives!

The distributors all wanted to meet with him. Like most church administrators, Rob is a busy guy, so he declined their meeting requests and instead sent each of them a spec sheet of his needs. That reduced his time drain considerably since he only needed to meet with the top contenders.

Part of Rob's distributor selection process included research on their service quality. He included service response guarantees on his spec sheet, and he also checked their references to see how well they delivered on the service component. Though most would agree that this is a good 'due diligence' test, many skip it because of the time it takes. In Rob's case, it really helped him identify the top distributors.

### Contract Negotiations

Having done his research well, Rob was ready to enter the negotiation stage. But this is where he did something that was even more unique.

He discovered an attorney who specializes in copier lease negotiations! He hired Wade Cascini with Xippa ([www.xippa.net](http://www.xippa.net)) whose website states:

At Xippa, we're here to help you, the customer, get the most out of your Copier and Printer lease agreements, including Managed Print Services and Cost Per Page contracts. Our policy of free, no-obligation Copier and Printer lease contract review consultation means you only pay us if we can save you money.... With over 20 years of proven industry experience in Leasing and Service Level Agreements, we're able to ensure that when you come to us, you'll know exactly what your contract is giving you, and how to

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get what you need out of it.

I spoke with Wade and he said, "Most people are not aware that there are experts like us that can save them a lot of money in these negotiations—bottom line! Having done so many of these has helped us know what's possible, and we use that to our clients' advantage."

Through Wade's counsel and negotiations, Christ Church Fort Worth saved considerable funds in leasing the copier that rose to the top of Rob's objective selection process, promising to meet their needs very well. At the time of this writing they have had their new copier in place for nearly a year and are very pleased with it—and with their distributor/ service provider in every respect. So much so that they recently got a second machine!

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