

Inkjet vs. laser

Are you using the right printers to reduce business inefficiencies?

INTERVIEWED BY JAYNE GEST

Office printing consumes about 1 to 3 percent of a company's annual revenue, according to Gartner. But many companies do not actively manage their printing habits — commonly resulting in ongoing, costly inefficiencies.

Ask yourself: Do you know how many printers your company owns? Do you know if they are inkjets or laser printers? Do you know the difference between the two, and which is the best printer type for the job?

"If you can't answer yes or don't know the answers to these questions, it's time to take action," says Matt White, subject matter expert on managed print services at Blue Technologies. "Printers are tools like any other business asset, and not having the right tools for the job can cost you significant time and money."

Smart Business spoke with White to discuss how to eliminate inefficiencies in your print fleet, comparing upfront and operational costs to determine the right machines for your needs.

Should companies be using inkjet or laser printers?

The first questions to ask when deciding are: What are you printing and why? How much will your workplace typically print in a month?

Inkjet printers have a lower initial purchase cost and print photos better, which makes them typically best suited for residential use. But as a business, you need to consider the cost to operate that machine, not just the upfront sticker price.

With inkjets, you may end up buying a new printer rather than repairing one when it breaks. These 'convenience

printers' — often found on the desks of executives and managers — are also less efficient in their use of ink. The cartridges are smaller in size, with an average yield of about 500 to 1,000 pages.

Laser printers, however, are specifically created for commercial use. While they cost more upfront, they are more efficient in their use of toner, have higher cartridge yields and print faster. They'll also last much longer because they are easier to repair, and you can network them to serve multiple office users.

Laser printers from established brands, for example, are five or 10 years old and still going strong; inkjets are just not designed to last that long.

Traditionally, inkjets cost around 15 to 20 cents per page on color and around 6 to 8 cents per page for black and white only pages. In comparison, laser printers cost about 8 to 12 for color prints and 1 to 3 cents per black and white page. If your office prints thousands of pages a month, these differences can really add up.

Do laser printers always make more sense for businesses?

Businesses are the niche that laser printers were designed for. An inkjet, however, can make sense if you need to print photos or only print 10 to 20



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pages a month.

Your technology partner can help educate you on the actual costs of operation or ownership, which may surprise you. They can also help evaluate your operations to find the best-fit machines for your needs.

How can companies consolidate or upgrade existing printers in a cost-effective way that limits the impact on operations?

The process starts with a walk-through that plots out where existing devices are and what print volumes they handle. A lot of times, just seeing your fleet on a map makes you realize where the inefficiencies are, and where it's logical to put in a centralized device.

If you're worried your office culture will be resistant to change, a technology partner can work with you in stages to minimize the impact of fleet consolidations and upgrades on your employees.

A technology partner who specializes in managed print service specifically can even handle central management for you moving forward. They can supply and service your print machines, so you and your staff can focus on more important things — like the services and products your company provides. ●