

Remote on a budget

How managed print services can help avoid disruption, save money

INTERVIEWED BY ADAM BURROUGHS

Many companies, in a very short time, have had to facilitate work-from-home arrangements as they adjust to government restrictions put in place to protect people from the coronavirus. And many of them still have printing needs to be met. Fortunately, some companies, through a managed print services program, have been able to help employees meet that need.

“Through a managed print services program, companies are able to send multifunction devices capable of scanning and copying to employees’ homes,” says Matt White, Managed Print Solution manager at Blue Technologies. “It means companies can outfit at-home offices with the same capabilities available at the main office.”

Smart Business spoke with White about the ways managed print services are saving companies money, creating efficiencies and helping businesses continue uninterrupted during the pandemic.

WHAT ARE THE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MANAGED PRINT SERVICES?

Companies might believe that they don’t print a lot, and their small fleet of printers doesn’t cost them much, so a managed print services program is unnecessary. They think that this type of program is expensive and that there might be significant upfront costs.

In truth, a managed print services provider works to save companies money. They quantify what it currently costs a company to maintain its devices, then compare that to a managed print services program. And almost every time it’s going to save the company money to implement such a program.

At the most basic level, these programs service and supply printers. More complete solutions enable companies to not only keep their devices up and

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running but also start controlling costs by looking at efficiency and standardization, using analytics to determine what’s happening in the printing environment.

HOW DO ANALYTICS HELP COMPANIES SAVE MONEY?

Analytics offer visibility down to the device. The data can show which device is costing the company the most, where workflow has the highest cost, and what can be done to improve on that. That can help companies gain predictability in terms of printing costs because often, the total cost of ownership and maintaining a fleet of devices goes into a general office budget. That makes it hard to separate the real costs for day-to-day printing. Analytics can separate out where exactly print costs are being accrued.

Working with a technology partner brings a wealth of experience and information to the task. It can help establish best practices that offer cost savings and greater efficiencies while ensuring employees have what they need, wherever they are.

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS DETERMINE WHETHER A MANAGED PRINT SERVICE IS RIGHT FOR THEM?

Technology providers typically offer a free assessment to examine the environment and determine what each device costs to operate. Operators should then talk with the providers about organizational pain

points. For instance, a company may need to get printers out to all employees’ home offices, reduce costs or upgrade devices. Find a provider that’s not only capable of achieving those goals but can do it in a way that is cost-efficient.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MANAGED PRINT SERVICES PROVIDER?

The provider should have a proven track record and references from companies that have used its services to back that up. Different providers have different offerings, so it’s a good idea to compare and contrast each to find the one that’s the best fit. Many providers can supply companies with toner and cartridges, and service devices, but look closer to see if they have multiple device offerings to suit any task or work environment the company might have.

Working with a managed print services provider can also be a vendor consolidation opportunity that brings document management, workflow solutions and more in one relationship.

Also, consider how the provider handles analytics. What can the provider show the company that’s going to help it measure ROI over time and how is that data presented?

With office environments changing, it’s a good time for companies to start the conversation about their print environment. Unmet needs or uncontained costs could be creating unrecognized problems. ●