

# Manage the Business, Not the Printer

*Why Augmenting Your Centralized Color Multifunction Device [MFD]  
with Distributed Color Inkjet Printers Makes Good Business Sense*



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## Executive Summary

Despite the digitization of business today, most organizations continue to rely on paper hard copies to get the job done. A great deal of printed information drives the fundamental workflow and success of nearly any business, especially in high-impact, high-touch areas like Marketing and Sales; Planning, Engineering and Design; and Human Resources. As a result, companies continue to look for ways to manage the ongoing cost, workflow and efficiency of using printed documents.

A new class of business inkjet printers has emerged as a viable alternative to color laser printers.

Managed Print Services [MPS], Enterprise Output Management [EOM] and Document Strategy Design have all emerged to address the need to optimize the performance and expense of workgroup printers and copiers. These strategies focus primarily on cost control, especially when it comes to color printing. One common way that companies have controlled cost has been through the centralization of color printing. Rather than continue to support distributed laser workgroup printers and copiers, organizations instead leverage the economies of scale found in centralized multifunction machines and copy centers.

Organizations are now realizing that centralizing color office printing can mask hidden costs and inefficiencies. With a fresh look at centralized, color, and workgroup printing, it becomes clear that adopting a new hybrid printing solution makes good business sense. As a result, many are opting for a new, more balanced approach that leverages advances in inkjet printing technology and provides a cost-effective, beneficial alternative to centralized color workgroup laser printers.

*Distributed color printing is a sound way to augment a centralized color MFD . . . and business-class inkjets can be a better option than printing with costly color lasers.*

## The Downside of Centralization

For years, organizations have worked to control the costs of color workgroup printing. Click charges, overages, toner costs, maintenance expense and downtime are all on the list of costly printing concerns that are familiar to any IT department. In order to rein in expense and inefficiency, many organizations work to drive traffic away from departmental and personal printers to a centralized device or copy center where both cost and performance can be more easily managed.

This centralized approach has a number of shortcomings that are often overlooked. For example, a great deal of *productivity* can be lost as a result of the workflow interruptions among knowledge workers who must "commute" back and forth to get their documents. Critical communications often lose *impact* as well,

**A centralized printing approach  
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since users typically look to avoid the hassle of printing on the “good” machine and make do with whatever monochrome printer or copier is available nearby. And *control* over the process is compromised if documents are created outside the IT network environment where access, security and privacy are less easily monitored and controlled.

## ■ Productivity Loss

*Are people taking valuable time away from their activities in order to retrieve their printouts from the centralized MFD? “Print job productivity loss” has a very real, yet often overlooked, impact to company performance. According to professors at the University of California, Irvine, it takes over 23 minutes for workers to get back to tasks after interruptions<sup>1</sup>. That equates to nearly half an hour of lost productivity for every print job. Multiply that productivity loss across every employee, every time there’s a need to print, and you can see the dramatic loss of productivity that centralized printing actually causes every day.*

The interruptions and time spent waiting for printouts and returning to work takes a costly toll on productivity. The questions become: How long does it take each day for your knowledge workers to walk to and from the printer? How long do they wait for their documents to come up in the print queue? In a study conducted with 1,250 corporate IT managers<sup>2</sup>, 48% report a common frustration among employees who need to leave their desks to retrieve print jobs and/or wait in printer queues for documents that are needed right away.

## ■ Impact Loss

*Do people print in monochrome when printing in color would be better? It happens often, and can cause a real loss of impact to critical documents and communications. When busy knowledge workers find it necessary to interrupt their workflow to print something in color, it’s much more likely they will elect to print in black and white instead, especially when quick response is essential. This can result in a very real impact loss, especially in fast-paced functions like sales, marketing and support. Centralized color printing slows the overall process and encourages increased reliance on more readily available monochrome workgroup printers—which may be good for the budget, but sub-optimal in terms of the impact loss of the documents themselves.*

Printing in color versus monochrome makes a real difference. Marketers have long recognized the positive impact of color to boost customer engagement and brand recognition, but other uses of color likewise improve results. Nearly 30 years ago, the University of Minnesota concluded from its research that use of color improves

the efficacy of communications<sup>3</sup>. The study measured the effectiveness of visuals in presentations to persuade an audience. The researchers found three benefits to using color versus monochrome:

1. Color is more persuasive
2. It enhances comprehension
3. Message retention is better

It is clear that color has a genuine impact on communications and process.

