



Managed Print Services

An Independent Buyers Guide

Implementing a Managed Print Service is a challenging task with many associated benefits and risks. It is therefore imperative that a buyer takes an informed and structured approach to the solution design and contracting process, if success is to be achieved.

This guide will help the buyer make structured and effective decisions about how to successfully implement and administer their particular version of a Managed Print Service. There are tips but no tricks, only solid guidance on how to deliver a robust solution.

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Date: June 2010

Version: 3



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The Buyers Guide provides the best practices that are essential to implementing a Managed Print Service with the minimal amount of effort and risk. This is achieved by providing the buyer with the necessary insight to make informed and effective decisions about designing a solution and selecting an appropriate vendor.

The premise of the guide is that a MPS must ultimately deliver effective and efficient support for the business process, at the right price. This is because office printing, faxing and scanning are essential day-to-day activities that must be effectively supported if employee satisfaction and performance are to be enhanced and maintained.

Furthermore, success relies on a strong and healthy partnership between the buyer and the preferred vendor. This requires the service provision to be clearly stipulated and contracted if both parties are to enjoy a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship.

The guide is short and to the point and contains lots of examples on how to maximise the performance of a Managed Print Services and avoid the pitfall of false economy. In addition, it contains guidance relating to operations management, Information security and sustainability. All of which are essential to building a MPS solution that continually improves and maximises the return on investment.

To-date, large organisations have mainly been focused on implementing MPS solutions, however, the Photizo Group argue that the growth period has only just started and that MPS solutions are now moving into the mainstream. So, if you would like to take advantage of the following benefits in the most effective way then you need to read this guide:

- Reduce the operational overhead associated with print (somewhere in the region of 30%)
- Improve operational efficiency with better tools, features and training
- Enhance the organisations public relations profile by focusing on sustainability and accountability
- Establish a more secure environment by keeping information strictly confidential

At a time when every line item in the budget is under intense scrutiny, organisations are quite naturally searching for new ways to reduce costs and operate more efficiently. This is why organisations are now actively focusing on office printing, faxing and scanning as a significant opportunity.

In addition, advances in technology and the need to meet compliance and information security challenges associated with faxing, email and device integrity are driving organisations to consider MPS solutions that centralise, securitize and standardise office output.

There are many complexities associated with implementing a MPS solution that may cause the initiative to stall or fail to meet expectations. It is therefore critical that the buyer carefully designs a MPS solution and implements best practices that will maximise the potential for long-term success.

Partnerships are essential to achieving success, as neither the buyer or the vendor can succeed on their own. However, evaluating and selecting a vendor for a MPS is a complex and demanding process that requires a structured and systematic approach throughout the tender process.

Establishing a baseline for comparative analysis is an imperative objective, as this will reduce ambiguity, subjectivity and personal bias within the evaluation and decision making process. Furthermore, clearly stipulating the expectations of the organisation will assist the vendors with formulating their proposals.

Finally, the way in which information is managed and secured is of immense importance, as failure to protect information can have serious financial and reputational ramifications. It is therefore essential that organisations develop an information security policy that directly relates to the Managed Print Service.

THE PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION PROCESS

There are many complexities associated with implementing a MPS solution that may cause the initiative to stall or fail to meet expectations. It is therefore critical that the buyer carefully designs a MPS solution that will maximise the potential for long-term success.

Even with CEO backing, implementing a MPS can be an extremely difficult process if the initiative is not carefully planned and executed. So, take the time to plan the strategy and tactics to meet the specific needs of the organisation, in the short, mid and long-term.

The planning and communication process is a critical step in the transition to a MPS because it is essential to have a documented outline of the main objectives before entering into the tender process. In addition it is also necessary to rally support for the solution, obtain resources and ascertain any potential barriers to a successful implementation.

This means embedding the concept that office printing is necessary but expensive and that a reduction in the number of output devices and prints-outs will be good for the organisation, and our planet. Furthermore, employees should be encouraged to accept that they must play an active role in making a material difference.

The buyer must also ensure that careful consideration is given to the long-term impact of the solution design on employees and their ability to do their jobs effectively. People will not take kindly to a solution that makes their lives more difficult, irrespective of the greater good.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A MISSION STATEMENT

It is important to develop a mission statement that encapsulates the aspirations and objectives associated with implementing a MPS, as this will maintain focus throughout the transition to a MPS and help the stakeholders understand the context and relative importance of the initiative.

In addition, including the vision and mission within the requests for information and pricing will help the vendor to start understanding the expectations of the buyer and with making decisions about how to meet the requirements.

The mission should be based on providing support for the business process in the most cost effective way. So, consider the following headings when developing a mission statement:

- Maximising customer satisfaction
- Providing visibility and control
- Reducing operational risk
- Improving information security
- Reducing the impact on the environment
- Enhancing the decision making process
- Improving service, support and performance

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In order to design a solution that is fit for purpose, one has to understand the business strategy that the MPS must efficiently and effectively support. Stakeholder analysis and engagement is the conduit to making this happen and the process should be initiated at the earliest possible opportunity.

The engagement process will assist the buyer with obtaining resources and also help with understanding the requirements that will ultimately shape the solution design. It will also help with establishing contacts within key areas that will act as facilitators and the conduits for the ongoing communication process.

Here is a list of potential stakeholders for consideration:

- Senior management and business heads
- Potentially numerous functions with the IT department
- Potentially numerous functions with the Facilities/General Services Department
- Existing vendors supporting the current output environment
- The Human Resources Department
- Employees and Employee Groups

THE CURRENT STATE SURVEY

A current state survey is a useful tool for ascertaining the potential requirements of a MPS. However, be careful to only ask questions specific to functionality and capability requirements, as broader questions may lead the respondents to think in terms of a need for additional devices, not less.

The aim of the survey should be to identify those factors that are inhibiting the efficient and effective business process, along with the requirements that will potentially address the issues. Try to encourage employees to provide their name within the survey, as it will then be possible to engage with them directly and to potentially create ambassadors for the MPS.

Here are some suggested questions:

1. Approximately how many pages do you print per month? 0-250, 250 – 500, 500 – 1000, More
2. Approximately what percentage of pages are printed duplex (double-sided)? 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%
3. Do you utilise the 'Print hold functionality' (AKA 'Secure Print') feature on your printing device? Yes/No
4. Do you send and receive analogue faxes? Yes/ No
5. Approximately how many pages do you scan per month? None, 1-250, 250 – 500, 500 – 1000, More
6. Do you use a document management system? Yes/ No
7. If the current office printing services were a commercial operation, would you recommend it to your friends and family? Yes/ No
8. If the answer to question 7 was no, please choose any number of the following reasons:
 - a. The service and support for the output environment is inadequate
 - b. The equipment in general is inadequate
 - c. The equipment in general is unacceptably problematic
 - d. The training and education process is inadequate
 - e. The communication and support process is inadequate
 - f. Another reason

Questions 7 and 8 will help with the development of future question and act as a litmus test for customer satisfaction surveys. Finally, do not forget to set a date for the completion of the survey and to send reminders after only a few days.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION

It is important to start selling the vision of the future to all the stakeholders as soon as possible. This is because employees will be made to feel part of the process and less likely to rebel when they lose a Desktop Printer or have to walk further to an MFD. Apparently, it will take a minimum of six reminders before the concept sinks in.

In addition, communicating the benefits of the solution and openly addressing any known concerns will also start to build trust in the MPS concept. Be sure to communicate the schedule for optimising each location well in advance to allow the business units to plan around the transition or to request that it to be rescheduled to some extent.