



Asked & Answered

What Your Business Could Gain with Managed Print Services

Q&A WITH WES FAVORS, AREA VICE PRESIDENT — SALES OPERATIONS FOR STAPLES — TECH SOLUTIONS.

According to Quocirca, the business advisory firm, 50% of large companies use some form of managed print services (MPS), and 90% of those that do are either satisfied or very satisfied with their print infrastructure. Is a managed print model right for your business?

We spoke to Wes Favors, Area Vice President — Sales Operations for Staples — Tech Solutions, about how MPS could help you save money and time.

WHAT ARE MANAGED PRINT SERVICES?

Wes Favors: If you were to ask 10 people what MPS is, you might get 10 different answers. I define managed print services as a service that allows a company to outsource the management of all aspects of their print environment. It includes the management of hardware, consumables and break/fix services, as well as optimization of the print environment to ensure the best possible cost. This includes both the desktop print environment and the traditional copier devices.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMPONENTS OF MPS?

There are three main components of MPS: consumables and supplies, hardware, and service (break/fix). In addition to these three main components, software solutions that help optimize print environments are becoming more prevalent with MPS.

MPS brings a number of key benefits to companies with unoptimized print environments. They range from freeing up valuable IT resources so they can focus on more strategic priorities to a reduction in total cost of ownership of the print environment. It's really about making sure every job is printed to the right device at the right price.

QUESTION:

What's the biggest gain of MPS?

ANSWER:

MPS lets IT staffers do what they do best and takes printers off their hands.

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WHO GAINS THE MOST FROM MPS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION?

The benefits of MPS are typically spread out across many functions of a company. If the IT team is responsible for fixing the print devices, they get back valuable time to spend on more strategic priorities.

Procurement sees the benefits of auto-replenishment of supplies and the elimination of the need to order print consumables. In addition, they never have to worry about users ordering the incorrect supply and ensuring that the most cost-efficient toner is always used.

Finance realizes the benefits gained from very large cost savings with moving to MPS. The percent savings varies based on the current state print environment, but we consistently see companies saving anywhere from 10-40%.

HOW DOES MPS SAVE COMPANIES MONEY?

Most companies that have not entered into an MPS agreement really struggle knowing what they spend on print. Moving to MPS helps provide visibility, and what gets measured gets improved.

Beyond that, here are five cost-saving elements to MPS:

1. Typically the cost to fix printers goes down considerably when it is done by a third-party provider, as opposed to a company's internal IT resources.
2. Procurement or end users aren't spending time cutting POs or ordering toner.
3. Optimizing the print environment on the most efficient print devices and ensuring that the most cost-efficient consumable is being used every time can provide a significant cost savings. You're printing to devices that cost less per page.
4. There are savings associated with capital outlay — you don't have a closet full of toner. Also, a company no longer runs the risk of buying toner that becomes obsolete due to a print device no longer being used in their print environment.
5. Helping companies reduce the amount of print reduces expenses on many consumables.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A GOOD MPS PARTNER?

What's important is working with a provider that collaborates with your company on the right solution. They should help you understand what your current state total cost of ownership is and help guide you to the best possible future state TCO. In addition, a good partner will always put resources in place that will help drive continual optimization. An MPS engagement should never be a three- to five-year agreement that is only evaluated six months before contract expiration.

QUESTION:

What's the biggest myth with MPS?

ANSWER:

The biggest myth is that an MPS solution will always save you money. The real cost savings come through process change.

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A quick word of warning: Many companies are good at selling copiers or printers but not good at managing the entire process.

ARE THERE ANY SECURITY RISKS WITH MPS?

Because print devices are connected to a company's network, there is some security risk. It is important that a company work with a partner that considers this in their solution. And of course every company is different. We will typically provide a free security assessment as part of our initial engagement to help companies understand their risks and how they can be addressed with MPS.

Most MPS programs include the installation of a data collection agent on a customer's network. This agent is used to collect data on the print devices and is the backbone of the auto-replenishment portion of MPS. This agent typically is extremely low risk as it only sends information about the print device and not about data on the print jobs themselves.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MYTH WITH MPS?

The biggest myth is that an MPS solution will always save you money. If your MPS provider is not looking at total cost of ownership reduction, but rather is just changing the way you are billed for the component parts of print — cost-per-page billing, for example — you will not see a savings.

The real cost savings come through process change. You don't have to optimize to save people money, but you do have to change the way they do things. Every print environment is a little bit different, and you need a partner who understands that and can look at the whole picture.

To learn more about MPS, please visit StaplesAdvantage.com/MPS



Wes Favors is an Area Vice President – Sales Operations for Staples – Tech Solutions. He helped design the Staples MPS offering and has been helping customers gain the benefits of MPS for nearly a decade.