Certain organizational functions have an ongoing need to print color documents and will continue to be high-page-volume “consumers”: Marketing, Sales, Engineering, Design and Human Resources. In addition, certain verticals likewise generate higher color page volumes: Healthcare, Manufacturing, Financial Services and Real Estate are examples. These natural functional workflows need to be supported, not subverted.

## ■ Compromised Security and Control

*Despite the digitization of business today, the fact is that most organizations continue to rely on a lot of paper to get the job done.*

*Do sensitive, confidential or proprietary printouts sit around waiting to be picked up? Using a centralized MFD can result in compromised security and control, and the potential impact to privacy, confidentiality and regulatory compliance can be another unnoticed risk. Unless companies have installed automatic software solutions to manage user authentication, security and document control, the risk of confidential or sensitive information being retrieved by mistake, stolen or lost is very real. Print jobs that are not picked up at all leave potentially sensitive financial, medical or proprietary information completely unprotected and uncontrolled.*

Document theft or prying is a justifiable concern. Any person can walk over to a printer and pick up a document that belongs to someone else unless controls have been put in place to help mitigate such risks, such as password-protected printing.

***High-performance and affordable inkjet color printing can allow an organization to more effectively manage its business, and not the printer.***

## Is it Time for Business Inkjets?

One alternative to using a centralized color approach is to deploy color laser printers in workgroups that have a need for greater access to color printing. But many organizations find that while this looks like a good strategy on paper, the outcome is more expensive than they anticipated. One reason for this is that high-speed color lasers often have correspondingly high recommended duty

cycles—15,000 pages monthly or more—and may be overkill if the actual page volume is lower. Most departments print well below that level. Indeed, a recent study conducted by InfoTrends found that the average page volume on color laser printers and MFPs is less than 5,000 pages per month<sup>4</sup>.

## ■ New Approach with Inkjet

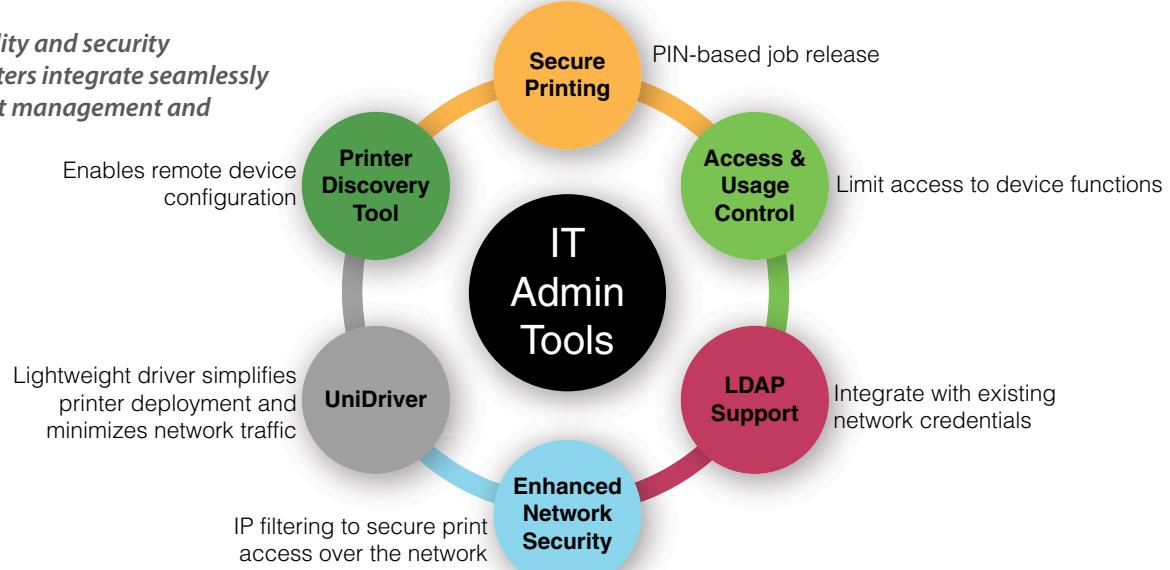
Although IT equipment decision-makers tend to think of inkjet printing as primarily for use in home or small offices, a new class of business inkjet printers has emerged that makes inkjet technology a viable alternative to color laser printers in office settings. These advanced business inkjet printers are fast and reliable enough to keep pace with the workload. They also are enabled with the IT tools and solutions that allow them to be securely managed on the network, just like other intelligent devices.

