Based on the outstanding performance of its colour and monochrome MFPs in BLI's comprehensive laboratory tests, Konica Minolta Business Technologies, Inc. has been chosen as the winner of BLI's 2011 “MFP Line of the Year” award.

BLI’s “Line of the Year” is awarded once a year to the OEM whose product line is determined to be the best overall in its category based on the cumulative test results of all models tested in BLI’s rigorous two-month laboratory evaluation. Among the many factors considered are reliability, image quality, productivity, ease of use, scanning, and a host of connectivity attributes. Also considered is the breadth of the OEM’s line and its ability to provide quality products suitable to a broad spectrum of customer needs, from low-volume to high-volume.

In the last year, Konica Minolta has won more A3 “Picks” than any other vendor. “Time and again, Konica Minolta’s line has proven itself in the majority of areas that matter most to end-users—reliability, ease of use, productivity and image quality,” said George Mikolay, senior product editor, A3/Copier MFPs. “These areas are the foundation on which we measure every single A3 device we test, and with outstanding performances in these areas, along with robust feature sets, it became readily apparent that Konica Minolta is the vendor to beat for 2011.”

Colour: They Came and They Conquered

Over the last 12 months, Konica Minolta has won six individual “Picks” for its business colour products. Indeed, its models earned top honours in virtually every speed range, from the 22-ppm bizhub C220 to the 50-ppm colour/65-ppm black bizhub C652/C652DS. Combined these models ran for an astounding 835,000 impressions without even a single malfunction. In fact, the flawless reliability performance of the bizhub C452 was the best among business colour models in its speed range not just in the last year but in the past five years. Their outstanding reliability, combined with user-replaceable components, means users can expect rare downtime for service on these devices.

All six models also offer strong productivity in key test areas, with above average performances when running BLI’s colour job stream test, which simulates usage in a real-world environment. In addition to strong copy and print productivity, scan speeds are faster than average in both colour and black for each device and colour scan file size is smaller than average.
Exceptional image quality is another hallmark of the devices. “Colour print quality is a big differentiator for Konica Minolta,” said BLI Manager of Laboratory Testing Pete Emory. “Unlike the majority of business colour models we test, Konica Minolta’s products maintain extremely good and consistent output from start to finish over the course of our high-volume tests. So much so that if I need to output a long-run job containing colour elements on a business colour device, I’d choose these Konica Minolta engines every time over most any of their competitors.” All six of these models received high marks for both business graphics and photographic images. For more graphics-intensive environments, an EFI Fiery controller is also available for all the models from 28 ppm and above.

**Muscle in Monochrome**

With Winter 2011 “Picks” for the bizhub 423, bizhub 363, bizhub 283 and bizhub 223, along with recent awards for the bizhub 601 and bizhub 751, Konica Minolta has earned accolades in virtually every speed range in monochrome from 22 to 75 ppm. As with their colour counterparts, reliability was exceptional, with the six models producing close to 800,000 total impressions with no service required other than a single preventive maintenance visit for one of the models.

Strong productivity was also common to the devices, each standing out for their above-average performances in BLI’s real-world job stream test.

**Common Advantages for a Seamless Transition**

Boasting similar capabilities, features and functionality across the board for its colour and monochrome “Pick” winners, users can easily transition from using any of the colour machines to any of the monochrome machines without a learning curve. All the models offer very good overall ease of use and comprehensive security measures, including standard hard drive overwriting. With the MyTab feature, a Spring 2009 BLI “Outstanding Achievement” winner available on all the colour “Pick” winners as well as on the bizhub 423, 363, 283 and 223, frequently used print job selections can be configured and saved on the main tab of the driver, and can be different for each user. As all required features can be viewed at a glance, this capability allows users to easily take full advantage of the driver feature set with less chance of errors. A toner supply gauge and job queue display conveniently located right on the main control panel screen means that users do not need to navigate through additional screens and menus to access device status information. Third-party software developers can also integrate their document management and cost accounting solutions with the devices via bizhub Extended Solution Technology (bEST).

All the colour models as well as the monochrome 423, 363, 283 and 223 offer scanning in full colour, auto colour, black and greyscale. Scan to/print from USB functionality is standard, and users can scan to multiple types of destinations in a single session. Both searchable and encrypted PDF are supported, and colour and black scan speeds are for the most part faster than average.

“Making these impressive models an even better is that they typically offer strong feature sets, with high paper capacities and support for heavy paper weights seen throughout the majority of the line,” said Mikolay. In addition, modular finishing allows users to easily upgrade to more robust finishing capabilities, such as saddle-stitching for booklets.

For us, BLI’s highly coveted ‘MFP Line of the Year’ award means nothing less than the ultimate accolade,” said Daisuke Mori, Director - Sales & Marketing Division of Konica Minolta Business Solutions (S) Pte Ltd. “Over the past few years, our MFPs have been recognized as top level color and monochrome devices. This strikingly illustrates that Konica Minolta provides exceptional performance and quality throughout and across its MFP product range.”

BLI congratulates Konica Minolta on winning MFP Line of the Year for 2011.
About BLI’s Picks

Twice a year with its “Pick” awards, BLI gives special recognition in each category to those products that provided the most outstanding performances in BLI’s exhaustive lab tests, and once each year, it acknowledges the vendors whose overall product lines are judged to be the best in their respective categories by virtue of their cumulative test results. In order for a vendor to be considered for “Line of the Year,” products in each market segment must have been tested by BLI. In addition, the breadth of the vendors’ product line is considered.

BLI’s awards stand alone in that they are based on a rigorous battery of lab tests that takes approximately two months to complete and includes an extensive durability test, during which each unit is run at the manufacturer’s maximum recommended volume. BLI’s durability test is unique among office product evaluations and uniquely qualifies BLI to assess reliability, which is a critical factor for buyers and IT directors, given that virtually all of the products are designed for use on networks.

In addition to assessing reliability, in terms of the number of service calls and PM (preventive maintenance) calls required, as well as misfeed frequency, BLI’s comprehensive evaluation includes an assessment of copy and print quality, productivity, ease of use and economy, as well as connectivity issues such as feedback to workstations, administrative utilities, print drivers, multitasking and scanning solutions. Each product that successfully passes BLI’s lab test earns BLI’s “Recommended” or “Highly Recommended” seal and a BLI “Certificate of Reliability” and qualifies as a “Pick” award contender. Consequently, a BLI “Pick” is a hard-earned award that buyers and IT directors can trust to better guide them in their acquisition decisions.