

“In France, print costs were cut by 42 per cent. Next year, we anticipate savings of around €0.2m in mainland Europe and £0.5m in the UK.”

THE LESS-PAPER OFFICE: DOCUMENT OUTPUT MANAGEMENT CUTS PAPER WASTE AND SAVES ENERGY

Our approach to document output management has generated thousands of pounds worth of savings and slashed paper and energy use. It's a powerful example of how our lean approach can combine technology and business understanding to improve service while also generating environmental gains.

SIMPLIFYING CHAOS

Historically, Fujitsu, like most organisations, hasn't used centralised purchasing or management of its document output hardware. As a result, printing, scanning, faxing and photocopying equipment tended to be procured according to local needs and managed without proper control of document output costs or standards.

The issue has always been how to get a balanced deployment of devices that meet the needs of users and the business. With the advent of multi-function devices and a range of new management features, it is now possible to simplify a previously complex situation and so generate economies of scale and some compelling environmental benefits.

The genesis of the transformation took place in Fujitsu's French offices, where the existing print supply contract was coming up for renewal. A review of printing costs suggested that multi-functional devices – which print, scan, fax and copy – could slash costs, especially if backed by a managed print service. This service would include automatic monitoring of devices, automatic toner replacement, and incident management facilities, and would cast document output as a service that could be actively managed for quality, business relevance and cost-effectiveness.

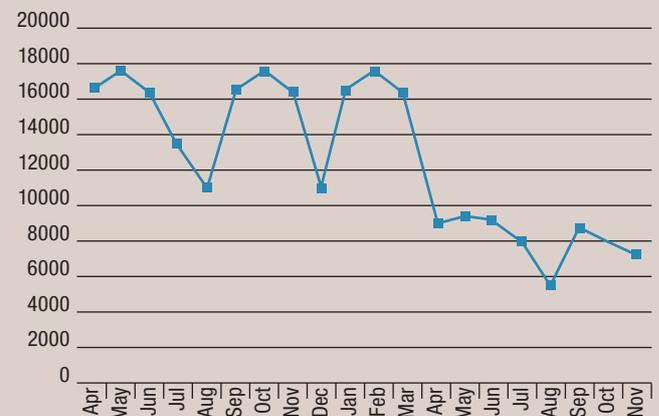
The results were impressive, with the number of devices in use falling from 197 to 23 and savings being generated of around €33,000, or 42 per cent, a year. It's a major reduction that we expect to be repeated across the rest of our operations – with annual savings anticipated of around €0.2m in mainland Europe and £0.5m in the UK, Fujitsu's largest operation in Europe.

MAKING WASTE VISIBLE

As a business, we place great emphasis on the importance of identifying and eliminating waste – principles embodied in our lean services practices and Sense and Respond techniques. Applying them to document output, it was clear that there was scope to introduce much greater oversight, analysing usage across different parts of the organisation to identify savings.

Before the project, the French business was using around 150,000 pages a month. It's now running at about 83,000 pages a month – less than the previous lowest monthly totals which were recorded in the holiday periods of August and Dec. (See Figure 1).

1. FALLING PRINT PATTERNS



Monthly printed page totals from April 2006 – France (Double-sided counted as 2)

CASE STUDY PRINT MANAGEMENT

BETTER BY DEFAULT

A key benefit of greater central management of document output is the ability to build in sound environmental choices. For example, all new printers are defaulted to print black-and-white, double-sided, and draft quality. Users can override these settings, but only on a job-by-job basis.

The system also uses a PIN number system, which users must enter at the printer before the job will complete. This has the dual benefit of reducing unnecessary print jobs while giving people more flexibility over their printing. If, for example, someone arrives at a printer to find it busy, they can simply enter their PIN at another printer and the job will automatically output there.

The replacement of old devices has also had a significant impact on power usage. In some cases, four separate printers which would have been drawing power 24-hours a day have been replaced by one multi-functional device with advanced energy-saving modes to match usage patterns. As a result, while the full energy savings haven't been finalised, we expect them to be at least 75%.

Having a centralised view of the whole system also allows better siting of printers, with under or over used devices identified. It also allows detrimental usage patterns to be identified and remedied. In one office, for example, mobile engineers regularly printed large numbers of screen grabs to assist them when heading out on jobs. This was not only a very unproductive use of the engineers' time but screen grabs demanded large quantities of toner. By recognising this and developing a reporting tool that contained only the information required, engineers now need only print one A4 document and the cost of consumables is reduced.

THE SERVICE DIMENSION

By moving to a managed service, businesses are also able to introduce simplified supplier arrangements, where one supplier supplies all the technology and IT managers are free to monitor performance rather than micro-manage hardware and consumables.

Replacing old printers with a standard model also makes for greater simplicity both of maintenance and operation – meaning greater uptime and less time spent getting to grips with the idiosyncrasies of a new office's print set up.

GETTING BUY-IN

While transformation of our document management was primarily driven by economic criteria, it's the environmental dimension that has actually proved key to changing behaviour. Adopting more modern hardware and adding the service layer enabled the change, but it was only the commitment of individuals and teams – harnessed by raising awareness of the environmental benefits – that have helped the project realise its aims.

David Keeling, project sponsor, discusses the approach that has been taken:

“We were quite prescriptive about what devices we were going to have and where we were going to put them, as part of a balanced deployment to meet user and business needs. But we also communicated to the workforce what we were doing, why we were doing it, and what the benefits would be to the business. We've seen a mindset change around printing... In most offices in the past, you'd see a recycling bin next to the printer. People would print out a document, and then put it in the bin. People aren't printing as much: they're thinking first.”

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REF: 2741

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