

MPS Checklist



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At 4:45 pm on a Friday the printer breaks down. The report that is being held hostage halfway between the input paper tray and the output slot is due by 5pm. Predictably IT is wrapped up in another crisis and no amount of button pushing or restarting on your part will turn off the evil red blinking light. The frustration mounts and as the hands on the clock tick your panic mounts; until finally it chimes at exactly 5 pm: late, late, late, late, late.

This is a situation that you have probably been in before and will probably happen again if a protocol and support system is not found.

The ABCs of printing sound a bit more like **MPS: Managed Printing Services**. One of the most important things technology can do is to co ordinate each electronic device with another to make a unified fleet for the office.

It's extremely important then to have a reliable I.T. team who understands what your company needs to use its technology for, how you intend to expand your technology to meet growing corporate needs and who will be able to troubleshoot any problems that may arise.

As the devices become more complicated, but able to perform more functions, outsourcing for I.T. help may become necessary and with several benefits to be gained from consulting with an outside firm it may be the better choice for your company.

Take a Load Off

Outsourcing for your tech needs means that you free up in-office resources. It also means you can make a cut on some of your printer finances because I.T. management companies are able to get materials at a lower cost. Through careful research and discussions with your prospective I.T. organization it can also be valuable to decide how many management resources you want going towards end user application and infrastructure support. Some I.T. management companies recommend that 10 per cent-20 per cent of resources can be directed to high priority initiatives.

Making a Bankable Investment

With the right I.T. management company it is possible to save up to 40 per cent annually on printing services, materials and support. If one group is managing the I.T. functions in the office it eliminates the needs for employees to be their own tech watchdogs – something that can lead to duplicating orders, lost materials, and further tech difficulties as multiple people try to fix problems they are not familiar with. Delegating the management of your I.T. to a professional organization simplifies the whole process and can have huge savings potential for your company.



Staying in the Loop

Outsourcing simply means you have an enormous amount of access to industry experts. Though your office technology may be adequate for the company there may be a different product that could provide you with exceptional services. You may not know about this, but the IT companies do. Having a third party assess your office needs and equipment in place to serve those needs to see whether or not you are getting your money's worth is invaluable. They can provide a comprehensive analysis and will be able to recommend to you how, where and if you should upgrade any software or equipment.



Things to Consider

Before committing to an outsourced I.T. management company do your own in-house assessment of your company's administrative needs using this checklist:

1. How much valuable I.T. resource is being allocated to printer and printer network management and support, and can some of this time be re-allocated to higher priority activities?
2. Is the current end user service level acceptable, or can it be improved to better meet end user demands?
3. Are overall printer and imaging related costs - hardware, software, supplies, support - being accurately tracked and managed?
4. Are new and emerging printing and imaging technologies being leveraged to improve end user productivity and effectiveness?
5. Is printer and imaging device and network performance being closely tracked and monitored?
6. Are printing and imaging assets being effectively tracked and managed?
7. Does your organization deal with multiple providers for printing and imaging technology procurement, network design and implementation, support, and provisioning of supplies?
8. Is lack of capital budget preventing upgrades or enhancement of printer and imaging services?
9. Are there any third party software solutions that can enhance print and imaging services?
10. Does your organization support environmentally friendly business practices?



As well as assessing your needs, you must also consider the I.T. company's services and credentials in order to find a good fit. The checklist below offers some relevant questions to begin your evaluation:

- ✓ How long has the potential outsource partner been providing this type of service? Are they dedicated to printing and imaging network support, or is this just one aspect of their business?
- ✓ Can the potential outsourcing partner support the customer's existing environment, as well as provide access and support to new hardware and software solutions from multiple technology providers to best meet end user requirements?
- ✓ Can the potential outsource partner increase end user service levels, and do they offer Service Level Guarantees?
- ✓ Does the potential outsource partner provide coverage for all of North America, including remote office locations?
- ✓ Can the potential outsource partner manage and support all aspects of printer and imaging support and management?
 - ✓ Assess the current environment, future requirements, opportunities for cost reductions and improved service levels.
 - ✓ The expertise to recommend appropriate technology solutions, both software and hardware, regardless of the technology provider.
 - ✓ Design and implement effective printing and imaging networks.
 - ✓ Manage all aspects of printer fleet support – hardware and software service, end user support, provisioning of technology and supplies, on-site support with **Service Level Guarantees** for all North American locations.
 - ✓ Streamline printer fleet administration by providing one invoice for all printing and imaging hardware, software, services and supplies.
 - ✓ Track and manage all printer fleet assets.
- ✓ Will the potential outsource partner take responsibility for a tech transition plan?
- ✓ Can the potential outsource partner support an "evergreen" option that allows for new technologies to be rolled in without the need to incur capital costs?
- ✓ Will the potential outsource partner pro-actively manage the printing and imaging network, and provide customers with access to performance and tracking statistics?

Having these questions at the top of mind will help you to stay organized when you are not only thinking about outsourcing, but when you are vetting the different companies to find your perfect fit.

