AIS

ONE COMPANY, MANY SOLUTIONS

COPIERS AREN'T BORING

Unless you find saving money boring

Copiers Aren't Boring!

Of course you'd expect the owner of a copier dealer (though we're much more than that these days, offering IT managed services, 3D printers, document management, and business telephone services) to say copiers aren't boring.

It's still true.

As a business owner, I know I get excited about how to stretch my budget by increasing productivity and/or decreasing costs.

And when I can do both at the same time, I get VERY excited.

And that's why YOU should be excited about your copiers. With planning and the right strategy, your business can become more productive AND save money.

Excited yet?

Here's what we'll cover in this short eBook?

- Digital copiers ARE sexy – they can save you money
- Why doing business with a local copier dealer is good for you
- An explanation of what a print assessment is – it's the first step to saving money on printing
- There's no such thing as a single "best" copier, but there IS a best copier for YOUR business
- How managed print services help to control costs

When you're through, you'll understand the essentials of what you need to know to cost-effectively get the best copier and other office equipment for your business.

Gary Harouff, President
AIS
www.ais-now.com

Who Says Digital Copiers Aren't Sexy?

She thinks my tractor's sexy – Kenny Chesney

Now, with all due respect to Kenny, I'm not entirely sold on the idea that any woman really thinks a tractor is sexy. Kenny Chesney sitting on a tractor might give that farming tool a certain allure for his female fans though. I am entirely convinced that no one thinks a copier is sexy (despite that brief period of time when certain "parts" were copied – and I won't flatter myself to think I could sexy up a copier by perching on one).

Even so, I disagree. Digital copiers ARE sexy. Here's why.

"Saving Money Is Sexy"

I wish I could remember who I heard this from. Years ago in a conversation about software – I'm pretty sure it was about document management – someone was belly aching about trying to market a boring piece of software instead of something more exciting and sexy like big data (or whatever the "it" technology was that year). Document management is a little bit boring – it's been around for decades, the functionality is essentially the same as two decades ago (though better and easier to use), and the tools just work. Boring. And then someone said something like, "but they save businesses money and saving money IS sexy."

As a business owner, I could relate to that. I love tools and processes that save my employees time so they can focus on doing what they're good at – serving our customers. That's better for my bottom line, my employees, and my customers.

Why Copiers Are Sexy

Printing and copying documents is the third-largest expenditure (after rent/office

space and salary/benefits) for the majority of businesses.

At the same time, it's one of the least-understood expenses. Most companies have no idea how much they spend on printing and copying. For companies with more than one location, the grip on overall spend here is even more tenuous. This expense is just an undifferentiated mass of break/fix repairs; maintenance contracts for parts of the printing fleet; supplies like paper and toner; sporadic purchases of equipment that may not even be needed; and wasted IT help desk time as they troubleshoot printers and copiers.

Because all businesses print and copy, many businesses don't think about an overall strategy to get these costs under control – they just keep stroking checks and muddling through.

But, like ANY technology, the application of digital copiers strategically to address your business' issues will improve the efficiency of your business and, in almost all cases, save you money and time.

Managed print services is the strategy and service that will help your business accomplish this. In general, managed print services will help you because:

- you buy or lease the exact right equipment to meet your business' requirements for printing and copying documents – no more over purchasing of equipment and expensive supplies that remain unused
- The right equipment equals improved uptime, less frequent printer repair, and better productivity
- IT staff can focus on what they're good at – which isn't troubleshooting digital copiers

Save 30%

There's a statistic from Gartner (an IT advisory and research company) that says that a company can save up to 30% of their printing and copying costs with managed print services. It's an eye-catching figure; used frequently by copier dealerships like us. In our experience, it also tends to be true. While we never claim that we'll save that much for every customer, we do know that we've saved nearly all of our customers money. And every one of our customers is more productive with a strategic rather than haphazard approach to managing printers and digital copiers.

Spend less. Do more. That's sexy.

Support Your Local Copier Dealer – 5 Reasons It's Good for Your Business

We've all read about the benefits of buying from local businesses – it's good for the environment because that produce you bought wasn't shipped from across the country, it adds more money into the local economy, and it just feels good to support your neighbors. I found a great infographic outlining the economic

benefits, click here to look at it .

What's this got to do with buying a copier? Or leasing a copier?

You have two choices when buying or leasing copiers and printers – manufacturer direct or locally authorized dealers. Actually, there are two other choices for buying; local office supply store for smaller MFPs and printers or online (eBay is popular); but we're going to focus on the first two today. As a locally authorized dealer, you might think we're too biased to listen to about the advantages of buying local. All I can say is that after decades in the copier industry, ignore my experiences at your peril.

