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# Partnering

FOR SUCCESS

**AUGUST 2008**



## Introduction

QualityLogic has been providing testing products and services to the printer industry since 1986. For most of this time, our primary customers have been engineering and quality assurance groups within printer companies. We are proud to say that every printer company in the world relies on QualityLogic to help them ensure their products meet their quality objectives before launch.

Over the past several years, we have begun *partnering* with our customers' marketing groups to help them understand, validate, and promote the competitive strengths of their products. Our customers find that sponsoring an independent test that focuses on *the competitive advantages they want to promote* is the best way to get their message out. And having QualityLogic's name and logo on the test results provides greater impact and credibility with their customers, retail and distribution channels, analysts, and the press.

This paper will walk you through the process by which your printer marketing team can partner with QualityLogic for independent validation of your products' features and/or promotion of the competitive strengths of your products. It will also introduce you to some of the services we provide.

## The Value of OEM-Sponsored Studies

To initiate an OEM-sponsored study, your company provides funding to QualityLogic to substantiate claims you intend to make about your product. These studies compare your products' features against similar features in your competitors' products, or validate key features of your product specification for independent validation of your marketing claims. The primary advantage to these types of studies is that we focus on your product's competitive strength as opposed to the broad brush approach taken by other labs and magazines who issue "best of" or "editor's choice" awards.

- **Features Tested** – If you know what your competitive strengths and advantages are, we will begin there. If you need help identifying your strengths, we can benchmark your product against other products and point you in the right direction.
- **Validating your Claims** – Once we agree on the focus of the test, we begin by making sure that your product stands up to your claims with independent testing. You may want to stop there, or, like many of our customers, continue testing against competing products of your choice, giving you a powerful message – one that focuses on your key advantages against the products your sales and marketing team will compete against in the field.

- **Timing of Results** – We can work with you while your product is in development, ensuring that test results are available for you to promote with your product launch, not whenever the next independent study is conducted.
- **Engineering Value** – Suppose the results of your study turn up some previously unknown problem? This may be as valuable as test results for publication, especially if it results in an improved product. The results can lend an independent credibility to requests for product changes that your Marketing team makes to your Engineering team. And you control whether or not these aspects of the study are published for your customers.
- **Confidentiality** – Until you decide to release results of a test, you control the flow of any information to customers, the press or competitors. We work under strict NDAs and if analysts or competitors ask for details on the methodology or results of a study, we release only what you authorize.

#### CASE STUDY

– HP commissioned QualityLogic to compare the print throughput performance of a number of LaserJet products with Instant-on Technology to a selection of competitive products from various manufacturers. In their research with their customers, they found that *“the average print job was just 3-5 pages”* and *“users care about the total print time it takes a job to print - starting with when they send a print job to when they pull it off of the printer.”*<sup>1</sup> Based on this information, QualityLogic developed a test methodology and test pages that focused on this area of printing performance. HP selected the competitors they wanted to compare themselves against, and QualityLogic procured the printers from commercial sources. The results are published on HP’s website, product brochures and catalogs, and jointly published on QualityLogic’s website at [http://www.qualitylogic.com/News/Instant-on\\_PerformanceReport.html](http://www.qualitylogic.com/News/Instant-on_PerformanceReport.html)

## Why QualityLogic?

For most of our 20+ years as a testing company, QualityLogic has been known among engineering and quality assurance groups worldwide as a premier provider of testing products and services to the printer industry. In recent years, we have partnered with our customers’ marketing and product management organizations to lend credibility and validation to their marketing claims. Our name can be found on our customers’ printer and consumables packaging, product brochures and catalogs, websites, datasheets and more. This exposure has dramatically increased our contact with our “customer’s customers,” who now frequently look to QualityLogic for help in understanding claims made by printer companies so they can make more informed purchase decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.hp.com/sbso/expert/instant-on.html?jumpid=req\\_R1002\\_USEN#](http://www.hp.com/sbso/expert/instant-on.html?jumpid=req_R1002_USEN#)

While your customers value our opinion, we value our competitive strengths, which are our expertise, our reputation and our integrity. Even though our customers provide direction for the focus of the test, or are involved in selecting competing products they want to test against, QualityLogic must “buy into” the validity of the metric we are being asked to measure and who we are being asked to measure against.

