

Companies can leverage their existing base of employee badges – the ones that get them into the parking garage and past security every day – and use them to access and print on multi-function printers.



Securely eliminating excess without distress

Overview

Nothing lasts forever, especially that fleet of printers, fax machines, and scanners cluttering your office. As corporations look to save money, increase productivity and go green, replacing all those tired devices with multi-function printers is the way to go.

While you consider a capital project such as this, remember that most corporations require their employees to carry proximity badges to identify them as they enter the building. With a little simple logic, it's easy to combine the two concepts into one solution.

The business case is easy. Start by walking around your office and looking at the piles of paper stacked up in the copy room. From the stacks of new paper in boxes to the piles of printed documents and faxes that will never get picked up. Look at all the personal printers people have stashed away in their offices and cubicles, and consider the costs of hardware, toner, paper, and maintenance.

Now, picture the same copy room with one powerful machine that prints, scans and faxes. Imagine an environment where print jobs won't sit abandoned, but rather are printed only when the employee who sent the print job flashes his employee badge on the printer, releasing the print.

Now you're starting to get the idea of how using employee badges with multi-function printers can change your office environment.



CA (formerly Computer Associates, NASDAQ: CA), a four billion dollar IT management software and solutions company has done just that, deploying a secure printing solution for its North America offices. In this process, they are replacing nearly all their copiers, printers, fax machines and scanners with multi-function printers (MFPs) that leverage their existing base of employee badges for access and identification.

This solution was implemented by Pharos Systems, using AIR ID Enroll® contactless smartcard readers from RF IDEas.

The advantages of adding secure printing won't stop at convenience. Implementing a solution such as this offers companies many advantages.

Solution

The solution, while quite complex in implementation, is fairly simple on paper. Employees send print jobs to a unified print server that covers all the CA offices in North America. A print job remains in queue until the employee presents their access badge at a printer.

CA Senior Principal in charge of Facilities Services Brett Prochazka says, "I can print to any device I want, in any CA office in the US."

The advantages of adding secure printing won't stop at convenience. Implementing a solution such as this offers companies many advantages:

Security/Compliance: Sensitive documents are no longer left visible to anyone walking up to a printer.

Day-to-Day Cost Savings: The amount of paper and toner are reduced as the amount of print jobs goes down.

Green: No longer are print jobs abandoned or forgotten in copy rooms, wasting resources. CA estimates a savings of 1400 trees per year.

Overall Cost Savings: In CA's case, they reduced the number of printers in their fleet by 1/3, and that doesn't even include the additional devices they plan to eliminate in future phases.

Flexibility: Print jobs are no longer limited to the local printer. A print job needed in California can be sent to a printer in New York, and picked up when the employee reaches his California office. No more carrying heavy bundles of presentations across country.

CA is a fairly large company, and planned their transition in phases, to minimize the impact on the employees. To date, CA has completed phase one of this project, replacing all common group printers with new MFPs. As this phase gains foothold in the corporation, future phases will begin, starting with removal of private, in-office machines and expansion to Europe and Asia.

“It’s great for cost savings and sustainability, it’s neat to use, and the executives love to talk about it.”

Results

For CA, there was a significant challenge to implementing such a large-scale change to their employees - education. Change doesn’t happen overnight, and is often met with resistance, but as Brett Prochazka puts it, “we had very little backlash in phase I, mostly positive.” However, he adds, “phase II, the removal of personal printers from people’s offices, may be more complicated.”

In order to diffuse any large-scale concerns, CA has made considerable investment in education for the new system:

E-mail Communication: A campaign of e-mail messages announcing the change and explaining how ‘Secure Release’ works was coordinated and communicated to the employees.

Posters: They put posters up around all the offices, by the new printers, explaining the capabilities.

Informational Cards: ‘Zip Cards’ with instructions are affixed to each printer.

Online Training: Employees were encouraged to participate in online training sessions through their desktop PCs to learn about the new MFPs.

With all the avenues of education, the employees were prepared for the change. To demonstrate the reasons for making such a large-scale change in their printing, CA executives coordinated a company-wide tree planting. Even with the 1400 trees per year that are being saved with this initiative, the CA employees went out and planted more trees to emphasize the importance of what the company was doing.

Benefit

While printers are certainly a logical extension of the usefulness of employee badges, CA is looking ahead to other areas that could benefit from unification. They have already begun investigation into using employee badges for room scheduling, booking workstations, and on-site kiosks.

Brett Prochazka concludes by saying, “it’s great for cost savings and sustainability, it’s neat to use, and the executives love to talk about it.”

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