

The Post-Standard

Friday, May 02, 2008

Reducing waste aids Xerox

Company's revenue comes from paper reduction, data digitizing services.

By Rick Moriarty
Staff writer



You might think that a company that sells copier machines - and the paper and ink that they use - wouldn't want to tell customers how to reduce their supply use.

But Xerox Corp. does just that because it knows it's good for the ecology and surprisingly good for the company's profits, Xerox Chair and CEO Anne Mulcahy told the Famous Entrepreneurs Series Thursday at the Palace Theatre in Eastwood.

"We do a lot to actually reduce the use of paper," she said. "That sounds like a crazy idea for Xerox, but we spend a ton of time saying we want you to use paper smart."

As a result, a lot of the company's revenues are coming from services it offers to customers to help them reduce paper use and digitize data to make it more useful and available, she said.

"We're constantly trying to embrace and get in front of the curve, to adapt to new technology," she said.

Despite predictions that computers would create the "paperless office," companies around the world are anything but paperless, Mulcahy said. On the contrary, offices hooked to the Internet use 40 percent more paper than those that aren't - much of it to print out copies of e-mails, she said.

She said 45 trillion pages of paper are consumed annually. Though Xerox has profited from that use of paper, it recognizes that level of paper use also takes a toll on the environment and is not sustainable, she said.

So in addition to showing customers how to reduce their use of paper, Xerox has worked with paper suppliers to promote recycling, and paper production that uses more of a tree, reducing waste, she said.

Xerox is doing other things to ease the burden on the world's natural resources. It reconditions used copy machines, putting them back into use and reducing the number of used machines that wind up in landfills, she said.

Mulcahy, 55, a 32-year veteran of Xerox, has been its CEO since 2001 and its chairman since 2002. When she took over, Xerox was a company laden with debt and on the brink of bankruptcy. During her seven-year tenure, she has transformed it into a profitable and virtually debt-free company.

But Mulcahy gives the company's employees credit for the turnaround. "The real magic at Xerox came from the people who did extraordinary things," she said.

Staff writer Rick Moriarty can be reached at 470-3148 or rmoriarty@syracuse.com.