What's This Copier Going to Cost Me?

"How much is it?" That's the first question all of us that own or lead a business want to know. There's a misperception that buying direct from the manufacturer's representative will always get you the best price.

It won't.

The fact is everyone buys at roughly the same wholesale price from the same source. Copier dealers are often smaller companies with less overhead. We can be more agile in our pricing.

But, even if you pay less for the equipment itself, as we all know – price isn't everything.

Service Speed and Quality

Talk to anyone who's been in the industry for a long time and they will all say that (with rare exceptions) local dealers provide better service . Here's why.

It's the manufacture's equipment, obviously they'll be able to service the copier better than anyone. That's wrong in two ways:

1. Service technicians go through the same training regardless of who they work for.
2. The manufacturer isn't local. Service calls often have to be checked with HQ. This can turn a 24 hour service into a 72 hour service. Local dealers make decisions faster.

Service technicians also tend to be some of our longest-tenured employees. They know what they're doing. They've seen it all and that knowledge equals a faster repair – and a quicker return to productivity for your business.

Local dealers will attempt to diagnose the issue over the phone and maybe even troubleshoot. Manufacturers' call centers will often simply forward contact info to the nearest technician. They'll have no context of the problem, so it takes them longer to diagnose. Having at least an idea of what's wrong allows local reps to ensure they're carrying parts and supplies they're most likely to need when they arrive at the customer's office.

Square Pegs and Round Holes

Manufacturer direct will have products from that manufacturer. On the other hand, local dealers carry equipment from multiple companies. We offer Konica Minolta and Kyocera copiers, printers, and scanners (we can also sell and service equipment from other manufacturers too, depending on the specific needs of a customer). This allows us to better mix-and-match equipment to create custom fit printing solutions for our customers based on equipment speeds, output options, and pricing. Instead of square peg; we've got pegs that are square, round, rectangles, and quadrilaterals.

Account Manager Longevity Equals Expertise

Local dealers generally have loyal employees who stick around. They know their customers and how their services can best help customers achieve their business goals. Printing costs are between 2-4% of a businesses revenue. You want to know the person advising and selling to you understands what they're talking about – and will be around to help you in the future.

Billing Support

Our invoicing is extremely accurate. However, mistakes can happen. How much fun is it dialing into a call center . . . somewhere . . . and being passed around when you have a question about your bill? We're local. We're accountable. In fact, we've even visited customers to explain their invoice to them face-to-face.

If you're in local to one of our locations in Las Vegas, Palm Desert, Los Angeles, Orange Country, San Diego, or Riverside and looking to buy a copier – or lease a copier – consider us.

The Print Assessment: The First Step to Saving Money on Printing Costs

While measurements aren't the be all and end all of business success, the ability to measure and track hard costs can help your business spend more effectively.

A commonly overlooked area of business infrastructure spend is your print fleet. If you don't know how much you're spending on your copiers and prints in toner, paper, and maintenance costs (which can lead to lost productivity as equipment goes down); there's a good chance you're spending more than you need to. I've written about managed print services as a solution to this business issue before.

The path to savings begins with a first step – and that step is a print assessment.

The goal of the assessment is to identify your real print needs and volumes and then provide a recommendation for the mix of copiers, printers, scanners, and fax machines that meet those needs.

Here are some of the things we look for when assessing your environment.

- Where are you spending money now – leases, maintenance contracts, etc.
- How many devices do you have?
- Are those devices optimally placed? For efficiency or for convenience for the person in your office who complains the loudest?
- Is your printing environment secure? Do you have job release at the machine enabled? Are documents with confidential information handled appropriately on

the devices?

- Are your machines old and consuming lots of electricity? Sometimes you can save energy (it adds up on your electric bill) and reduce your carbon footprint.

You'll know how much you actually print, what you're really spending on consumables,and also if there's a gap. If you're spending for more capability than you need, the cost savings are obvious. On the other hand, your productivity could be suffering if you don't have a large enough print fleet to meet your actual business needs. Either way, you'll know and can act based on real numbers instead of what you think the numbers are.

Based on these results, we get to work for you, creating a combination of hardware, software, and process that will meet your budget and performance needs.

- Print fleet creation. Recommendations for your ideal mix of equipment could include all new equipment or a mix of existing equipment and new equipment. We'll also do some "Copier Feng Shui" for you and recommend the perfect placement of these devices for maximum productivity. OK, so I just made up "Copier Feng Shui," but the idea placement of office equipment for productivity is very real.
- The flow of documents through your business could help or hinder productivity. Software recommendations for workflow are included, as well as suggestions for processes and moving documents where they need to be in your company.

