Efficiency and flexibility: office print transformed

Background
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council is responsible for delivering local government services to around 290,000 people in the Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell in England’s West Midlands. Faced with reductions in central government funding and not wanting to increase the local council tax paid by residents, the council is focusing on efficiencies across its operations to free up resources for the protection and improvement of frontline services.

The Challenge
Office printing was identified as a clear candidate for rationalisation. The council had a culture of personal printers, purchased by individual users who also bought their own toner and ink. The council had no visibility or control over how much it was spending on printers and consumables; printer uptime was variable; and it was a struggle for IT to maintain the wide range of brands and models. The council also had around 140 fax machines with dedicated phone lines, many of which were rarely used.

The Solution
Xerox is implementing its Enterprise Print Services (EPS) at Sandwell, installing a total of 150 devices across ten sites. These are multifunction devices (MFDs) that offer capabilities such as duplex printing, stapling, scan to email and digital faxing. Three on-site Xerox employees are responsible for maintaining the MFDs and keeping them stocked with paper and other consumables.

“...not only saves the council a significant amount of money straight away, but will ensure costs are controlled and managed over the lifetime of the agreement. The partnership’s joint expertise gives great confidence that our crucial cost reduction, service and wider business objectives will be delivered.”

Stuart Kellas,
Finance Director, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Office print rationalisation and improvements.
30% cost reduction over five years.

A project board of Sandwell, BT and Xerox representatives is overseeing the implementation. It keeps the project on track and ensures that the transition to EPS respects the council’s processes and engages the right stakeholders. The board is also managing a change programme to deliver appropriate training on the new technology and help users adjust their printing habits.

The Results
Xerox EPS gives Sandwell a rationalised, fully managed fleet of MFDs that will reduce office printing costs by 30% over five years. This managed print service cuts the ratio of printers to people by a factor of 10, while providing increased functionality and improving device availability and reliability.

Users can send documents to any MFD for printing. For example, if someone needs printed documents for a meeting in another council building, they can send them to a device in that building and collect them on arrival. This is made possible by a unique PIN code access that users key into the MFD to release their printout.

As well as making printing more flexible, PIN access helps prevent waste, as a document doesn’t actually print until the PIN is entered. This also improves information security, as printed documents no longer lie around on printers for other people to read or pick up.

The MFDs’ digital faxing capability has enabled Sandwell to dispense with its fax machines and their associated costs, including rental, support and phone-line costs. Enhanced faxing functionality on the MFDs keeps faxed documents more secure and increases efficiency. For example, previously, if a document such as a supplier contract arrived by fax, it would have been manually scanned, page by page, to create an electronic version for storing. Now, the receiving MFD automatically converts the incoming fax to a consolidated PDF and emails it straight to the recipient.

Software built into the MFDs provides management information about each device’s performance and activity, including device uptime and volumes of black-and-white and colour printing. This information enables us to optimise the council’s fleet of MFDs, for example by moving an under-used printer to a busier part of the office.

The Xerox solution also helps Sandwell reduce the environmental impact of its office printing, with projected annualised savings on power usage (26%), greenhouse gas production (29%) and waste to landfill (43%).

The Future
In a subsequent phase of the print management project, Xerox will analyse the council’s in-house print room and external print supplier strategy, with a view to improving efficiencies across the entire print environment. The MFDs installed at Sandwell are also ready to support increased levels of digitisation at the council, which could include, for example, direct scanning of case files, or of receipts into an expenses system.

Case Study Snapshot

The Challenge
• Cut the cost of Sandwell Council’s office printing and faxing
• Reduce carbon footprint, waste and power consumption
• Improve printer availability, quality and functionality

The Solution
• Thorough analysis of the council’s print environment
• Replacement of around 1,500 printers and 140 fax machines with 150 multi-function devices
• On-site Xerox staff to maintain printers and manage consumables
• Change management programme to train users on the new technology

The Results
• 30% reduction in costs over five years
• Ongoing fleet optimisation through consolidated view of the office print environment
• Improved printer availability and reliability
• Energy use and greenhouse gas emissions cut by over a quarter
• Less waste and better security through use of PIN printing
• More efficient and secure fax capability
• Platform for future business improvements

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