

Suppliers: The year ahead

February 13, 2015

Earlier this week, *Photo Counter* invited a range of leading photo-specialist oriented suppliers to comment on the year ahead.

We asked them all to make a brief observation on how they fared last year, and what they saw as the key objectives and challenges in 2015, along with some specific questions on their segment of the market, be it photo services, accessories, etc.

Their responses are compiled below:

ADEAL

Outcome for 2014:

Adeal travelled along with the rest of the industry in 2014. As sales of camera hardware ebbs and flows, so too do the sales for accessories and equipment. It was interesting to see an increasing trend of our reseller customers establishing their own import and distribution models and therefore competing head to heads with us. But there was plenty of clever product innovation throughout 2014 and we have secured some of this as well as growing share within the market.



Objectives for 2015:

2015 is a growth year for Adeal. We have secured some new brands for the photographic industry and in addition, we are expanding our sales and distribution model to other industries outside photographic.

Challenges for 2015:

I don't think 2015 will much different from previous years in terms of challenges. Currency volatility needs to be monitored, costs kept in check and opportunities pursued as they present themselves. As always, you partner with the best suppliers and customers. We have a view that we support those that support us.

Product focus for Adeal:

I can announce that we have secured exclusive distribution for the Phottix range of photographic equipment, Zhong Yi optics, who manufacture the Mitakon Speedmaster range of lenses, Foto Speed and their advanced camera strap system and b-grip with their innovative belt holster.

Retail opportunities in accessories:

I think the clever retailers already concentrate on accessories, but a re-focus on the selling process to maximise profitability will reap rewards. Average sales/gross dollar value per transaction is the key and clever retailers work hard on their attachment rates. For our brands Manfrotto is a classic example. The sale of a Manfrotto branded support, bag, filter, LED light is an easy sell with an integrated brand approach using Manfrotto branded products.

CR KENNEDY

Outcome for 2014:

The year was not without its challenges but overall was satisfactory for us.



Objectives for 2015:

Continued expansion of our Sigma and accessory business. The launch of the Pentax full frame DSLR in late 2015. To offer our customers internationally competitive prices at all times.

The introduction of five new Ilford Fine Art papers that are added to the Ilford Galerie Prestige range.

Challenges for 2015:

Managing the continuous decline in the \$A. Ensuring our customers are competitive against international internet competition.

Retail focus in hardware:

As the CE channel has become less interested in imaging due to the loss of the low-end compact camera market, so service and product knowledge becomes more and more important.

Those retailers who are prepared to invest in stock, so that the customers have a real choice and



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knowledgeable and dedicated staff will do very well. Brands that the customer knows and respects will dominate over inferior house brands in 2015.

Sigma's new premium 'Art' lens range – a success?

The response has been overwhelming, so much so that our main problem has been securing sufficient stock.

Sigma is the Imaging Supplier of 2015 Rolex Australian Formula One Grand Prix. We will be launching a nationwide TV campaign for the Grand Prix telecast period. Sigma has certainly succeeded as the biggest independent lens maker in the world, and continues to push the bar in terms of introducing new technology before any other manufacturers – such as the world's first f1.8 zoom lens. The quality associated with 'Made in Japan' products still resonates very strongly with consumers, and every Sigma product is entirely manufactured in Japan.

IPS

Outcome for 2014:

IPS had a great year, as many of our customers prospered in their imaging ecosystems – so did we.

IPS had a respectable share of the ubiquitous smartphone-to-print business via the new Kodak Print Place (Kodak Kiosk tablet 100 solution) sales.

Our Australian and NZ national roadshow reaped significant uptake in the Dakis online and kiosk solutions and there was healthy interest in our IPI Marketing Group membership, and use of the MSP (Marketing Solutions Program) as well as the new Managed Marketing Services (MMS) that automates a 12-month calendar of Direct EDM's from the photo specialty retailer to their own customer databases, whilst supporting these promotions with managed social media via Facebook, Google + and Twitter.

