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Laser Printers

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Bild: Xerox

Laser Printers

Obwohl die Ähnlichkeit eines Laserprinters mit einem Kopierer offensichtlich ist, wurde die Idee aus einem Xerox Kopierer einen Drucker zu machen zuerst als unnütz und nicht marktfähig abgetan. Doch ein Ingenieur hat sich durchgesetzt.

In the early seventies engineer Gary Starkweather found himself caught up in an internal horse race at Xerox. His *competitors* were better *staffed* and *funded*. One team had fifty people; another, twenty. Starkweather's had only two. It had been an uphill battle to get even that far.

A few years earlier Starkweather had been working at Xerox's New York research facility. The company was already dominant in the market for photocopiers. Computers didn't need copiers but they did need printers – devices that made original documents based on instructions sent from the computer.

One morning, Starkweather woke up and thought, hmm ... maybe Xerox technology might make for a good printer. But when he took the idea to management, he was told "... it was the most *brain-dead* idea his boss had ever heard." Still, Starkweather wouldn't let go of it. He set up a work area in the back of his lab behind a black *curtain*. Starkweather's boss was *aware* of what was going on and, after months of trying to stop it, *threatened* to *lay off* members of Starkweather's team. The *interminable* engineer had two choices: *abandon* the idea, or go up the corporate ladder.

Starkweather had heard Xerox was opening a new research center three thousand miles away in Palo Alto. He *approached* a senior vice-president and threatened to leave for IBM if he didn't get a transfer. The transfer was *granted*, and within ten months Starkweather had completed a prototype of his new printer.

But the *obstacles* he faced were far from over. For one, corporate headquarters couldn't *grasp* the potential market for computer printers. Computers were still a relatively new technology.

Second, while Xerox was doing some research on printers, most of it had nothing to do with Xerox's photocopying technology. Starkweather *recalled* one printer based on a ten inch *drum* that spun around at more than eighty revolutions per second. *Characters* were placed on the outside of the drum and were used to stamp impressions on paper much like a *typewriter*. According to Starkweather, characters routinely flew off the drum, and there was a

	single
	contest
	better
	good names ... at stake
rivals	
manned ... financed	
	main
	job
	jackpot
	*see list ... determined
idiotic	
screen	
well-informed	
*see list ... dismiss	
*see list	
give up	
contacted	
allowed	
complications	
understand	
remembered	
barrel	
letters	
*see list	

lone woman in Troy, New York who knew how to fix them.

It was ultimately decided that a *competition* would be held to see which printing technology was *superior* – a "fly-off" in the words of Starkweather. The teams prepared their printers. Professional *reputations* were *on the line*.

But when Starkweather saw the six pages to be printed for the fly-off, he knew he'd already won. They didn't include just letters and numbers, but graphs, pictures, and other complex figures. Starkweather's new laser printer, which built upon Xerox's *core* strengths, was the only technology up to the *task*. It went on to revolutionize printing and proved a financial *windfall* for Xerox. And it was all thanks to the efforts of an *admittedly tenacious* engineer. ■ **Andy Boyd**

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<i>abandon, to</i>	aufgeben, im Stich lassen
<i>admittedly</i>	zugegebenermaßen, freilich
<i>approach, to</i>	angehen, Kontakt aufnehmen
<i>aware</i>	bewusst, gewahr
<i>brain-dead</i>	hirntot, hirnlos
<i>character</i>	Schriftzeichen, Type
<i>competition</i>	Wettbewerb, Wettstreit
<i>competitor</i>	Konkurrent, Wettbewerber
<i>core</i>	Kern
<i>curtain</i>	Vorhang
<i>drum</i>	Trommel
<i>fund, to</i>	finanzieren, fördern
<i>grant, to</i>	gewähren, erteilen
<i>grasp, to</i>	begreifen, verstehen
<i>interminable</i>	konstant, endlos
<i>lay off, to</i>	entlassen, abbauen
<i>lone</i>	einzel, einsam
<i>obstacle</i>	Hindernis, Widerstand
<i>on the line, to be</i>	auf dem Spiel stehen
<i>recall, to</i>	sich erinnern, entsinnen
<i>reputation</i>	Ruf, Ansehen
<i>staff, to</i>	besetzen, anstellen
<i>superior</i>	überlegen, besser
<i>task</i>	Aufgabe
<i>tenacious</i>	zäh, beharrlich
<i>threaten, to</i>	drohen, androhen
<i>typewriter</i>	Schreibmaschine
<i>windfall</i>	fig.: Glücksfall