Solutions Made Simple

Enhance the benefits of the MFP for business evolution

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From analog to digital to a sophisticated hub, the MFP continues to be a cornerstone product in the office technology dealer channel. While diversification comes in many flavors — adding product offerings for additional tools and services such as managed print and IT services, postage meters, water, production and document management — it also comes with the evolution of the MFP. Has your dealership put strategies into place to enhance the features and benefits of this important product?

Saving money and time and being more efficient have been incorporated into conversations before the MFP even became a connected device. As the MFP has evolved to have a panel that looks more like a smartphone with applications, the conversations around this "gateway or hub to internal communications" need to evolve for today's business needs and users. Conversations around the value of applications — those that give the ability to edit documents and route them to shared collaboration and document management platforms — are good places to start when you consider the life cycle of your mission-critical documents.

With security and efficiency being top of mind for most workers in businesses today, we need to make sure that our sales and service teams are up to speed on the tools and questions to ask that impact document security and printing to network infrastructures.

Document security questions can be as simple as asking if anyone printing is concerned with someone else seeing the information that is being printed and left sitting on an MFP's output tray. Document printing efficiency questions can be as simple as asking how often someone prints, only to find out the MFP is down and he (or she) must go back to his computer to print somewhere else.

Asking a customer if he "has had an 'IT health check' lately?" is another simple question that may prompt additional dialogue on the benefits of a safe network.

Four Categories to Focus on for Business Evolution

(1) Print Strategies: Manage Your Printed Output — According to an article published by Keypoint Intelligence,

the forecast for printing is stabilizing and slowly making its way back to pre-pandemic volumes. Keypoint states that organizations with more than 500 workers will end up seeing a 23% reduction in prints in the office. Organizations with 100 to 499 employees will see an 18% reduction, those with 20 to 99 employees are looking at a 14% reduction, and those with one to 20 employees will see 11% fewer pages.

The hybrid/remote workplace has clearly impacted printing throughout the world, especially in larger corporations, but we are all still printing documents. According to Google, the typical office worker prints 10,000 pages per year at an average cost of $725, or $60 per month. For a company with 60 employees, we are looking at 600,000 pages per year at an average cost of $43,500. Breaking this down monthly, we are looking at 50,000 pages per month with an average cost of $3,625. The bottom line is that the cost of printing is still one of the most uncaptured costs in businesses today.

Value-add MFP tools can help companies manage and track their printed output, providing the ability to have the print job securely "follow" the end user so he can print it at any networked device the moment he walks up to it.

Devices do not print — people print. Are your sales professionals asking customers and prospects if they have had a print output study lately? The print output study can help you develop a print strategy around rightsizing, optimizing and standardizing the fleet.

(2) Modernize Your Fax Workflow — In 2019, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a memorandum allowing companies to decommission copper wire phone

services as early as August 2022. This has caused businesses to experience unexpected cancellations or price increases through phone and internet providers.

Are your telephone lines plain and old? Are you still selling boards with your MFPs because "they always get a fax board"? If so, it is time to consider a modern fax solution.

Modern faxing capabilities provide more security, audit trails and less downtime than traditional fax boards with analog lines. Ask your service department to run a list of MFPs that have experienced fax service challenges and you will see the types of problems you can solve by moving them to a modern way to fax.

(3) A Smarter Way to Scan, Search and Store Mission-Critical Documents — Scanning from the MFP has evolved from basic scanning to a much more sophisticated approach to capturing information, acting on it and sending it somewhere to be stored.

The question to ask end users today is not about whether they are scanning, but what they are scanning, why they are scanning, who is touching these scanned documents and where they end up. Scanning to a shared drive is considered unstructured data. Over the years, I have seen that information on shared drives is often unorganized and duplicated with no standard naming conventions. This causes your operating system to be taxed and slowed when searching for documents.

Adding an advanced capture and storage tool to the MFP will help the scanning process become more efficient. These tools provide you with the benefits of full-function naming and indexing automation so your documents are more easily searchable within a central repository. Other benefits of utilizing a central repository are having the ability to access documents via the web, managing multiple versions of a document and setting up retention policies.

As you move from unstructured data on a shared drive to a central repository in the cloud, you start to develop a more organized storage methodology and can add this tool to complement your disaster recovery strategy.

Have you taken the time to assess your own current state when it comes to storing documents within your dealership? If not, this year might be the perfect time to consider change by automating the way you print, scan and save documents.

(4) Value-Add Administrative Tools for Everyone — Applications and admin tools are now available on most — if not all — MFPs (both A3 and A4). However, are your sales and service professionals up to speed on the benefits of these tools?

Having discussions about the benefits of security functions such as network port security, IP address filtering, encrypted communications, user authentication, user access restriction, hard disk drive and data encryption, data overwrite security systems, document security and device operation administrator features are ways you can differentiate your MFPs from your competitors'.

A tip for sales reps and service personnel: Pick one of these security functions each week and learn more about how it helps the customer. Then, develop a flyer that helps explain these features.

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Building a Solutions Strategy

Steps to consider when building a solutions strategy for your dealership include:

■ Look at how these tools are centered around the MFP — the gateway for internal communication.

■ Identify the categories such as print strategies, modernizing fax workflow, smart scanning to storage and value-add administrative tools.

■ Start with two to four solutions you want to get good at selling.

■ Get good at asking the discovery questions around these categories associated with the MFP.

■ Do not mention the name of a tool too soon — it is all about how that tool will solve a problem.

■ Learn about how the tool helps solve a simple business challenge.

■ Leverage the partnerships with your manufacturers for content.

■ Invest in presale knowledge sharing and post-sale support.

Solutions Solve Problems

Preparing to sell solutions is an educational process for everyone — from knowledge transfer to sales, pricing, ordering, implementing, billing and servicing with the objective of aligning with your customers' goals and objectives. Where is your dealership in this process today? ■

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