

AAA Business Systems & Repair Inc.

www.aaabusinesssystems.com

435 N. Bluff, St. George, UT 84770 435-673-9889 800-278-9889 435-628-7752 Fax

We have been an HP Authorized Retailer and Service Facility as well as a Canon Authorized Service Facility for more than ten years. So we know how good their equipment and the support they provided for that equipment has been in the past. We are sorry to say that the equipment being manufactured by HP today has a much shorter life expectancy than the equipment of just a couple of years ago. Most HP plotters have whole assembly replacement, instead of individual part replacement. This frequently causes the price to repair a plotter to be so high that it is not cost effective to repair it, in comparison to buying a new plotter. Plotters that have individual parts available usually are maintained far longer than when they only have large assemblies. Because HP does not have local dealerships they have less control over the technical expertise of the techs that service their equipment. This is one of the reasons that they design their plotters the way they do. However, we believe that the primary reason is that they make a lot more money when they sell a large assembly than when they sell a single part. But the really big money is made when you, the customer, buy a new plotter instead of an individual part. On the other hand Canon has more individual parts available than any other manufacturer we know of, thereby extending the life of your machine.

Ten years ago there were at least three authorized HP retailer/service facilities here in St. George that sold and serviced HP equipment. Today, to the best of our knowledge, we are the only one still supporting the HP plotter line and maybe the only HP authorized service facility in Southern Utah. This is typical of the whole country because HP is competing more and more against their own retailers and service facilities. Today, only the big box stores and internet stores can still sell their product line and they do not provide after market support for the products they sell. In large cities, HP has tried to compensate by setting up their own service techs. However, HP plotter owners in our city have been given prices of over \$1200 just to have an HP employee come here from California. That is in addition to the cost of repair.

Years ago, when a HP authorized service facility called HP for technical support, he did not talk to customer support. He actually got to talk to a tech that had experience servicing the product being called about. If necessary, the call would be escalated to a product specialist that only worked on the product being called about. If that was not enough, the call could be

escalated to the engineering department that designed the equipment. Today when a HP authorized service facility calls HP for technical support, he gets to talk to the same technical support that the customer talks to. If you are lucky you get to talk to a clerk from this country who looks for your questions on a computer data base and then reads or faxes the answers to you. But most of the time, you get a clerk in India that you have trouble understanding. We believe that these cut backs in support were part of cost cutting that was forced upon HP by market pressures that will only increase in the future. Please do not misunderstand we believe HP has been a great company and is still a pretty good company. However with the type of service and support they can provide today they should stick to products that can be shipped by next day air, and that rules out Plotters.

Compared to HP, Canon's technical support is light years ahead. They have two teams of expert service techs with years of experience in two locations, New Jersey and California. They work together in a large room with several plotters of the same type you are servicing. They have them set up with different accessories, so they almost always have the same combination you are working on. All of them are specialists in technical support. Although a problem can be escalated to the engineering department, I have never needed to escalate any call above this level. This was not true for HP.

Canon also has a tech rep that comes by at least twice a year to evaluate and train dealer service techs. This is, of course, in addition to the training received from Canon schools on each piece of equipment before the dealer can sell the product. In this area there are three different Canon authorized dealerships with many service techs that provide authorized service on plotters. HP has only one authorized service tech in this area (our firm) right now. In a year or two they may not have any, because each year they sell a higher percentage of what can only be described as disposable machines. Many machines below \$700 do not have any parts available to maintain them. If there is a problem, you are expected to throw them away and go out and buy a new one. More expensive pieces of equipment are required by law to have replacement parts available. Unfortunately, HP makes the parts so expensive by selling them as assemblies that the end result is exactly the same. Canon also sells whole assemblies but almost always also sells the individual parts as well and leaves it up to the dealer to decide which is the most cost effective.