

WHITE PAPER

Why Print Management: Considerations of Reducing the Cost of Printing

Reducing the cost of print can be a painless way for enterprises to alleviate their hard-pressed IT budgets, so it is good practice for IT Managers to constantly seek new ways to streamline printing costs. Gartner research states that printing costs regularly account for up to 3% of an organization's revenue. This white paper seeks to highlight a common sense approach to print cost reductions to positively impact overhead and bottom line.

Challenges

It stands to reason that the overall cost of print can be driven downward by reducing the amount of print output. Given that the quantity of print is determined largely by the user, reducing print costs can be tricky to implement. Key to reduction is to understand the drivers of print cost and their implication to your organization. On the face of it, print economics are relatively simple to define. Multiple studies have found that the 'average' employee prints around 10,000 sheets each year. With each sheet costing around 10 cents to print, that's \$1000 of print costs per head, per year. Simple math shows that a 1000-employee company can easily save \$30,000 per year. But we need to dive deeper into what sits behind this per head, per year, print cost by defining types of print overhead:

First, hard print costs, or the price you actually pay per page output, per department. This should be relatively simple to master; collate the cost of ink/toner cartridges consumed and divide it by the overall number of pages printed per department. It's worth mapping this out so that from the outset you can confirm usage statistics.

Second, escalating energy costs. Printers are literally energy guzzlers, even when in standby mode, so it's worth placing a \$ running cost per printer. Given they have become tantalizingly affordable, printers are randomly added to the enterprise fleet in vast numbers. With that uncontrolled growth, comes the increased power overhead. A standard midrange HP laser printer prints at 800 watts, so when operating 8 hours a day, consumes an eye-watering 2336 kilowatt-hours per year. (Using a standard average US electric tariff, that equates to around \$150 per year per printer).

Third, the greatest print overhead, frequently overlooked, resides at your onsite help desk support. Technical costs of supporting print continue to escalate as network infrastructure becomes more complex and mobile users proliferate. IDC research suggests that for every \$1 spent on printing, firms spend around ten times that in IT support. In fact, printing is the number two help desk request worldwide. Lockton UK, a global insurer, cited excessive help desk calls as one of the primary reasons for understanding and addressing their print situation.

Consider Next Steps

Which path you next take will depend on the size of the problem and the demographics of your organization. We consider three different scenarios and actions you can take:

- If you are working in an organization of under 100 employees, you will be able to significantly reduce your print overhead with simple steps. Setting high usage departments' printer modes to fast print and duplexing can save up to 30% of costs. Encourage print preview and selective Web via cut and paste.
- If you are working in an organization with thousands of employees spread across branches, across multiple geographic areas connected over a complex network, you may need additional tools to take you down the path of print cost reduction. Various print management solutions are available to take the print decision making capabilities away from the user and place the control in the hands of IT. The solutions replace

traditional print management redundancies, with seamless, automated, policy driven print management that puts IT in charge of print enablement.

- In VDI and cloud computing environments, the drivers become even stronger to deploy a third-party print management or virtualized print infrastructure to bring down costs. Why? In a virtualized environment, hundreds of different printers each with their own driver exist, being used by thousands of employees that expect print-on-demand from wherever in the world and on whatever device they elect to use, that particular day. It becomes impossible to even begin the printer mapping exercise, let alone apportion what IT overhead costs it incurs, so understanding print economics and reducing them becomes equally illusive.
- In addition, adding new clients, printers and system upgrades requires high levels of technical knowledge and adds to the costs of IT infrastructure for those companies who have not yet embraced a printing virtualization solution where the rollout is enabled centrally across the network. Costs are decreased further still by recognizing the vast leaps in employee productivity. In a virtual print managed world, printers operate at maximum efficiency all the time. Large numbers of multi-page documents can be split and directed into alternative print queues, increasing the print engine speed so the time to print is also reduced. Print command sent to busy or non-functioning printers can be redirected to other available printers for immediate printing, ensuring minimal work disruption across your enterprise.

Empower Sustainable Cost Reduction

Whatever your primary reason for driving carbon cost down (be it reducing your own energy bills; achieving corporate responsibility through decreased footprint; or to allow you to apply for data centre carbon efficiency grants), it's a factor that will only increase as the years go by. Look for those solutions that offer sustainable and ongoing cost reductions in energy. It is worth noting that an investment now in virtualized printing infrastructure can be quickly offset by the knock-on effects in carbon, electricity consumption and resource reductions as the technology uses print appliances and print stream compression to take a much lower power load.

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About Process Fusion

Process Fusion is a software company and a cloud solution provider. We help organizations transform inefficient, paper (labor) intensive business processes into a secure, automated, mobile ready Digital First experience for all participants.

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