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Whitepaper

A Guide to Managed Print Services (MPS)



Control your print infrastructure with Managed Print Services

It is generally acknowledged that businesses are looking to achieve greater efficiencies irrespective of their industry sector, but where to start is the real question.

Printing and document creation activities are the bedrock of most business operations, though many companies are still failing to adopt solutions and services that optimise these processes, reduce operational costs and enhance security.

According to a 2018 Quocirca report¹ at present only 23% of companies surveyed agree that managed print services (MPS) play a very important role in digital transformation, with 54% saying they expect it to do so in two years' time. This means that businesses need to regard printing as more than just a peripheral IT activity. Instead, printing and document management should be an integral part of office workflows and their strides towards digitalisation. This can be achieved by using MPS which demonstrably save employees time and effort by facilitating workflow efficiencies. This in turn leads to greater employee satisfaction and less frustration with inefficient or broken machines.

Flexible working also plays an important part in the changes companies are experiencing in the current economy. The shift towards flexible working and a mobile workforce brings new challenges but also greater opportunities.

Employees who work from home or offsite are still able to access the document services which saves time and speeds up operations, allowing them to still feel part of the team.

With more companies feeling the pinch, costs are starting to be closely monitored and those relating to printing and document management are no different. A 2017 study by Keypoint Intelligence shows that 49% of businesses were motivated by cost reduction when implementing MPS. MPS have been proven to reduce printing costs by 26% overall, which sends serious savings straight to the bottom line.

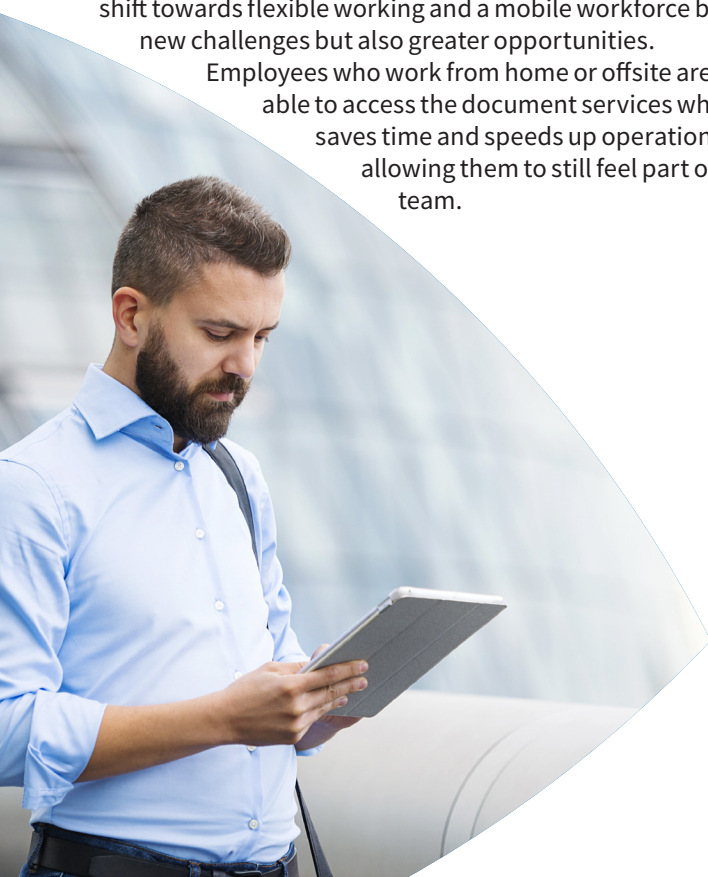
The cost of running printers and MFPs is much more than the purchase price of the actual machine. Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) is heavily influenced by the price of toner used, how often it needs changing and the type of paper required, as well as general maintenance costs and the cost of replacement components. Together, these elements can amount to thousands of pounds and some experts have claimed they can be as much as 15% of a company's revenue.

Further, the amount of time employees waste on printing, scanning, copying or faxing documents with outdated or poorly configured machines is just the tip of the iceberg, as their ensuing frustration leads to heavy demands on the IT departments responsible for installing and fixing printing devices and systems. In fact, around 23%² of helpdesk calls relate to printing issues. This means that IT specialists spend almost a quarter of their time fixing these relatively minor problems, which reduces their ability to implement the company's overall IT strategy. The time wasted on these tasks creates a serious problem in terms of payroll costs and budgets, making it much more difficult for the company to reach its primary financial goals.