I know some of you are reading this and thinking, "It's just copiers and printers. Why does this even matter." If that's your attitude toward technology, I'd like you to take a moment to read this post by Monique Phalen, Opportunity or Cost? Your Success Depends on How You View Technology.

Information technology, of which your digital copiers are a part of, can create a competitive advantage for your business – if you're smart about it.

If you think you might be paying too much to print and copy your business documents today or think that you could use your equipment more effectively, consider a free, no-strings-attached print assessment with us. You'll be happy you did.

The Best Copier Doesn't Exist; The Best Copier for YOU Does

"What's the BEST Copier?"

I, and our salespeople, get asked this all the time – what's the best copier (or printer, or 3D printer, or production printer, or scanner or ... you get the idea).

My tongue in cheek answer is always, "the ones we sell!"

The real answer – and the truthful one that I give – **is that there isn't one.**

Now, of course, there are models that are more reliable than others, the various manufacturers do have strengths and weaknesses, but those really aren't the most important considerations when buying or leasing a copier. You can also do a quick search and find various "best" lists from magazines, pay-to-play websites (that means manufacturers sponsor those "ratings"), and independent groups such as The Buyer's Lab.

And those can be useful resources when you do your initial research, but **don't base your decision just from that**.

I'm going to use a very broad analogy here, so bear with me, but it's like going on vacation. Do you want to relax? Go somewhere you've been before or experience something new? Play tourist or pretend to be a local? Or even taking a simple "staycation." Depending on your vacation "goals," the kind of vacation you take will be different. I've just returned from a relaxing time in Costa Rica where I had a fantastic time relaxing with my lovely wife, Rosa, and enjoying downtime – and an awesome day rafting. That's a different vacation from traveling to Rome and Vienna, which were more "touristy."
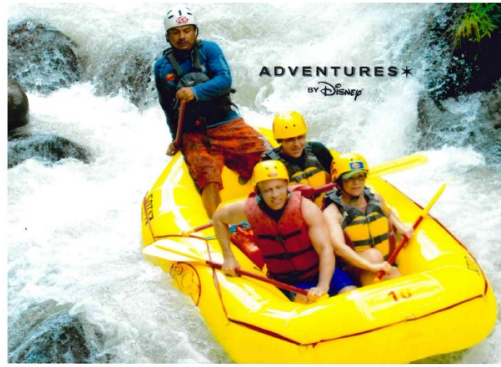
Which vacation was better?
That's *impossible* to say because they met different needs and goals.

What the heck does this have to do with the best copier? Simple, you need to pay attention to which equipment best suits your business needs and requirements, not an arbitrary "best."

How do you do that?

9 Things to Consider When Choosing the Best Copier

There are many variables when it's time to choose the right mix of office equipment for your office. These nine will get you started.

1. **How much do you print and copy?** Determine how many pages you print and copy each month. Your print and copy volume will help you decide on the speed you need, whether you should invest in additional paper capacity for your copier, and if you need a single, fast device or multiple slower devices. While you don't want to under-invest in a copier and then operate it at a higher level of its monthly duty volume (which can cause the equipment to wear out faster), you also don't want to over-invest either. A little-known fact about office equipment is that under-used copiers are prone to breakdown because they aren't being used enough!
2. **Do you NEED to print in color?** Color can be a great addition to customer communications, but it costs more. If you don't need to print documents in color, then stick to black and white devices, which tend to be less expensive.
3. **Do you need to scan documents?** If you don't plan on digitizing paper documents (you should!), the scanning features of a copier will be less important. On the other hand, if you need to scan lots of paper documents, you

could need a dedicated scanner to go along with your copier.

4. **Do you print marketing materials?** If you do, look for color copiers capable of printing and copying at high resolutions. Also look into the toner yield for the device and ease of color calibration. You also need to look into the copier's ability to print to different stock to give your marketing materials real impact on your customers.

5. **Productivity enhancers.** Stapling, hole-punching, and folding can save you time rather than having employees spend valuable time folding invoices so they'll fit into envelopes.

6. **Mobile print.** Do your employees roam around the office? Wireless connectivity is a feature to investigate that will allow printing from anywhere in the office – even with your phone.

7. **Paper size**. Do you need to print envelopes and anything other than standard-sized documents?

8. **Security**. No company wants to expose confidential information. Those of you reading this in more regulated industries have even tougher requirements. Look for access control (user code, card, biometrics) and the ability to protect the hard drive within the copier. And don't forget to include any network-connected copier in your security plan.

