

Applegreen selects Lexmark and IPS for scalable device management solutions and infrastructure

Applegreen PLC is a major petrol forecourt retailer in the Republic of Ireland, UK and USA. In recent years, Applegreen has enjoyed rapid expansion in the number of retail forecourt sites, and today employs more than 3,000 staff as Ireland's largest Irish independent forecourt retailer.

But with the company's significant growth, managing these distributed locations' print and document processes became increasingly challenging. Costs were increasing and supporting these sites was becoming much more difficult.

With no centralised print management solutions, the company turned to IPS Limited in partnership with Lexmark. Together they designed a scalable, centralised print management infrastructure across 255 sites, standardising devices, while also enabling remote document scanning and automation. In addition, Lexmark's range of security features have enabled Applegreen to enforce printing and scanning security policies across the fleet.

The Challenge

With multiple new sites and locations, Applegreen's print infrastructure became increasingly unmanageable and costs became more difficult to control. It lacked a centralised print management solution for devices and no single service level agreement.

The majority of devices were unmanaged and unsuited to commercial use, leading to lack of standardised software and drivers. Meanwhile, ad-hoc purchasing of consumables and devices were often untracked and uncontrolled. With no control over consumable purchases combined with the lack of device reliability it inevitably meant when devices were replaced, excess consumables were redundant and had to be thrown away.

Scanning and copying were also unavailable on many devices, forcing many sites to post invoices and proof of delivery by post. Subsequently, posted documents caused delays in head office, in turn delaying the processing of invoices. Other documents were left unreadable or lost in transit. Overall, processing cycles could reach up to six weeks. Due to the busy nature of retail environments, Applegreen required devices that needed minimal end-user training.

Three overarching goals were outlined for the project - to better control costs, to standardise and manage processes, and to create support that could be scalable to Applegreen's rapid growth.



The Organisation

Applegreen PLC is a petrol forecourt retailer in the Republic of Ireland, with a growing presence in the UK. From an operational base of 64 sites at the end of 2009, Applegreen has since grown to more than 250 sites across the Republic of Ireland, UK and even the United States. Today, Applegreen is Ireland's largest Irish independent forecourt retailer with a market value of \$390 million, employing more than 3000 staff.

IPS Limited is an award-winning managed print services and document solutions provider based in Dublin, Ireland. IPS conducts business throughout Ireland and UK, partnering with Lexmark to bring customised solutions that utilise state-of-the-art technology along with the best-in-class hardware portfolio of printer and intelligent multi-function devices. IPS was recently appointed by Lexmark as their direct warranty partner in Ireland and NI, demonstrating the global manufacturer's confidence in IPS' service management.

The Solution

Applegreen turned to IPS, the sole Lexmark business solutions dealer in Ireland and the premier provider of Lexmark retail print management solutions in the country. IPS' nationwide service presence with key service locations in the UK meant that a single service agreement with tailored service-level agreements (SLAs) could be implemented. IPS had in fact already enjoyed a long-standing relationship in managing Applegreen's head office devices. Therefore, confidence in IPS' service record was a given.

During a quarterly business review with the Applegreen Service delivery Manager and former Group Head of IT Vincent Nolan, IPS proposed a business case study that explained Lexmark's heritage in the retail sector and described how Lexmark Print Management Solutions excelled in multi-site deployments. IPS' focus was to design a solution that focused on infrastructure and process rather than just the placement of a standard multi-function print (MFP) device. To this end, it was outlined that Lexmark's technology and solutions could provide a scalable print and document management solution for Applegreen's rapidly growing business. IPS, having utilised Lexmark Print Management Solutions in many other retail environments, naturally turned to Lexmark due to its unrivalled track record in this challenging sector.

They then set about carrying out a detailed assessment of the different site types that Applegreen owns and maintains, ranging from larger motorway sites to smaller fuel-centric forecourt operations; each site would require its own unique, tailored solutions. This task identified two factors - the print process requirements for each type of site, and the scanning and document process requirements and how they could be enhanced.

After looking to the market for comparable solutions, it became clear that IPS and Lexmark were best-suited to achieving Applegreen's infrastructure requirements and offered a superior customisability of service. Upon agreeing to partner with IPS and Lexmark, a two-phase approach to implementation was proposed and subsequently executed:

- ▶ Stabilise the fleet of devices by implementing cost-effective smart technology solutions. This standardised all hardware, drivers, print and scan processes by implementing a single high-availability mono MFP device. Management applications were also implemented, allowing for centralised reporting and management of devices. IPS implemented Lexmark Markvision Enterprise and Lexmark Solution Composer to customise devices, user workflows and on-site forms to the exact build and functions required.
- ▶ Set up all devices to scan to a remote document scanning and automation service that eliminated need for postage, increase document reliability and reduce processing cycles.

Planning and implementation was efficient - after a two-month proof of concept to verify costs and technology, solutions were implemented across Ireland over a four-week period, and over a three-week period across UK sites. This rapid deployment, across all 255 sites, was possible thanks to Lexmark's easy to install devices and the Virtual Solutions Centre (VSC) for the remote deployment of Lexmark solutions.

"With our recent, rapid expansion, it had become increasingly clear that we needed to implement a standardised and scalable print and document management system. One that could match our growth in the future, and also help us keep on top of costs and processes. Thanks to IPS and Lexmark, we've not just got a range of new devices tailored to our needs, we've also got a whole new infrastructure."

Peter Balfe
SDM Applegreen PLC

The Results

Results were immediately noticeable, most notably in cost savings. On consumables alone, IPS has estimated a annual saving of 60 percent on consumables and devices. In terms of efficiency, it is estimated Applegreen saves a minimum of two hours a week per site on invoice processing, translating to thousands of hours saved annually and a massive increase in productivity. And with new scanning capabilities across all sites, postage costs have disappeared entirely - today, around 20,000 documents are scanned each month rather than sent by post. In less quantifiable terms, overall processes have been streamlined, regulated and standardised to create more user-friendly day-to-day document management processes. Centralised SLAs and remote support services mean devices can be updated, managed and repaired in a matter of hours.

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"It's been impressive how much Lexmark's solutions have enabled change - not just from a device perspective, but also that of the wider infrastructure. And in a marketplace where this kind of infrastructural transformation is becoming more and more imperative, it's been hugely rewarding to see it all put into action so effectively. We've successfully changed the discussion from one about devices to one about infrastructure."

John Jones
Commercial Manager, IPS

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