Fortunately, reining in expenses and getting the most out of your printing systems is achievable and needn't cost the earth. The key step is to outsource the management of your printing services to professionals who will take from you the burden of analysing usage and finding the print service package that best suits your needs. What's more, a responsible MPS provider will always offer a transparent breakdown of costs without hidden fees and small print caveats. The benefits for your business will be increased efficiency, reduced printing costs and streamlined document management.

¹ <https://quocirca.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Quocirca-MPS-2018-Summary-Report-Web.pdf>

² <https://www.imageoneway.com/blog/three-printing-stats-that-are-terrifying-to-your-it-budget>



What is a Managed Print Service?

A Managed Print Service (MPS) is a service specifically designed to streamline print activities, remove burden, and optimise the overall print environment. It allows users to reduce total printing costs, improve workflow and reduce overheads by not only providing ongoing management, but also monitoring and machine service and support, onsite and remotely.

By shifting the management of your printing estate to an MPS specialist, all of the onerous service and support issues are outsourced, which frees up time for your IT personnel to get on with important tasks that will help boost your profitability. MPS specialists can develop software solutions to suit your business and also monitor the environmental impact of your printing fleet. They can help uncover the hidden costs associated with devices that include copiers, printers, scanners and faxes, as well as identifying cost-saving opportunities throughout your entire organisation.

MPS in practice

As we've already mentioned, most companies do not have a clear view of the total cost of their print and print-related operations. So, before making recommendations, a good MPS provider will take the time needed to build a comprehensive picture of how your business operates and how day-to-day activities are carried out across multiple locations — paying particularly close attention to document management and processes. This audit provides a thorough understanding of existing data workflows and systems and helps to identify key operational bottlenecks.

The audit report gives a single, consolidated view of device and employee activity to highlight sticking points and where the highest costs are being incurred. It will also offer a clear plan of action that shows how you could achieve real and lasting business improvements, rather than simply going for the low-hanging fruit, which delivers only limited and short-term gains.

Typical elements of a good audit report include an asset list, details of peak printing times, a plot of the best locations for devices on floor plans, and suggestions for rationalisation of how documents are being printed and by whom.

This detailed context-led discovery audit allows the MPS specialist to analyse the impact of your organisation's current print infrastructure and identify where genuine improvements can be made for a positive change. The MPS specialist can then help determine what you're currently spending, how you're spending it, and then help you to print smarter, safer, leaner and greener. Savings of up to 30% on printing costs are by no means atypical.

When it comes to actioning the plan, the first step the MPS provider will take is to put in place a professional infrastructure team that is geared up to support your specific service requirements. This team will include a Project Leader to oversee the entire implementation, who will also be your principal Account Manager for the contract duration. You will be given access to a dedicated helpdesk that is a single point of contact with the MPS provider for all call types, including fault reporting, ordering consumables, querying an invoice and even requesting training.

The most progressive and responsive MPS providers use cloud-based software that actively monitors the customer's print estate in real time from the MPS helpdesk. This includes pro-active toner management, so that when the toner levels in a device have fallen below a threshold, the helpdesk automatically dispatches a replacement toner cartridge to arrive before the current cartridge is fully depleted. This reduces your logistics efforts, cuts toner wastage, eliminates the need to hold toner in stock and can improve your cash flow as toner is only ever purchased when required.

What are the benefits of working with an MPS provider?

As they have the experience and expertise needed to accurately track and analyse printing behaviours within your company, MPS specialists can offer bespoke cost modelling. A one-size-fits-all approach is all too often ineffective and counterproductive, as companies have widely varying needs for accessing printers and, even within the same company, it is quite usual for print workloads to differ greatly from department to department.

Using an MPS also reduces the cost of maintenance operations. Rather than maintaining or servicing individual devices one at a time – which can prove to be expensive in the long term. Managed Print Services connect all devices to one monitoring system to ensure not only just-in-time delivery of replacement toners but also timely repairs, should these prove necessary.

User customisation, which leading MPS providers include as part of their service, makes printing, scanning, copying and faxing easier, and even allows personalised workflows to be improved. These can be set up according to the needs of individual businesses and help users to carry out tasks more quickly and efficiently when they work with the printer control panel. Tailoring the system can be as easy as setting up a button on the device that will automatically process an invoice, from scanning and filing to sending it to the relevant address.

