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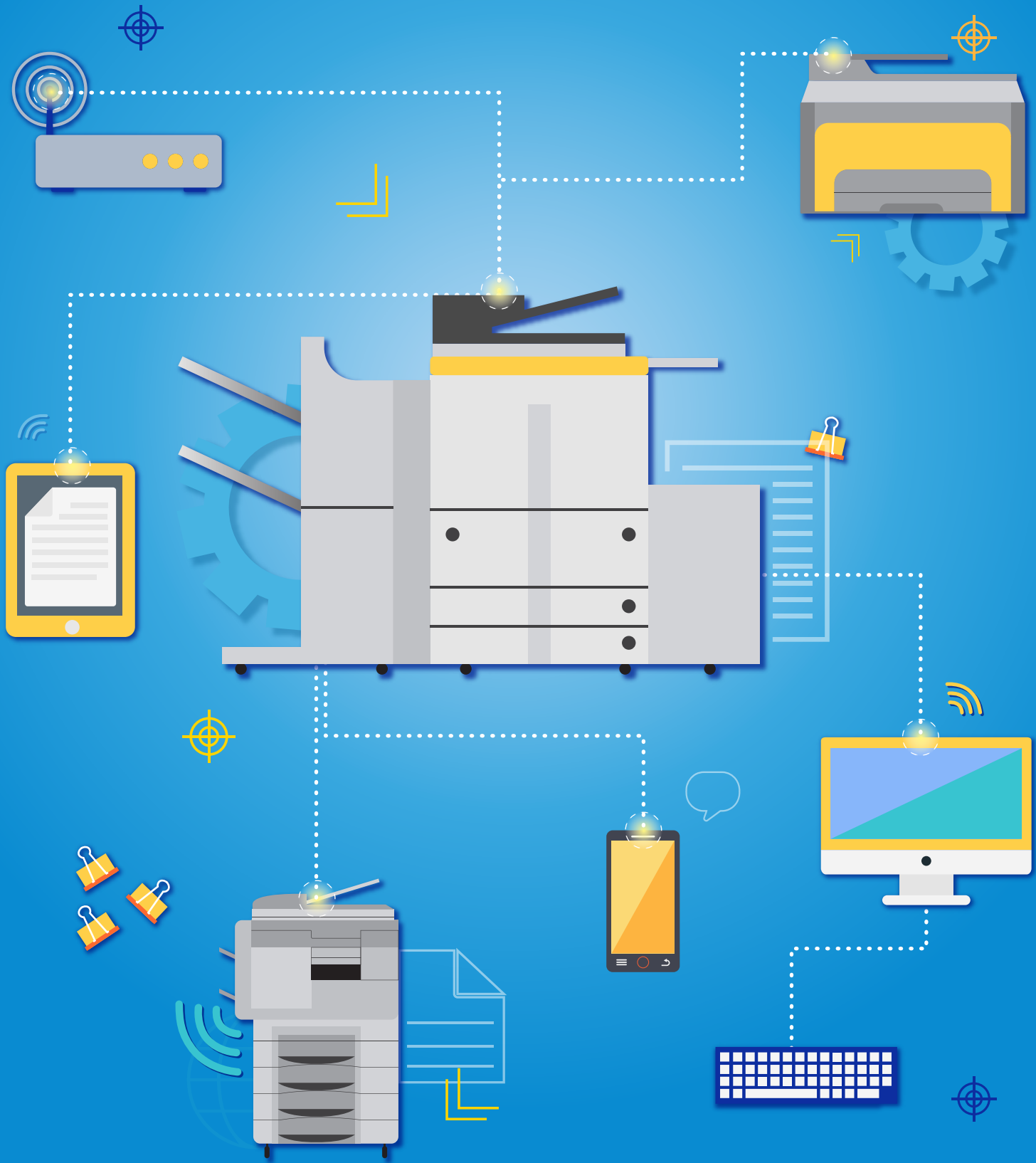
Our Guide to Controlling Print Costs



Contents

Introduction 3

Step 1: Rethink your print infrastructure 4

Step 2: Monitor and control your print environment 5

Step 3: Implement a print policy 7

The three hidden value-adds of professional print services 8

Print keeps evolving – and so should you 9

Contact 10

Introduction

Do you know how much you spend on printing? Many small businesses don't have the visibility into their print operations required to answer that question – and lack of visibility often means you also have limited control over how printing is used in your business.

That's why so many small businesses struggle with unexpected printing costs, unnecessary printer downtime, and a lack of consumables when you need them most.

