Case study

Media General

HP MPS solution simplifies multi-location print management

Industry
Broadcasting

Objective
- Gain control over print environment in multi-location company
- Reduce printing costs through centralized management
- Remove print management duties from local stations

Approach
Deploy HP Managed Print Services

IT matters
- Centralized software remotely monitors networked HP printers to generate toner alerts and collect data on print usage

Business matters
- Centralized management and purchasing streamlines costs, adds efficiencies
- Toner alerts ensure timely supplies ordering and delivery
- Accurate statistics on print usage enables ongoing optimization of the print fleet

"We immediately found that HP MPS was more responsive in managing our whole print environment. For the first time, we have reliable data on printing. We know print volume by printer and how much we're spending. The reporting is amazing."

– Randy Santos, director of Infrastructure Services, Media General

Media General is one of the nation's largest connected-screen media companies that operates or services 71 television stations in 48 markets. When the IT team decided decentralized print management wasn't working, it took control: first by refreshing the printer fleet, then by implementing a Managed Print Services solution. When the initial attempt at MPS came up woefully short, the New York regional office turned to an HP MPS solution that now saves the company time and money, and simplifies print management at their stations across the country.

Like many media companies, Media General acquired its television stations over time. Each station had local management in place, and among the things it managed locally was printing. But eventually, it became clear that the company would benefit from centralized print management.

"Business managers and IT engineers at each station would order devices, supplies and service on their own," explains Randy Santos, director of Infrastructure Services "There was really no plan, and it showed."

Dated devices from numerous suppliers were spread across the stations. They had become expensive to maintain and expensive to supply.

Left to their own resources, employees were reactively managing supplies. For instance, it was a common practice to have an employee run out to a local office supply store to purchase toner at retail prices. To compensate, some stations began stocking toner proactively. But a sincere effort to help solve the disruption soon resulted in extra purchases, cabinets of cartridges and surplus toner that was never used.

"We had no way to monitor anything. We had no idea how much printing was being done, or how much it was costing us," recalls Santos.

HP targeted refresh

Santos turned to the printing experts at HP to make recommendations for refreshing the printer fleet. "HP sat down with us, went site-to-site and worked up printer maps of each station," Santos recalls. It turns out that some of the existing printers were more than a decade old.

The station staff talked with HP experts about their printing needs and gave their best guess of printing volumes. Based on that information, HP gave Santos a recommendation of specific printers for each location. The company standardized on just a few printer models to simplify fleet management and chose networked HP printers that could be monitored remotely.

It also consolidated the fleet to achieve economies of scale. "Where we might have had three or four smaller printers in the past, we consolidated into two larger HP LaserJet 9050 printers, or a 9050 and a LaserJet M603. Often there was a 2:1 consolidation as part of the refresh," Santos explains. "Those two models became the workhorses of our fleet. They're high volume, highly efficient printers."

Centralized management

In addition to the refresh, Santos wanted to centralize print management. An early experience at one station with a non-HP vendor had resulted in frustration. As a result, Santos also looked to HP MPS to deliver on his centralized management goals.

"HP monitors toner levels using Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) and a data collection agent, which in turn sends us an alert three or four days in advance of when we'll need more. HP ships toner directly to the location of the specific person responsible for that printer."

– Randy Santos, director of Infrastructure Services, Media General

"We wanted HP MPS because we needed control over the printing environment, the supplies replacement, and the cost efficiency," Santos explains. "We also wanted to remove management duties from local stations, so instead of driving to a store or buying toner online at retail prices, we would realize the benefits of company-wide contract pricing."

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> – Randy Santos, director of Infrastructure Services, Media General

The company initially rolled out HP MPS with two stations. "We immediately found HP MPS was more responsive in managing our whole print environment," Santos says. "Toner delivery is better. Billing is better. And the reporting is amazing."

To monitor print volume, HP MPS is deployed with a data collection agent with a centralized server-based software solution that remotely collects meter readings on each networked HP printer. It also enables toner alerts.

HP monitors toner levels and sends an alert three or four days in advance of when it will be needed. HP then ships the toner directly to the location of the specific person responsible for that printer. "We no longer run out of toner, and we're not left with a huge inventory of toner we can't use," Santos explains. "It's a perfect balance."

The data collection tool also helps generate the detailed quarterly business reports for Santos. "For the first time we have reliable data on how much we're printing and where. We know print volume by printer and how much we're spending."

The quarterly business reports also make it clear when a device is either over- or underutilized. The report data enables Santos and the HP MPS team to fine-tune the printer deployments at each station. "HP tells us when we can save money by moving printers, which is very helpful. The reports provide the information, and then we can take action."

Customer at a glance

Hardware
- HP LaserJet 9050 printers
- HP LaserJet Enterprise 600 M603 printers

Software
- MPS data collection software

HP services
- HP Managed Print Services

Building on success

Following the initial success of the HP MPS solution, the company expanded the program to include a growing number of its stations.

Many of the stations take advantage of hardware support as well. And for stations that continue to have multiple-vendor printers or copiers on-site, the HP MPS team can service them as well. As a result, those stations will have only one number to call for supplies, service and support.

Some stations retain independence for their printing needs, but whenever possible, new stations are added to the program. "Our new HP printers are fast and reliable, and now we've incorporated supplies management," Santos explains.

The individual stations confirm the MPS program's success. "The proof is that the IT engineers from stations where we've deployed HP MPS say it's a great solution. It's simple for them. And it saves everyone time and money."

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