## ■ Advanced Administrative Control

Administrative utilities and tools considered standard with networked printing devices are also available with business-class inkjets {Figure 1}. IT administrators can remotely manage printing resources and configure a fleet of inkjet printers for seamless integration into an existing network, including securely assigning access to individual users. Availability of a Universal Printer Driver further simplifies printer deployment among multiple network users. Once networked and configured, these business inkjets can report their page usage and other data for managed print service applications.

**Figure 1 Standard IT Tools for Connected Printing Devices**

*With built-in configurability and security controls, distributed printers integrate seamlessly into networks for efficient management and deployment.*



*It is a myth that laser printers are less expensive to operate than inkjet printers.*

## ■ Cost-Effective Alternative to Laser

It is a myth that laser printers are less expensive to operate than inkjet printers. In fact, the latest class of business inkjet printers from Epson (and others) cost 40 to 80% less to print than similar-performance color laser printers<sup>5</sup>. And, the printed page yield from business-class color inkjet printer consumables rivals or exceeds the toner page yield of many color lasers—even up to 75,000 pages from a single set of inks with Epson’s Replaceable Ink Pack System<sup>6</sup> {Figure 2}. Couple this with the lower running cost of printing color documents from an inkjet versus laser printer, and the value advantage of inkjets becomes clear.

## ■ Big Capabilities, Small Footprint



**Figure 2 Less Intervention, Higher Page Yield**

*Easy access and less frequent replacement of high-yield ink supplies are characteristic of Epson’s business-class network printers.*

Another factor to consider is the physical size of the device. Business inkjets have a smaller footprint than MFDs, so they more easily fit into modern office environments. Never intended to replace the central copier, they provide a convenient supplemental printing solution for those workgroups that routinely print color documents as part of their typical workflow. A multifunction model can provide added convenience and productivity, with a built-in scanner to capture digital images for paperless content management applications. If an automatic duplexer is included—as it is with Epson network models—then enabling two-sided printing can also help conserve resources by using less paper.

## Moving Forward—Balanced Deployment

*A balanced deployment of distributed color business inkjet printers working alongside centralized MFDs can deliver significant cost and time savings.*

Given the need for ever greater productivity and cost control, more and more organizations are finding that augmenting centralized color MFDs with distributed color inkjet printers makes good business sense. In using a balanced deployment of color printing—workgroup inkjets as well as centralized MFDs—organizations avoid inherent productivity loss and workflow interruptions. The impact of color on critical documents and communication is restored through the more affordable availability of departmental color printing. Control of critical documents and information is improved as well. Inkjet printing technology has evolved to become a viable business alternative: low cost, high quality, plus a great deal of visibility and control.

*How do you move forward?* Carefully consider which color printing combinations best suit your workforce. Work to align your resources with business process improvements and cost-control measures that can have a measurable and sustained impact. And, look for providers and partners with the right mix of expertise, vision and capabilities that will allow you to make the most of color printing in your organization.

## Notes

1. Worker, Interrupted: The Cost of Task Switching. Kermit Pattison, University of California, Irvine. *Fast Company*, July 28, 2008.
2. Coleman Parkes Research, Business Trends and Issues Study {underwritten by Epson}, 2014.
3. University of Minnesota, Management Information Systems Research Center, School of Management. "Persuasion and the Role of Visual Presentation Support: The UM/3M Study," by Douglas R. Vogel, Gary W. Dickson & John A. Lehman, June 1986.
4. Office Vertical Market Opportunity Analysis by Core Based Statistical Area (U.S), McNulty and Reardon. InfoTrends, 2013.
5. Comparing Epson's A4 5000 Series cartridge and Replaceable Ink Pack System models and A3 8000 Series cartridge and Replaceable Ink Pack system models with similarly-featured color A4 and A3 laser printers priced \$1999 (USD) or less, as of 2015. Calculation based on continuous printing with highest-capacity cartridges or ink packs. Actual savings will vary based on print task and use conditions.
6. Replacement ink pack yields are based on testing with ISO/IEC 24712 patterns with Epson's methodology in default mode, printing continuously. Yields may vary considerably for reasons that include images printed, print settings, temperature and humidity. Yields may be lower when printing infrequently or predominantly with one ink color. All ink colors are used for printing and printer maintenance. For print quality, part of the ink from the included cartridges or ink packs is used for printer start up and a variable amount of ink remains in the ink pack after the "replace ink pack" signal.

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