As an independent test lab, we must be able to defend our test results as independent and credible when we speak with analysts, magazine editors, your channel partners, and your potential customers. So, even though the final report will say that you sponsored the study and selected the features, the printers or consumables you want to compare, we are able to endorse the validity and relevance of the test for your customers.

#### **CASE STUDY**

– A large government agency issued an RFP to purchase in excess of \$20 million dollars of printers and associated consumables and services over a several year period. They had narrowed the field to two printer companies and were particularly concerned about the page yield claims of the toner cartridges made by these companies. They contacted QualityLogic to conduct an ISO Yield test on printers from these companies so they could make an informed purchase decision. They awarded the contract based in part on these test results.

Many printer companies see that OEM-sponsored testing with the strength of the QualityLogic brand is a powerful marketing tool. It ensures that their competitive strengths are communicated to their customers in a way that results in increased sales of their printers and/or consumables. For example, Hewlett-Packard refers to QualityLogic on their website as “*one of the world's leading quality assurance organizations*” and in a recent magazine advertisement, Toshiba refers to QualityLogic as “*one of the industry's leading and most respected independent testing companies.*”

### **Working with QualityLogic**

The following sections will guide you through the process of sponsoring a study with QualityLogic.

- 1) **Confidentiality** – It is imperative that we have open and honest communication with you about the strengths and weaknesses of your products, as well as those of your competitors. This begins with a non-disclosure agreement.
- 2) **Understanding your competitive strengths** – It’s been our experience that starting with a premise of either a known or desired competitive strength is the most predictable way for you to end up with a test result that

you will be able to use in your marketing materials or ad campaign. We can start with a strength that you have proven with internal testing, or we can test your product in several different areas and report where we think you might have an advantage to be explored with a more focused test. In some cases, our customers have not only identified their competitive strengths, but are already working with an agency to develop an ad campaign around that strength. In partnership, we work with the agency to ensure that test results are presented in a way to most effectively support that campaign.

#### CASE STUDY

- In 2007, Kodak entered the consumer inkjet market with a new product for consumers that were “*fed up with pricey ink*” and claimed to save consumers “*up to 50% on everything they print*”.<sup>2</sup> Kodak sponsored a study where QualityLogic compared the cost of ink per page of the new Kodak EASYSHARE AIO printers to several competitors. After the test results were delivered to Kodak, we worked with their ad agency to communicate the test results via webcasts, analyst briefings and infomercials as part of their overall marketing campaign.

- 3) **Identifying the competition** – In most cases, our customers know what competitors they want to include in their product comparison, but since QualityLogic has been testing printers since 1986, we can provide valuable assistance in this process.
  
- 4) **Designing the test** – Once we understand your focus and/or the competition, we will design a test that will either validate or invalidate your claims, and we will provide a cost and schedule estimate for the project. There are many factors that affect not only the cost and the schedule, but the level of independence required to have the greatest impact. Many of our customers include key team members from several groups in this phase of the process (MarCom, PR, outbound marketing, product marketing, legal, etc.) to ensure that the test is designed in a way that provides you the most value from the results. The following are some considerations:
  - a. **Test Design** – Our goal in designing a test is to make sure it is reasonable, defensible, and utilizes scientific methods, yet represents real-world use. Your customers must view the test as representative of how they use your product, and the test results have to be easily understood. For example, measuring print quality can involve sophisticated instrumentation and reporting metrics that your customers may not understand. We would instead create categories

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<sup>2</sup> <http://printfreedom.kodak.com/shell.html>

that are understood by your customers and report results in terms meaningful to them.

