



**KEYPOINT**  
INTELLIGENCE

| *InfoTrends*

# WHITE PAPER

## SHARP'S APPROACH TO DIFFERENTIATE

Are You Getting Your Drinking Water from The Sky?

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## Introduction

Dealers are looking for new and fresh ways to differentiate their offerings. Sharp found a way by promoting fresh, clean drinking water. At the Sharp National Dealer Convention, Keypoint Intelligence - InfoTrends was introduced to a new technology sold exclusively by Sharp in the US that harvests fresh clean drinking water from the sky. In a recent interview to gain insights into the new technology, we asked Ron Dorfman (CEO/Founder of Skywell) a few questions.

## Key Findings

- ◆ Sharp is the exclusive partner for Skywell.
- ◆ Skywell compliments Sharp's business model and vision of the smart office of the future.
- ◆ Sharp and Skywell are committed to educating customers about the health and environmental benefits of the Skywell technology.
- ◆ The Skywell panel provides an interactive customer experience with water.

## Sharp Interview

*InfoTrends: How is the Skywell changing the way the world thinks about drinking water?*

Ron: Creating a new source of clean drinking water is, not surprisingly, quite relevant to a wide variety of different people and applications (think: emerging economies, disaster relief, Flint, Mi, etc.). While continuing to develop our larger capacity renewal energy models, we, in partnership with Sharp-USA, have identified the US office market as our initial launch target for our Skywell model 5T1 premium (5-gallon per day) "smart" unit.

The responses we are getting from our office market customers are generally divided into three different categories:

1. People are quite excited over the consistently superior water quality and taste associated with Skywell water over their existing water sources.
2. Because traditional office water coolers/dispensers haven't seen much innovation in the last 50+ years, people really like the enhanced appearance, user experience and smart features provided by the Skywell, as well its associated portability and convenience.
3. People are totally connecting with the sustainable and socially responsible footprint of the Skywell.



**Figure 1: The Interactive Skywell Panel**



Source: Skywell

*InfoTrends: Let's talk more about the user experience relating it to the imaging industry when we went from analog to digital technology.*

Ron: Traditional drinking water sources in today's typical office environment are either some form of dispensed "filtered" water or water contained in plastic bottles (either single serve or via a 5-gallon delivery model). There is virtually no user experience or interaction associated with these traditional sources. Our 8" interactive touchscreen, quite like the dashboard you might see on a smart phone or copier interface, allows the user to establish a personal hydration/consumption profile to set and track water consumption goals, as well as to monitor the individual's and office's positive environmental impact resulting from the use of the Skywell. The user can test his/her knowledge of environmental and sustainability issues by taking the daily Skywell Eco-Quiz.

**Figure 2: Take Daily Skywell Eco-quizzes from the Interactive Panel**



Source: Skywell



*InfoTrends: What are you most excited about when it comes to your partnership with Sharp?*

Ron: When we initially sat down with Sharp Corporate to discuss the potential for this distribution partnership, they made it clear that they felt that the Skywell represented a key ingredient in the Sharp's vision for the "Smart Office of the Future". It has been extremely gratifying to see how nicely the Skywell fits in with the other smart office business equipment technology offerings of Sharp. The addition of the Skywell to Sharp's ever-expanding menu of innovative office solutions has been very well received by both the channel dealer and its customers.

As we started to place Skywells in the office, it was immediately apparent that office management really wanted to get its drinking water source out of the kitchen. Because all you need to operate a Skywell is a regular 110V electrical outlet, we began to see Skywells placed in reception areas, conference rooms and other office gathering locations. The reason for the historically atypical placements of the Skywell was simple. They wanted to show-off their new innovative, attractive, smart and socially responsible office technology to co-workers and customers alike. Like the software apps on Sharp's copier panels, you can easily customize the Skywell 8" touchscreen to exhibit company names and logos or brand a special message onto the panel regarding upcoming customer meetings and special events.

The undeniable reality has been that Skywell generates lots of buzz and goodwill once it is placed in an office. User engagement, office-wide water consumption, and branding/messaging/advertising creativity significantly increase following the introduction of a Skywell within the office.