Our photo specialty customers who concentrated on their services, grew their businesses – and in turn – so did IPS.

Objectives for 2015:

IPS's mantra is the 'Best Brands In Imaging'. To deliver that promise – we know we can't remain stagnant – so we are always refining and broadening our product offering as new innovations come to market.

We're lucky to be able to cherry-pick and offer the best brands and products the world market has to offer – and 2015 is going to see IPS launch new and innovative products

IPS has exciting new wet and dry print solutions lined up for the new year, an expanded range of inkjet media, as well new efficient and affordable lay flat and conventional photobooking technology

Challenges for 2015:

Many retailers need to stop working 'in' their business and work 'on' their business.

Photo specialty retailers need to break away from the thinking that they can 'save their way into growing their business'.

Many business owners expect change and growth but also expect it without investment in either new technology, being online, or marketing (traditional and social media) – it just doesn't work that way.

Retail focus in photo printing services:

As I mentioned above: many retailers need to 'Stop working in their business and start working on their businesses' and to find the time to invest in marketing their own services.

Invest smartly in the right solutions for their business – whether it be new hardware (kiosks, online eCommerce or new wet or drylab technology), online (with Dakis Solutions) or marketing (with the IPI Group's superb MSP) – there are cost effective solutions that will get results... and IPS is only too happy to help out.

Many photo specialty retailers think that their (now) old technology first-generation digital minilab is 'state of the art'... However, what was a ground-breaking watershed in technology, print quality and services in 1999, or 2000 is now just old technology 15 years later. We would encourage all photo specialty retailers to constantly strive for better quality, with more and varied services, and compare their 15-year-old technology with the current wet or dry printing options available today, otherwise how do we hang onto the title of 'photo specialty retailers' if we are not differentiating our offer from the mass merchants and supermarkets?

OLYMPUS IMAGING

Outcome for 2014:

2014 was a great year for Olympus! We expanded the OM-D line-up to three bodies, launched three new lenses and grew our average selling price by 12 percent, which is double the market average.



Objectives for 2015:

At Olympus we see ourselves as the 'facilitators of great photography', so 2015 will be year of engaging our community and expanding our Micro Four Thirds system with the recently-announced products.

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Challenges for 2015:

– For the camera market it's consumers' willingness to spend. We as manufacturers of product have the ability to influence just about everything else.

Mirrorless Vs DSLRs:

With the great products and technology that mirrorless brings to the category, we expect the upwards trajectory (compared to DSLRs) to continue..

Olympus as a pro brand:

Olympus products have always had an ethos around delivering a balance of feature set, performance, technology and usability. Thus the Olympus system has always had a unique value proposition for professional photographers, some have been on board for quite a while, whilst others are starting to join the mirrorless revolution. The Micro Four Thirds platform provides boundless options for professionals and all users through a diversity of imaging products and manufacturers that have not been seen before in the industry.

PHOTO DIRECT

Outcome for 2014:

2014 was a very strong year. We introduced a lot of new products and have found the market acceptance to be very strong. The stars are our DGI canvas – we put a lot of effort in with the manufacturer to get the coating and base material made to very tight specifications and customer feedback has been great. The other star is the



combination of the DNP printers with DiLand software. We now have a very low capital investment solution that provides more versatility than any other product we have seen before. It's a mindset shift but once taken people really see the simplicity.

Objectives for 2015:

Continue to build on the 2014 product launches

Challenges for 2015:

Probably the uncertain economy, it still continues to create a lack of consumer and business confidence, we can't do a lot about this so we'll focus on delivering the right solutions to the customers.

Retail focus:

I think the focus needs to be around delivering a fantastic consumer experience at every touch point of the business in store and online.



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SUN RISES EARLY!

Canon's Sun Studios is first cab off the rank in offering the just-announced brace of Canon new products, including entry-level and enthusiast models such as the Canon EOS 750D and the mirrorless Canon EOS M3. An email blast under the ... [Continue reading](#) →

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