- b. **Procurement** – Where possible, we prefer to procure the printers and consumables from standard retail channels so we can add this level of independence to the report. We use standard mystery shopping techniques to ensure that we are acquiring products that are representative of what consumers can procure. An excerpt from a test report might read, *“QualityLogic procured all printers and consumables from standard retail channels.”*
- c. **Test Files** – If we can select test files from a QualityLogic test suite or use standard test files from ISO, it adds another element of credibility to the test. If standard test files are not suitable, having QualityLogic design the test files adds independence to the test, and you can promote this level of independence: *“QualityLogic selected the test files used in the test...”*
- d. **Test Procedures** – Like standardized test files, we use standardized test methods wherever possible. For example, there are now ISO standards for determining and reporting color and mono toner and ink yield. Within these standards are sample size requirements for the printers and cartridges, as well as temperature and humidity requirements. Even if we are not executing an ISO yield test, using and citing elements of the methodology provides additional credibility, and so you could state *“...and designed the test methodology based on ISO/IEC 19752.”*
- e. **Validation of the Metric** – In most cases, we use our own test personnel to execute the test and analyze the results. However, we can also execute tests where the test results are analyzed by real-world customers of your product in a focus group-like setting. *“QualityLogic partnered with Davis Research to recruit business users of multi-function devices to compare the test results”*
- f. **Information Partnering** – There may be cases where incorporating information from an industry research organization can help with and expand a message. Using these resources to validate competitors’ market share or product pricing, when combined with our test results, creates a unique and powerful message: *“The Cost of Ink per Page was based on both yield testing by QualityLogic and MSRP cartridge pricing provided by IDC.”*

- 5) **Selecting the Test Results** – Many tests that we perform begin with multiple test objectives and multiple competitors. We allow you to decide if you want to publish all of the metrics against all of the competitors or report a subset. For example, we might design separate tests to measure print quality, performance and ease of use against five different competitors. You may want to only publish results against four competitors or the results only for print quality and performance, and use the balance of the information internally for product improvements. This is acceptable, however, we do not allow the test design to be altered after the test has been completed, so you may not use the results from only part of a test run.
  
- 6) **Use of the Test Results** – Everything to this stage of the process is under non-disclosure with QualityLogic, and you decide how the results will be used. In other words, you may decide to use the test results only for internal purposes and not publish them. If you decide to publish the results, QualityLogic does require that we approve any use of our name and/or logo associated with the test results. We can typically provide the necessary approvals within 48 hours.
  
- 7) **Reporting Options** – All of our testing projects result in a final test report that you can reference in your marketing materials and post on your website. There are several other beneficial ways your PR and MarCom groups can partner with QualityLogic to help get your message out. A few examples of the optional post-test support we provide are:
  - Joint Press Releases
  - Posting results on QualityLogic’s website
  - Regional / localized reports
  - Participation in analyst briefings, press conferences, trade shows, dealer meetings
  - Webcast, podcast, video conference, infomercial
  
- 8) **Pricing Options** - Most of the work we perform is time and materials based, though we will provide you an estimate before starting work. We pride ourselves on the accuracy of our estimates. We do not mark up any equipment or consumables purchases that we make and always separate these charges from our labor charges. We understand that schedules change. We have a very flexible organization and will not charge late fees for starting the project later than anticipated or impose penalties for stopping the project for any reason. If you prefer a fixed price bid, we can provide this as well. This is especially common in tests that follow standard methodologies, such as consumables yield testing.



\* **Use of the QualityLogic Logo** – if you elect to use QualityLogic’s logo on your packaging or marketing materials, you can choose one-time use, per use, or annual maximum licensing use fee pricing, to best meet your budget needs.

## **Starting the Process**

In most cases, the process begins with QualityLogic executing a non-disclosure agreement with your company. Once we have this agreement in place, we meet with you by phone or in person to discuss the project by walking through the eight steps described above, as well as covering any other aspects of the project that are important to you. Within a week after this meeting, we deliver a detailed proposal for your consideration.

As a recognized worldwide leader of independent testing services, we welcome the opportunity to *partner* with you to substantiate your claims with independent and credible test results.

For more information, or to request a proposal for testing services of your products, please contact us toll free at **800-436-6292 ext. 121** or **+1-805-531-9030 ext. 121**.

Or, you may visit us at [qualitylogic.com/printer\\_test/competitive.html](http://qualitylogic.com/printer_test/competitive.html)