Partnering with print services experts can solve these problems for you – and more. For starters, there's no need to order toner, no long waits for repairs, and no worrying about how much you're spending on printing.

This includes proactive maintenance with full service and support of your printer devices, and can lower your printing costs by up to 25 per cent.

But it's not just about reducing your print spend. A print service adds value to your business by working with you to improve productivity, maximise uptime and give you access to the latest printing technology without the need for a large upfront capital expenditure.

In this eBook, we'll explain how we achieve this through a three-step approach that will help you change your mindset with regards to your current print infrastructure, implement a print policy, and use data analytics to monitor and evolve your print environment.

STEP 1:
Rethink your print infrastructure

If you're like most small businesses, you've likely put up with print inefficiencies for years, whether that's a malfunction, a toner order that has yet to arrive, or something as simple as a paper jam. These problems can put entire departments out of action, causing frustration and costing you money.

From our experience, one of the most common causes of such problems is simply having the wrong print infrastructure for your requirements, whether that's devices that are too small to meet a department's print volumes (and needing constant replenishment of consumables), large devices with high costs that you hardly use and don't need, or outdated devices that are costly to run and don't have the functions your business needs.

Having the correct devices for your business is the first step to gaining control of your printers, as this has a domino effect and can prevent many other problems and inefficiencies.

Using a consultative service approach

Selecting the right devices is a costly, time-consuming and error-prone process. This is where experienced print consultants can be highly cost effective. They can provide a service to periodically assess and evaluate your organisation's printing needs and recommend the best devices to meet them.

Devices are demonstrated or trialed, so there is a transparency and certainty in the purchase decision. This approach removes much of the guesswork and time required to select the right device(s).

Consultants can also apply strategies like balanced deployment, so that devices provide the functions each user group requires and are physically located right where they're needed. This approach is proven to significantly improve workplace productivity because it puts the right devices in the right places.

CONSULTANTS CAN APPLY STRATEGIES TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY

STEP 2:
Monitor and control your print environment

The modern business world is all about data, and the ability to see your print usage and status of your devices will help you understand how to control your printing costs and forecast service needs to maximise uptime.

Consultants can give you this visibility by showing you reports via print audits and control usage with print management software, so you can track and assess your monthly or weekly spend. For example, these reports can give you a breakdown of:

the total amount of printing and scanning on a periodical basis

the total costs on a periodical basis

number of consumables used per week/month

machines requiring upcoming maintenance

By having these insights, you can address preventable costs by controlling unnecessary usage, budget accurately and only pay for what you are using.

UNDERSTAND THE TRUE IMPACT OF PRINTERS BY GETTING HELP TO UNCOVER THE HIDDEN COSTS

STEP 2:
Monitor and control your print environment

Real time data means real time service

Addressing the downtime problem is one of the biggest benefits of monitoring your print environment. Using print management software tools, your service provider can prevent downtime by being able to see any device that needs attention. Whether that's a toner that is running low and needs to be replaced, a part that's wearing out or any other foreseeable faults, your service provider can address these issues ahead of time, before they become a costly and productivity-sapping problem.

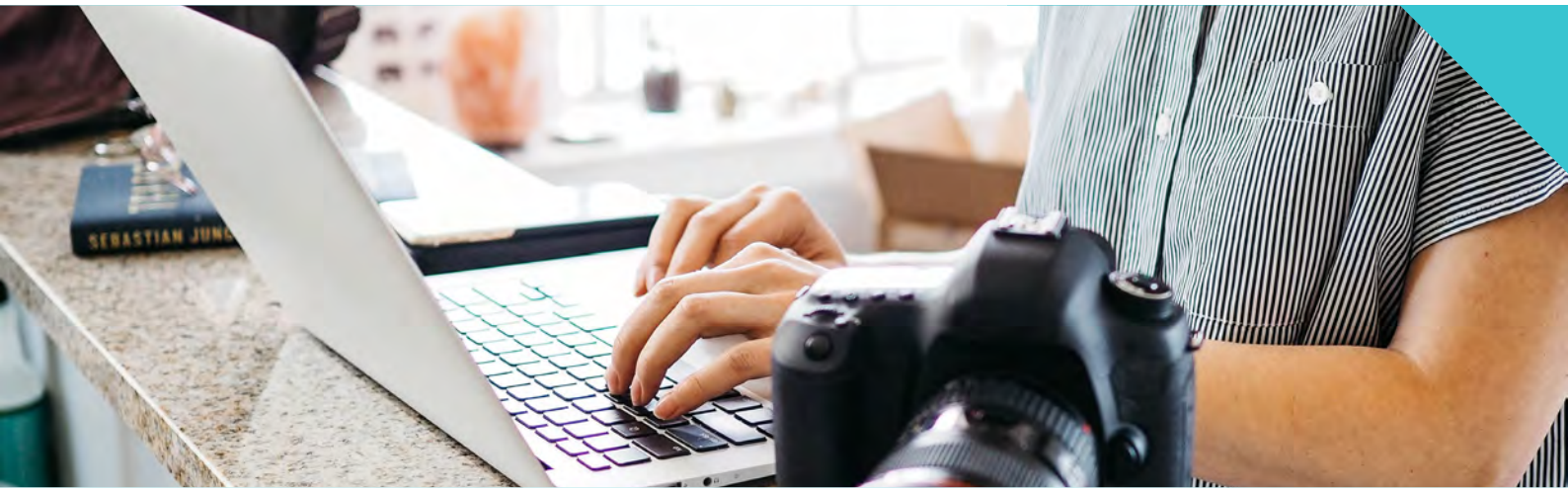
This means devices are available when they're needed because they're being monitored and maintained by your service provider.