What's more, print authentication can be incorporated to enhance document security and remove the possibility of unauthorised machine usage. This invaluable feature helps to optimise document output and reduce paper consumption. The MPS can customise workflows for each customer according to their preferences and existing systems – it's all about saving time.

Your MPS specialist is also a key player in your company's security strategy. They can, for example, recommend the use of access codes or even biometric authentication to minimise the risk of documents being stolen, and the MFP can be programmed to provide an audit trail of what is printed and by whom. In addition, multifunction printers with automatic hard drive wiping functionality as well as network-level solutions will reduce the risk of information being retrieved by hackers. This helps avoid the risk of malicious attacks like the one in November 2018 when a hacker claimed to have forced about 50,000 printers to create posters supporting his favourite vlogger, hijacking the machines from their users.

It is also worth considering that having only one print management provider will reduce the number of people from outside your organisation who have access to your networked devices - which significantly increases the security of your systems.

With businesses demanding more and more documentation to support products and services and also generating ever more documentation to support their own internal processes, digitising hardcopy documents has become an essential part of good business practice. However, cloud storage users are now demanding an application that simplifies workflow and allows them direct access to scanning at the machine, without having to use their mobile devices and computers. A good MPS will offer cloud storage apps that are a convenient and hassle-free way of meeting this demand.

As for mobile workers, the MPS can also implement mobile printing from Android tablets and phones, iPads and iPhones, Chrome Books, Windows PCs and Macs. As well as being an enormous asset for employees, this feature is also ideal for visitors who do not need or want a permanent connection to your business network environment, or wish to install a printer driver. Whether in the office, school, or even on the road, users can send a print job directly from their devices - even if they use multiple devices and multiple platforms. Wireless printing will increase productivity as well as improving flexibility and mobility within your organisation.

MPS flexibility also extends to the level of subscription. Responsible MPS providers should offer scalable and flexible subscriptions that grow or shrink with the customer. If the company expands, so should the printing and document services. If operations are scaled back, then the printing systems should follow suit and not lock the company in contracts that are no longer a good fit. Bottom line, an MPS contract should be an Operational Expenditure (OPEX) rather than the upfront cost of a Capital Expenditure (CAPEX).

Responsible systems for a healthier environment

Reducing the amount of paper, electricity and print consumables your business uses is all part of meeting your corporate social responsibility obligations. Monitoring systems implemented by an MPS specialist will help you to identify and track levels of print usage, which means you can exercise informed control to reduce the environmental footprint of your printing operations.

A good MPS provider will always take responsibility for your company's day-to-day toner recycling. At Toshiba, for example, a disposal service is offered to all customers whereby waste toner is collected and disposed of in line with the Environmental Pollution Act – managed disposal and re-use of materials.

Recycled toner particles are used in the production of paint or as a colouring agent for aggregates, whilst the plastic toner bottles are either used again or sent off to be converted into new plastic products such as garden furniture. Cardboard used in packaging or for transporting the waste toner bottles is also reused and ends up as items like egg cartons and animal bedding.



Selecting your partner

A robust document management system, planned and implemented by a leading MPS specialist, will adapt to any organisational structure and will offer an efficient and cost-effective solution for any size of operation from the smallest start-up business to the largest public sector body or multinational company. It will also offer the flexibility and scalability needed to support organisations through every stage of their evolution and growth.

Reducing paper usage is essential for virtually all businesses and has been identified as an important development goal by many CEOs. Often however, owners, directors and managers are deterred from moving forward because of the amount of time and effort they believe will be needed to change the way they print and manage documents. In reality, the management of print operations can be outsourced to a specialist provider that can remove burden and identify the pain points, delivering tailored solutions.

Managed Print Services are more than an auxiliary part of your office activities. They should sit at the centre of your workflow processes and represent a valuable resource that allows the organisation to increase the efficiency of its operations. The key to getting the most of your MPS is to partner with a responsible provider that delivers and grows with organisations, be they big or small. Finding the right MPS gives you a trustworthy partner that will accompany you on your business journey – wherever that may take you!



Greendocs specialises in sustainable printing solutions for any organisation. Our experts use a combination of software solutions and Toshiba's eco-friendly print hardware to deliver a carbon neutral infrastructure which saves you money whilst being kinder to the planet.

To learn more, contact our expert team.

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