9. **Copier service and support.** Finally, don't forget to check into the service record of the partner you're buying or leasing equipment from. Copiers need ongoing maintenance and periodically will need to be repaired as parts (such as the rollers inside of the machine) wear out. You want a partner with a great service track record who will keep equipment downtime to a minimum – keeping you productive.

There are more than nine items I could list, but that's another blog post. I hope I've managed to give you food for thought if you're thinking about choosing the "best office copier" for YOUR office.

There's no single best copier, just the best one for you!

It Pays to Manage Your Print Costs: And Managed Print Services Helps

Do you know how many pages your office prints and copies in a year? Do you know how much that costs?

If you can't (or don't) measure something, you have no control over it. Managed print services will give you that control – at least over printing and copying.

Managed print services (MPS) results in gaining visibility into and control of your

printing and copying – helping you save money and increase productivity. It also helps to improve document security and can be an asset to any environmental sustainability (green) initiatives in your company.

Not to mention it's a growing industry, rapidly becoming a go-to solution for expanding businesses across the nation.

Managed Print Services: A Broad Definition

Managed print services is a program offered by a service provider that manages all aspects of your printing devices and oversight over your business' document output needs.

Broad, right?

Here's a better explanation of what managed print services is and its purpose.

How Managed Print Services Works

MPS is meant to be a holistic approach in efficiently managing all your printing devices (printers, fax machines, MFPs, and copiers) by a service partner who matches document output needs with the right office equipment (and placement of that office equipment).

When you partner with a managed print services provider, you're basically signing up to hand over control and optimization of your print environment to the experts. Your managed services provider (MPS) will go through a process to identify areas of print waste and inefficiency in your current printing practices. Then, they'll work with you to find solutions that cater to your business – boosting office productivity and cutting costs.

1. **Assessment.** In order to get an understanding of your printing needs, your MPS will analyze your current printing processes and practices.
2. **Planning.** Your MPS will draft and propose a plan to tackle inefficiencies to cut costs, reduce waste, and boost productivity.
3. **Implementation.** With the help of your MPS, you'll implement your new printing plan.
4. **Optimization.** Your MPS will continuously monitor and manage your printing fleet, optimizing it to your needs.

The Purpose of Managed Print Services

Rather than dedicating internal resources to business activities related to printing, outsourcing managed print services allows you to focus on your business.

MPS can save you money, increase office productivity (your IT team no longer will have to waste their time troubleshooting equipment they don't fully understand), and make your life easier.

Here's how an MPS plan works:

- **Perfect printer placement.** Easy accessibility to equipment is critical to the effectiveness of employees – placing printing equipment in easily accessible areas for an appropriate amount of employees helps improve workflow and maximizes device usage. What's this mean? Less time wasted standing in line to print or copy documents.

- **Automated supply delivery.** With MPS you eliminate the need for ordering toner cartridges. Your devices are monitored so your toner is shipped automatically when your machines run low, which also eliminates equipment downtime – allowing you (and everyone else) to be more productive.

- **Replace inefficient devices.** Your MPS partner can help you identify which machines are underperforming and replace them with more efficient devices (staying on budget of course).

- **Predictability.** By entering into a partnership with a MPS provider, there will be no more surprise maintenance or unpredictable printing costs because you pay a simple monthly fee based on the printing and copying needs identified in the initial assessment. There are overage fees if you print more than your monthly maximum (these overage fees are negotiated upfront – again, no hidden costs).

1. **Print tracking.** Know who prints and how much they print (and copy). Also, with print rules, you can establish parameters for printing black and white versus color, enhancing document security by allowing walk up release of print jobs, and more.
2. **Regular maintenance.** Copiers are complex pieces of machinery and they need regular maintenance as parts wear and need to be replaced. Preventive maintenance will keep your copiers in action for longer between the need for repairs – keeping your office more productive.

- **Training.** Managed Print Service providers can assist in employee training and provide help desk support for print issues so your IT department can focus on their regular tasks.

- **Mobile printing.** MPS providers can help establish, maintain and provide troubleshooting support for mobile printing so you can print from anywhere, from any device.

Managed print services can be tailored to your business' needs, whether you're a small office with limited printing and copying needs to a large company whose offices span multiple buildings.

Still have questions? Let us know – we're happy to help guide you through the many printing solutions options you have.

EXCITED YET?

Stop treating copiers and printers as an afterthought.

With the right strategy -- and partner -- save money and boost productivity.

Book My Print Assessment