AUTOMATED BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Digging Deeper into Managed Print Services

Below the Surface

We live in a connected world. One thing leads to another. Such is the case with MPS, where the engagement works its way up a ladder and eventually becomes a continuous endeavor.

You've already determined that your organization is sorely in need of MPS. You're already aware of how it can reduce your expenditures around everything document imaging—by as much as 30 percent. And you already understand that managed print services isn't a "one size fits all" strategy and helps solve pain points in your print ecosystem. So, what's next?

The 5 Phases of MPS

Because managed print services means different things to different people, there's a lot of nebulousness with the definition. Still, three distinct MPS practices exist today: supplies and break-fix (basic method of converting a hardware and supplies setting from transactional to contractual), infrastructure (optimizing and managing the entire print environment, including devices and supplies), and advanced (print behavior changes, the "green" piece, security and workflow improvements—both the icing on the cake and the cherry on top).

Now let's take a slightly more in-depth look at what a typical MPS process entails…

1) Assessment: In order to comprehend fleet usage, data must be collected to establish a baseline. There are various ways to accomplish this, including deploying agents to report the statistics to a server or using a USB key to capture stats, and it can take as little as a week to upwards of three months. Interviewing employees adds another layer to learn about document output and workflow.

2) Presentation: Armed with information on breakdowns such as color versus mono, simplex versus duplex, and paper size, the service provider apprises management of what's good, what's bad and what's ugly—the executive summary. Ultimately, cost savings will be shown to give an organization a ballpark figure on what it can expect from participating in an MPS program.

3) Implementation: Once the contract is signed, the service provider installs a permanent system of accruing fleet data, the purpose of which is twofold: to ensure device uptime is kept at a high level (diagnostics) and to gather info for monthly billing (meter reads). As MPS tracking tools are designed for service providers but don't intrude on end users' daily tasks, no training is required.

4) Monitoring: In short, the "ongoing" part of the process. Stats are compiled on a continuous basis, fleet right-sizing continues, and quarterly—or another time interval—findings are continually reported to the organization. This is the stage where service providers prove to their customers over and over again that they're being proactive, not reactive, about resolving issues or preventing them from happening.

5) Optimization: The output portion of a document imaging ecosystem is now managed—but that's just the tip of the iceberg. The next steps are moving beyond "what's being printed" to "who's doing

the printing." Enter print management, and then strengthening the infrastructure via other software pieces that can streamline workflows and raise worker efficiency.

Debunking Myths

The whole concept of managed print services has evolved rapidly in recent years, as have the programs offered by the manufacturers. And what was once considered to be part of the MPS equation may no longer apply. It might also be a shock to some people to discover just how simple managed print services can be, given how it blurs the lines between hardware and software and business process automation. Of course, with numerous benefits and a history all of its own, MPS has seen its share of common misunderstandings, some of which include:

- *A business can't take advantage of MPS because it recently purchased new hardware.* In today's age, that just doesn't matter.

- *The organization doesn't have enough devices to participate in a program.* In fact, MPS is a vertical-agnostic solution that's ideal for any size company.

- *Salespeople are always looking to sell you an expensive copier.* Old school thinking, because today they're really looking to match your needs with the right device.

- *The business can't afford MPS.* Not true, as there are little or no upfront costs—and managed print services helps save money faster than it could otherwise.

- *Resellers don't have competitive, reliable programs like those offered by manufacturers.* False again, as resellers are also creative at finding ways to satisfy customers—and often fulfill the requirements better.

- *Multiple vendors provide organizations with more options and keep prices competitive.* Simply put, a print ecosystem is organized more efficiently under a single vision, rather than it being co-directed.

3 Takeaways

- Managed print services is an organic way of deepening the engagement with a partner
- The five stages of MPS bring a strategic and optimized print ecosystem
- Managed print services is flexible and appropriate for all businesses