Toronto Children's Services Division

SUMMARY

Toronto CSD purchased and installed new Lexmark multifunction printers for each of its daycare centres and regional offices for about the same total outlay as one year of its former five-year copier lease.

Toronto Children's Services Division cuts printing costs with Lexmark multifunction printer solution

The Organization

The City of Toronto's Children's Services Division manages the city's highly-regarded childcare system. In partnership with the community, the division promotes equitable access to high-quality care for children and support for families and caregivers. Of the 938 childcare centres and 21 home childcare agencies currently licensed, Canada's largest city directly operates 58, with another 371 centres located in elementary schools. The network provides care services to more than 56,000 Toronto children under the age of 10.

The Challenge

As far back as 2001, The City of Toronto Children's Services Division (CSD) had consolidated its single-function printers, copiers, fax machines, and scanners into a fleet of multifunction printers (MFPs) that deliver those capabilities in a single networked unit. The MFPs simplify workflow, reclaim desktop space, reduce electricity use, cut down on the variety of toner cartridges and other consumables that need to be stocked, and allow analog phone lines to be shut down.

The MFPs worked well, according to Vito Accardo, IT Manager for Toronto's Children's Services Division, but a problem loomed. "Those MFPs were on a five-year lease, and that contract was coming to an end," he said. In those intervening years, the city's policy toward technology acquisition had changed. Leases were out. "We had to purchase all devices instead," he said.

With the lease set to expire, a decision point arose that afforded CSD an opportunity to refresh its aging fleet and look at different vendors and dozens of advancements in output management, electronic document imaging and workflow. The goal for Accardo's team – at the outset – was simply to refresh its output fleet without interrupting worker productivity, while simultaneously reducing costs and total cost of ownership.

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> – Vito Accardo
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Accardo's team knew something else: their new MFP platform would provide substantially greater capability for significantly fewer dollars.

The Solution

After analyzing proposals from several vendors along with the results of hands-on field tests of several models, CSD chose to deploy MFP technology from Lexmark in its 58 city-operated daycare centres and six citywide regional offices. "We were impressed by the Lexmark products," said Accardo. "The Lexmark MFPs were physically more compact and our analysis showed them to be the most cost-effective solution."

Removal of the old units and installation of an all-Lexmark MFP fleet was completed in just one month. Of the transition, Accardo said, "We had no training issues – none."

CSD selected two different Lexmark MFP models from the same Lexmark product family to meet higher volume needs at its offices and more modest ones at the daycare centres. Both MFP models use the same toner cartridge, which simplifies consumables management. The models also feature the Lexmark eTask™ interface, a vivid colour touchscreen operator panel that guides users in performing tasks without the need for training. The eTask panel is easily customized and fully adjustable to match the individual users' optimal viewing angle. When used with Lexmark Document Distributor software, the eTask interface allows complicated business processes to be initiated with a single finger tap. CSD developed a custom icon and workflow to scan essential paper documents, such as children's birth certificates. The legally mandated documents are stored in secured electronic format for quick retrieval, providing instant access to any authenticated CSD employee while eliminating the drawbacks associated with storing paper copies.

Since implementation, Accardo's team has developed several new workflow applications. In one notable example, the MFPs print bubble sheets, nearly identical to the multiple-choice sheets used by many school systems to administer student exams. The sheets, designed using Remark Office OMR® software, are used by independent consultants who perform onsite inspections to survey conditions and regulatory compliance. The consultants load the completed sheets into the document feeder and tap a custom icon labeled "criteria scans" on the eTask panel of any MFP. The sheet is scanned and interpreted by the Remark Office OMR application and uploaded to CSD's Oracle® database.

The Results

For about the same capital outlay as one year of its expired five-year lease, Toronto CSD was able to purchase and install new Lexmark MFPs

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for each of its daycare centres and regional offices. With a portion of the savings, CSD opted for a three-year extended maintenance agreement from Lexmark. "Over a five-year lifespan for these Lexmark MFPs, the only incremental cost to us is the extended warranty," said Accardo.

Accardo says product reliability remains consistently high, with routine support provided by an in-house technical staff and onsite service handled by Lexmark-certified field engineers. "Even though we purchased a five-year warranty, I expect to get well over five years of service from these devices," Accardo said.

Providing world-class care for the children of a world-class city will always be the primary mission of the Toronto's Children's Services Division. And the savings achieved by switching to Lexmark output technology is helping to support that mission every day.

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