HP customer case study: Print optimisation from HP and Danwood makes Lancashire County Council a role model for other authorities

Industry: Public sector, Local government

Lancashire County Council aims to reduce print costs by 36 per cent over three years

"Lancashire County Council's internal print budget is on target to reduce by 36 per cent which could equate to over £4 million that can be spent on frontline services for the good of the people of Lancashire." Mike Wood, reprographics advisor, Lancashire County Council

Objective:

Facing a three-year print spend of over £12 million (€17 million), Lancashire County Council aimed to reduce its print costs by 36 per cent, with estimated savings of over £4 million (€6 million). It also wanted to improve workflow and print management.

Approach:

- The Council decided to optimise its print infrastructure, changing not only the hardware but also the printing culture for staff at its 600 plus sites.
- To avoid protracted tendering, it decided on a framework agreement through the procurement site of the Office of Government Commerce.
- It then went through an intense five-month evaluation process before selecting The Danwood Group, HP and SafeCom as its contractors.

IT improvements:

- The optimised solution features HP CM8060 and CM8050 Colour Multifunction Printers (MFPs).
- Innovative Edgeline Technology in these machines moves the paper not the print head delivering greater reliability and performance.
- Installation, configuration and management are simplified with HP Web Jetadmin software and efficiency is increased with an embedded HP Jetdirect print server and a SafeCom Pull Print solution.

Business benefits:

- Over the first year of the contract, print costs at the refreshed sites have been reduced by approximately 38 per cent. Mono print output has reduced by 25 per cent and colour output by 20 per cent. This saving will enable the council to improve frontline services for the county's residents and businesses.
- Energy consumption at those sites has reduced by an incredible 75.1 per cent due to the reduction in machines and the high efficiency of HP MFPs. Other environmental advantages have been a drop in paper usage and the recycling of toner cartridges.
- SafeCom Pull Print increases security and reduces travel time, costs and emissions by eliminating the need for staff to return to their office to output prints. This improves workflow and SafeCom's reporting functionality also improves management of the print environment.

Established in 1889, Lancashire County Council (LCC) is the local authority responsible for England's fourth largest county which is home to more than a million residents and 35,000 companies.

Lancashire covers 2,000 square miles and to administer this huge area, LCC employs 42,000 staff who currently work at over 600 sites. This is a large and complex organisation and that complexity was reflected in its printer landscape which had become expensive and difficult to control.

"The management of our old printer fleet was a sorry story," says LCC's technical infrastructure manager, Steve Purvor. "Subject to budget being available, local business managers could buy any number of printers they wanted. As a result the authority had an unknown quantity of devices and the whole fleet was uncontrolled in terms of budget. When we first started to look at the costs, there were approximately 2,900 networked printers in more than 600 offices and that was not a good situation."

Optimisation project

A working group was created to rationalise spending. It forecast that over a three year period, the council would generate as many as 185 million A4 prints which would cost around £12 million (€17 million).

Action was required, so LCC fixed a target to reduce those print costs by 36 per cent – a figure which could equate to a saving of over £4 million (€6million) over a three year period.

To make that target a reality, the council decided to optimise its print landscape with a project that, in addition to saving a considerable amount of money, would make management of the printer fleet more efficient and improve workflow. It considered five potential suppliers. Following a lengthy selection process it chose The Danwood Group which based its solution on HP Multifunction Printers (MFPs) and a secure pull print software solution from SafeCom.

"The reason Danwood decided to recommend HP was because a key issue for LCC was how the devices sat on the corporate data network and how they handled a great many different applications and platforms such as UNIX reporting and Oracle e-business suite ," said Paul Adelman, senior sales manager, public sector for Danwood. "We felt that HP MFPs gave us the most robust and reliable solution for this."

Culture change

By the end of the project, HP MFPs will be installed in over 600 LCC sites with personal printers being replaced by pool machines. Leased under a flexible Managed Print Service contract, they are replacing the old printers and photocopiers on a ratio of around 1:7 with a minimum of one device at each site and multiple machines in the larger offices. The printer fleet can be remotely monitored and managed with HP Web Jetadmin software and efficiency is increased with an embedded HP Jetdirect Print Server. The SafeCom Pull Print solution stores print jobs in a 'virtual printer' inside the print server, matching jobs to users with unique authentication PINs which enables them to collect their print from any printer on the network.

"These HP MFPs are good, solid and sound and our people are familiar with HP," adds Steve Purvor. "We also have an added comfort factor of knowing that HP is being proactive and forward looking with its Edgeline technology. This fits with our philosophy of long term planning led by efficient technology."

Already, the print optimisation is delivering dramatic results. In the first 12 months of the three-year contract and with only two thirds of the 600 sites rationalised, print costs at those sites have been reduced by around 38 per cent. In addition, energy consumption at those sites has reduced by an incredible 75.1 per cent due to the decrease in machine numbers and the high efficiency of HP Multifunction Printers. Mono print output has reduced by 25 per cent and colour output by 20 per cent.

And, as this evolving, organic project gathers momentum, ongoing results are set to be even more impressive, leading to savings of many millions of pounds. Latest statistics comparing one month in 2008 with the same month in 2007 reveal an overall drop of 40 per cent in print volumes with mono print down 43 per cent and colour down 36 per cent.

Environmental benefits

In addition to the huge drop in energy demand, environmental benefits have been increased by the reduction in paper and recycling of used ink cartridges. They are so impressive that the Council recently won a Green IT award in the Government Computing Awards for Innovation.

The SafeCom Pull Print solution has also enabled flexible working for staff because they no longer need to return to their own office to output hard print copies. This brings the additional benefits of reducing their travel time and fuel consumption and further 'cost per square foot' savings are also being achieved by reducing the office space taken up by printers and copiers.

The need for authentication means that print jobs are only processed when the user is by the machine, leading to greater security and this versatile way of printing results in greatly improved workflow. Management of the print environment is also streamlined because it is possible to see who printed which job and where, on the council's intranet site.

"Working with our contractors, The Danwood Group, HP and SafeCom has enabled us to become a more efficient local authority when it comes to the management and volume of print," says Mike Wood. "It is enabling us to make considerable savings that can be spent on frontline services for the benefit of local people. The way we are reducing our output and managing our costs has also stirred up considerable interest among other local authorities, many of whom have visited us with a view to implementing similar projects in their own authorities."

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