STEP 3:
Implement a print policy

Many small businesses have also fallen prey to a ‘siloed’ management structure when it comes to their print services. That means that each department is left to manage its own print usage, with no organisation-wide print policy or consistent print strategy in place.

This problem can be eliminated by implementing an organisation-wide print policy. This involves analysing print usage data to reveal process inconsistencies between departments and identifying any employee groups who are not adhering to your print policy. This, in turn, allows you to identify any inefficient behaviour patterns that may be putting undue pressure on your print budget.

For example, a common policy is for all printers to have two-sided (duplex) printing as the default configuration, which can reduce paper usage by up to 50 per cent.



Automate for efficiency

Analysing the print data of specific departments will also give you valuable insights into the type of documents and the volumes they are printing. That is, high print volumes often suggest an over-reliance on manual processes. Investigating why print output is higher in certain areas of your business than others can help you understand where you may need to optimise workflows. You may benefit from a document management solution, for example, alongside your print management solution.

Automating relevant workflows can significantly reduce your print volumes – and the associated costs. According to research by Keypoint Intelligence, businesses that are using print management software reduces print volume by an average of 28 per cent.

KEYPOINT INTELLIGENCE, 2018, BROTHER AU SOLUTIONS STRATEGIC RESEARCH.

The three hidden value-adds of professional print services

In addition to reducing print costs, boosting productivity and limiting the impact of service interruptions, having a print consultant take care of your printing needs can also add value to your business in three other ways you may not have considered: security, mobility and environmental impact.

Security

Networked print hardware can fall victim to the same security threats as other internet-connected devices. Data leaks are of particular concern for networked print systems – a Quocirca survey* revealed that 70 per cent of respondents had suffered one or more accidental printing-related data breaches. Partnering with a print services expert who can set up an authorisation system will go a long way to mitigating this risk by preventing unauthorised users from accessing your print network.

Mobility

The same Quocirca survey also revealed that 60 per cent of organisations have employees who want to print from their mobile devices. A print services expert can set up a range of cloud printing solutions that allow workers to print from any device and any location with an internet connection. This is particularly valuable for small businesses that employ mobile sales representatives, virtual assistants or other off-site staff.

Environmental impact

Partnering with a print services expert can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of your business. They'll also often help with the selection of energy-efficient print devices, and help you arrange the proper disposal or recycling of old hardware and consumables.

60%

OF ORGANISATIONS HAVE EMPLOYEES WHO WANT TO PRINT FROM THEIR MOBILE DEVICES

*QUOCIRCA, 2012, VENDOR LANDSCAPE: MANAGED PRINT SERVICES.

Print keeps evolving – and so should you

Your print operations should not just be a cost centre that you throw money at and hope for the best. Rather, with the right help an efficient print infrastructure will increase productivity while saving you money.

Implementing a company-wide print policy will drive productivity gains and cost savings across your organisation. And monitoring your print usage and status data will reveal where and how you can continue to evolve your print infrastructure to best service the developing needs of your small business.

Brother's consultative service approach is key to transforming your money-hungry print fleet into tailored solutions that will better serve everyone in your organisation. Let the experts take care of your printers, so you can focus on your business.

Call now for a no-obligation discussion about how Brother can help add value to your small business with professional print services, or **register online** for a free, no-obligation print audit and learn how you can optimise your print services.

Email: **corporatesales@brother.com.au**

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