Cloud connectivity is proving to be another game changing feature for the Skywell App, in terms of user tracking of his or her water consumption goals and achievements, gamification possibilities, product advertising and ease of remote performance and service analytics communication for the Sharp service techs.

*InfoTrends: Why did you choose to partner with Sharp?*

Ron: First, the Sharp executives are extremely forward thinking and really are committed to be the thought leaders in the very competitive business office solutions industry. Additionally, Sharp has very strong corporate leadership, a very deep dealer channel in the US and Europe and, along with its new corporate parent, Foxconn, brings a very heavy emphasis on developing the most innovative technology and solutions for its distribution network. The Skywell has proven to be a very complementary fit into this culture.



*InfoTrends: Since 1994, Foxconn's vision has always been to provide technological products and solutions that bring convenience to people's everyday lives. How much did Foxconn's background play into your choice to partner with Sharp?*

Ron: Foxconn has always been known for being the gold standard in consumer electronics technology innovation. Foxconn's world leading R&D and manufacturing capacities are truly changing the scope and speed at which office innovation is being developed at Sharp. Skywell considers itself quite fortunate to be able to play a key role in Foxconn's current vision of creating and supporting the "smart" office and home of the future.

*InfoTrends: How do you support the Sharp reps in selling the new Skywell technology into the office, and how do you address potential objections that companies may have who operate in low humidity areas?*

Ron: Sharp has done an excellent job in creating high quality sales collateral materials and technical service materials to support the Skywell launch. The technical materials include a comprehensive series of online training videos available to the dealers, complemented by an internal training certification program for all Sharp sales and tech personnel. As we always remind our dealers and customers, the Skywell technology is based on science, not magic. As such, its capacity to generate water is dependent on the existence of moisture in the ambient air. When the ambient temperatures in the office drops below 35' F, or the RH drops below 30% (both conditions which would produce significant discomfort for the office occupant, independent of the Skywell) the Skywell is not able to generate as much water as it is in more favorable, more traditional indoor ambient office conditions. Sharp is launching our product in stages throughout their dealer community. Skywell is in the process of beta testing a hybrid kit option that would allow the Skywell user to choose to augment its access to drinking water during periods of extreme cold and dry periods through the inclusion of highly filtered purified municipal water into the Skywell.

**Figure 3: Skywell**



Source: Skywell



*InfoTrends: Are you helping Sharp with a marketing strategy?*

Ron: Notwithstanding all the positive buzz that is being generated by the Skywell launch, just like it is for the introduction of all new products, Skywell and Sharp both know that long-term sales growth depends on the effective education of the Sharp dealers and its end customers. Skywell and Sharp are working diligently to capture real world case studies involving real dealers and their real customers regarding the cost, health and environmental benefits resulting from the adoption of the Skywell technology in the office. Sharp is very focused, engaged and interested in seeking ways to provide more value to its dealers and customers. It is no secret that if they can succeed in offering the end consumer new exciting and innovative solutions in today's office environment, it will open new doors into existing and new customer accounts and create new and vibrant sales opportunities for its dealer channel. When the Skywell brings its new smart innovative drinking water solution into the office, it generates excitement, fascination and engagement, a combination that clearly is opening minds, possibilities and "doors."

*InfoTrends: Do you ever see the Skywell going into a home?*

Ron: Yes, when we go into an office, someone from the office usually wants one for their home or even for their kids' college dorm. This gives the Sharp reps opportunities for added sales.

*InfoTrends: Thank you Ron!*



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# opinion

## InfoTrends' Opinion

Within the imaging channel, we often hear the term “digital transformation” and immediately associate it with copiers. Nevertheless, the digital transformation is apparent with many technologies, including water distribution. Skywell is revolutionizing the way we acquire drinking water the same way Sharp is revolutionizing the industry with the Smart Office and Smart Home approach. This means we are asking ourselves questions we may have not considered, such as “where is your water coming from?”



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[Comments or Questions?](#)

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