

## From Struggling to Thriving: Can a Change of Scenery Transform a Career?

By Scott Cullen

**Sales reps and service techs need the right conditions to succeed, and recognizing this can help office technology dealers hire smarter.**

In every organization, there are strong players, solid contributors, and, yes, those considered the “weak links.” That’s not a secret; it’s simply the reality of any workplace. But what’s less talked about is how often those so-called weak players can become strong performers in the right environment.

In the office technology industry, where dealers juggle changing market demands, evolving customer expectations, and rapid technological advancements, there’s no shortage of factors that can impact a person’s performance. Sometimes, the issue isn’t the individual’s talent or potential, but rather the fit.

When a candidate switches from one office technology dealership to another, they often bring the same skills and experience. However, the results can vary greatly, and in some cases, their career path changes completely.

### When the Problem Isn’t Performance, It’s Environment

There are many reasons why a skilled professional might struggle in their current role. The dealership’s leadership style, company culture, management practices, and team dynamics can all impact an employee’s performance.

Jessica Crowley, SVP at Copier Careers, said she often sees candidates held back by limitations in their previous workplaces. “They didn’t feel they could be open, or that they were respected, or that they brought value. Sometimes they simply weren’t given the tools to succeed,” she explained. “For example, I had one candidate who only had an Excel spreadsheet for cold calling because their company didn’t provide a CRM. When that same individual moved to a company with better tools, they thrived.”

Paul Schwartz, president of Copier Careers, emphasized the importance of mentorship and leadership changes. “When we talk about company culture, it’s also about the team environment,” he said. “We’ve seen situations where a leader leaves, and some of their team members follow. Or after a merger or acquisition, there’s instability, concern, and worry that cause people to look for new opportunities.”

### Why a Change of Scenery Works

Shifting to a new organization can have an almost immediate effect. A fresh environment may bring:

1. Different leadership styles that might resonate better with the individual.
2. A culture that fits their personality and values, whether that’s collaborative, fast-paced, highly structured, or entrepreneurial.
3. Opportunities to use their strengths more fully, with responsibilities better matched to their abilities.
4. Renewed motivation, fueled by the excitement of starting fresh and proving themselves in a new role.

---

**Copier Careers** is a recruiting firm dedicated exclusively to helping copier channel employers find experienced service techs, copier sales reps, managers, controllers, back office staff, and MPS/MNS experts. Learn more about our commitment to the industry at [www.CopierCareers.com](http://www.CopierCareers.com).

# CopierCareers®

Crowley noted that support systems significantly influence success. “Culture, management style, leadership style, service support, all of those matters,” she said. “Does the company have a production specialist? A full-service team? A billing team that responds quickly? Or is the salesperson constantly pulled away from selling to handle service issues? Those factors can make or break performance.”

Sometimes it’s driven by economics. “We’ve seen commissions reworked, territories moved, or a new sales manager come in,” observed Schwartz. “Whether the issue is professional or personal, those changes can quickly impact productivity.”

## The Risk of Writing Someone Off Too Soon

From a dealership owner’s view, it’s easy to think that an underperforming employee just isn’t right for the job. While that might be true sometimes, it’s important to see that performance isn’t based on skill alone.

Crowley explained that this is why recruiters probe deeply with candidates. “It’s part of what we do, asking why they’re not hitting their numbers, why they’re leaving, or why they’re seeking change,” she said. “Clients want to know that answer, too. And the most open-minded clients are willing to have a conversation once they understand the context.”

Schwartz agreed, noting that some employers see potential in candidates others might overlook. “We have clients who say, if someone has produced in the past but not recently, let me meet with that person,” he said. “They think maybe they can help them find the missing pieces to get back to that level.”

## How Dealers Can Use This Insight

Recognizing the role that environment plays in employee performance can help dealers make smarter hiring decisions and avoid overlooking strong candidates.

- Ask candidates the right questions. Crowley said it doesn’t have to be complicated. “Ask them, ‘What’s missing? What’s preventing you from hitting quota?’” she suggested. “That conversation helps determine whether the issue was the company, the role, or the individual. It’s a two-way street; both the company and the employee have responsibilities.”
- Look for patterns. If a candidate thrived in past positions but struggled recently, it’s worth exploring what changed.
- Be receptive to career redemption stories. Crowley emphasized that when candidates honestly and confidently explain their situation, recruiters can often identify where the disconnect is and find a better fit.

## The Candidate’s Perspective

For job seekers, it’s vital to recognize when a poor fit is holding them back. Staying in a mismatched role for too long can damage confidence, hinder career growth, and reinforce the idea that they’re a “weak player.”

“Sales reps usually know deep down why they’re struggling,” Crowley said. “Sometimes it’s just about putting the puzzle pieces together and realizing that the environment isn’t the right fit.”

# CopierCareers®

Schwartz noted that compensation discussions can serve as warning signs. “In this industry, most roles are base pay plus commission,” he explained. “If a candidate says they want their total earnings in only base salary, that’s a red flag. ‘Base chasers’ usually aren’t the right fit for our clients.”

## **Beyond Sales: Service Roles Too**

While much of the discussion centers on sales, service employees face similar challenges. “On the service side, some companies don’t offer bonus incentives for productivity or opportunities for training and certification,” Crowley said. “That lack of support pushes techs to look for new opportunities where they can grow.”

Schwartz recalled a case where a recruiter talked to a technician candidate. “Our recruiter told him that if he joined our client, he’d be trained on more devices and solutions,” he said. “The tech said he didn’t want that because he was happy not knowing more, since it meant less responsibility. That showed us he wasn’t the right fit.”

But many other service candidates are the opposite, and even if they’re motivated by the compensation in the end, servicing a wider range of technology and solutions can also be motivating. “At the end of the day, they’re servicing solutions and most of them are inherently interested in ‘What else I can learn? What new devices are coming out? What new solutions are coming out? How can I be more involved?’” said Schwartz.

## **It’s All About Context**

Performance isn’t just about ability; it’s also about context. A candidate who struggles at one dealership can become a standout at another with the right environment, leadership, and cultural fit. For both office technology dealers and job seekers, recognizing how a change of scenery can make a difference is the first step toward a more productive and rewarding future.