

The Hidden Costs of Printing

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Calls for the paperless office have been sounding since as far back as the 1970s, yet with the average employee using 10,000 sheets of paper a year,¹ it's clear that printing remains a core business function that's showing no sign of declining. However, that doesn't mean that the current model is working effectively. For many SMBs print spending has got out of hand. 52% of print decision makers have absolutely no idea how much they're spending on printing, and 44% of those that do are spending over £10,000 a year.² Clearly something needs to change.

This whitepaper looks at the ways you might unknowingly be wasting money on printing and provides expert tips on how you can cut down on costs and time.

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What a waste

For many the very idea of the paperless office is inherently tied up with reducing waste. Your employees are only human and all too often they're guilty of unnecessary printing, needless use of colour and high quality settings, and simply forgetting to pick up print jobs. In fact, the average employee leaves 600 pieces of paper at the printer every year.³ Even if you ignore the environmental repercussions, the costs alone suggest something needs to change.

Clearly training staff members to alter their printing behaviour should be your ultimate goal but there are a number of immediate changes you can make to directly limit waste. Print management solutions, such as Brother's PrintSmart Cost Control, let you track what, when and how much each employee prints, allowing you to identify departments and individuals who are printing excessively and introduce training and policies to control their activities. If necessary you can even place quotas on teams to physically limit their output.

Want to put an end to abandoned print jobs? Introduce pull printing. Users will have to actively release print jobs at the device, helping to eradicate lost and forgotten output. But that's not the only thing employees forget.

If you're also looking to cut back on colour, single-page and high resolution printing, administrators can introduce rules that change the default options to more economical settings. All in all you can shave 10% to 30% off your print budget by actively managing printing behaviour.⁴

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If it isn't broken...

You might think that holding onto your old printers instead of opting for an upgrade is a smart money-saving move, but those savings will quickly evaporate if you have to pay for frequent repairs. And that doesn't even take into account the business downtime this can inflict. However, on the other hand investing in a new printer only to have it break weeks later could see you even worse off. Businesses are so concerned by printer downtime that as many as 29% sit on a stock of replacement printers just in case a printer breaks down⁵ So is there another option?

Many businesses are instead choosing to partner with a Managed Print Service provider. With this as-a-service model you'll be leasing top-of-the-line products and receiving continuous maintenance and support, not to mention guidance on proper printer usage. As servicing comes part and parcel with the package, you can easily manage your print budget and avoid any nasty repair or replacement surprises and the downtime that comes with them.

You haven't got the energy

Downtime and repairs aren't the only costs legacy devices can leave you with; you could be throwing money down the drain in higher energy consumption. Modern devices are on average 35.6% more efficient than their predecessors⁶ and an MPS provider can ensure that your devices are continuously updated as new models are released. They'll also take the pain out of your green commitments by recycling your cartridges and obsolete devices.

Traditionally printers consume 30% to 40% of their peak power demand when idling.⁷ However, newer models of MFPs utilise low-energy standby modes, which draw close to no power when the device isn't being used. They work by charging a capacitor when the printer is active and can save up to 12p an hour per printer.⁸

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Printers, printers everywhere

The age of your devices isn't the only reason they might be costing you more in energy. Businesses could find that they're spending money maintaining and replacing print devices that simply aren't being used. They might be purchasing a variety of devices for tasks that could be completed by a single MFP, or alternatively, buying complicated multi-function machines that are surplus to requirement.

When you partner with an MPS provider for the first time, they can assess your deployment via a thorough print audit. Print experts will calculate the true cost of an ad-hoc approach and identify how to more efficiently deploy your fleet based on usage and need. Typically MPS providers can reduce a company's device fleet by 25% to 60%.⁹ But that's not where it ends. By tracking usage, with Brother's PrintSmart Cost Control, you can see how behaviour changes over time and manoeuvre your fleet accordingly.

MPS providers can reduce a company's device fleet by up to 60%.

Keeping it consistent

Cutting down on the number of printers you have deployed isn't the only way to streamline your fleet. Consolidating your hardware choices can deliver a number of benefits. Different printer models mean different cartridges, and ordering from a number of different sources is not only time consuming but far more expensive.

With an MPS model your entire fleet will be standardised, and supplies will be automatically ordered and delivered as and when you need them. This way you will not only enjoy economies of scale but no longer have stockpiles of unused inventory lying around. If you do need to make changes you'll be given access to a simple web portal to manage all of your ordering needs. With expert support available whenever you need it, you can take the hassle out of printer procurement.

You deserve better

You might have already made the move to an MPS model but is your current partner delivering what you really want? Are problems being resolved in a timely fashion and are fresh supplies arriving when they're needed? Do their devices have the functionality you require and are they secure against potential threats? Have they created a personalised offering that doesn't push products onto you that you don't really need? If the answer to any of these questions is no, then you might experience a far superior return on investment by switching supplier. Managed Print Services is about more than just providing hardware and consumables; your provider should be partnering with you to deliver a tailored package that simplifies your print environment, contributes expert advice and provides continuous support. Brother has a long history of delivering an industry-leading service with over 90% of their customers renewing their MPS contracts.

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Conclusion

Print will continue to be an integral part of your business for years to come but it doesn't need to be a drain on your finances. Managed Print Services can drive down costs on a number of fronts, but above all there's one massive saving you can make by partnering with an MPS provider – your time. The average IT department spends one-third of its time dealing with office printing;¹⁰ win it back by moving to the right MPS model.

If you think you might be spending too much on your print fleet, try out [Brother's cost calculator](#) and reveal the savings you could make.

1 <https://www.greenbiz.com/news/2010/08/23/uk-office-workers-addicted-paper>

2 <http://www.bmmagazine.co.uk/tech/survey-reveals-uk-businesses-do-not-have-control-of-print-costs/>

3 <https://www.newmanbs.co.uk/insights/article/how-much-paper-does-your-organisation-waste>

4 https://www.cookmedical.com/healthcare-business-solutions/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2014/04/Gartner_cost-cutting-for-office-printing.pdf

5 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/ready-and-enabled/cost-control/>

6 <https://www.therecycler.com/posts/oems-cut-printer-energy-consumption-in-europe/>

7 https://www.carbontrust.com/media/13113/ctv005_office_equipment.pdf

8 <https://www.brotherspark.co.uk/cost-inefficient-it/>

9 ICT Outlook — Recovering Into a New World — John Gantz, Chief Research Officer (IDC #DR2010_GS2_JG)

10 <https://www.greenbiz.com/news/2010/08/23/uk-office-workers-addicted-paper>