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Five Strategies To Improve Your Healthcare Print Device Fleet Management

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Information You Need to Cut Costs, Reduce Risk and Support Patient Care

Healthcare organizations have so much to manage in today's changing environment. In fact, hospitals and health systems represent arguably the most complex technology ecosystem out there. Yet, as reimbursement revenue continues to shrink, financial challenges also remain top of mind for most healthcare executives.[1] Add to that some pretty daunting security concerns: 35.5 percent of data breaches and 66.7 percent of stolen records occur in healthcare.[2] In part, that's because an individual's medical information is worth 10 to 20 times more than his or her credit card number on the black market.[3]

Despite all these dynamics, healthcare organizations can't lose sight of their primary mission to provide high quality, efficient patient care. Clinicians and other staff must use every tool at their disposal to facilitate that goal — from diagnostic equipment to electronic health records to paper documents.

Typically, an entire fleet of scanning, copying and printing devices exists in the background to support clinicians. This fleet of devices runs the gamut from large, complicated multifunction machines to compact task-specific equipment and everything in between. It goes mostly unnoticed when functioning well — but it creates disruption and delays when not performing up to par.

The fleet is like electricity: You use it all the time, but rarely pay attention to it until the lights go out. What's more, this fleet can be a black hole of direct, indirect and hidden costs and risks if not carefully managed.

Consequently, it's more challenging than ever to create a smooth work environment where the print device fleet functions efficiently in the background. Across a healthcare enterprise, these devices require supplies, maintenance and repairs. Furthermore, the inventory itself must be managed. While there are technology solutions available, some IT departments are leery of taking on new projects, increasing overhead and potentially exposing the enterprise to new security risks.

Today's healthcare organizations need a different approach. By taking a step back and seeking the right information, they have an opportunity to empower staff efficiency and effectiveness across the enterprise, while dramatically reducing costs and risks.

Symphion: Print Information as a Service
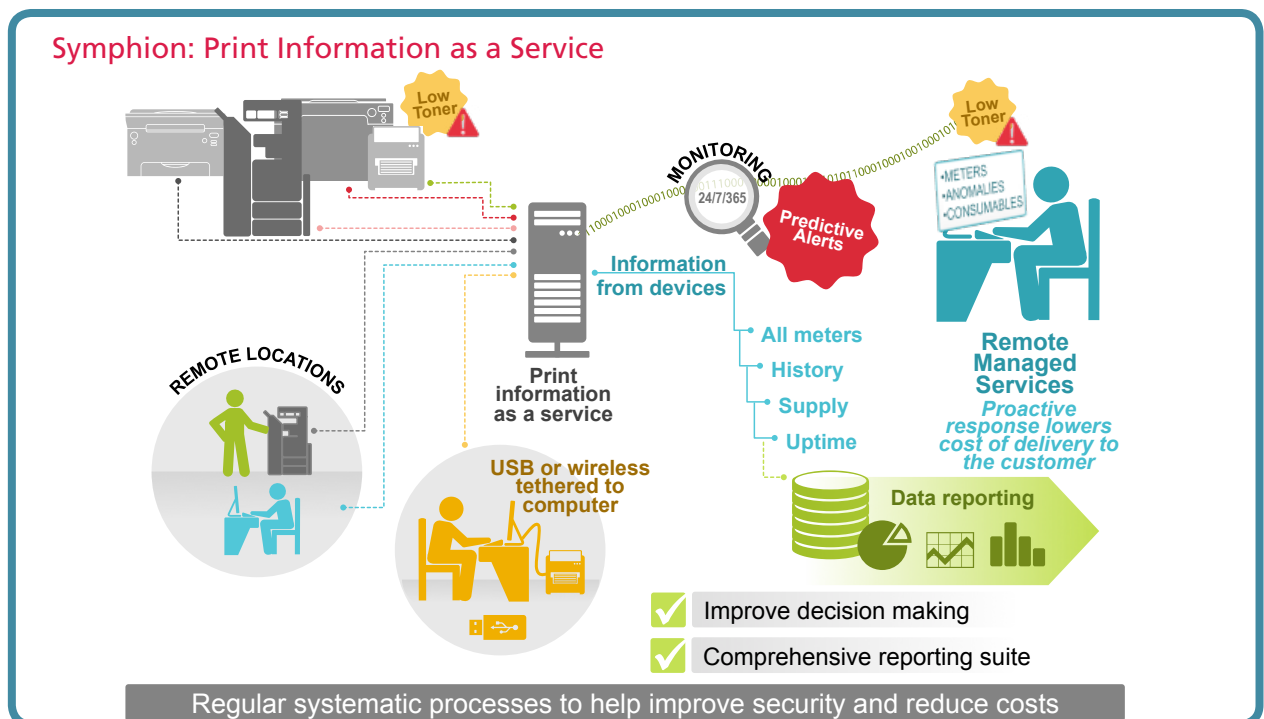
[1] American College of Healthcare Executives, "Survey: Healthcare Finance, Reform Top Issues Confronting Hospitals in 2014," 1/12/2015
[2] Identity Theft Resource Center, "Data Breach Report," 12/31/2015
[3] Reuters, "Your Medical Record is Worth More to Hackers Than Your Credit Card," 9/24/2014

A Better Way: Concierge Service

When it comes to print device fleet management, Information as a Service solutions *(see Sidebar 1)* are like having a concierge who provides personalized service and meaningful information to enable strong results.

The finance and materials management teams within healthcare organizations have access to more data than ever before. The problem is making the leap from various individual data points to meaningful information that supports solid decisions and optimizes operations.

By way of illustration, consider what it's like to travel in a foreign country. Let's say you arrive safely at your hotel on your first trip to Tokyo. With access to the Internet, it's easy enough to use language translators and look up different activities, restaurants and transportation options. However, without knowing the city or the language, the process can be stressful and time consuming. How can you be sure that you're making the most of your time and resources? You may end up gathering a lot of data, but still not getting the best travel itinerary.

Now imagine that instead of using the Internet you simply call the hotel concierge — a local expert committed to providing you with meaningful information and service. In minutes, you have an unforgettable evening planned that includes show tickets, dinner reservations and car service.

Print Information as a Service uses a similar approach by leveraging cutting-edge imaging analytics fleet management and tethered imaging analytics software to deliver a seamless solution to any enterprise, regardless of location, size or makeup.
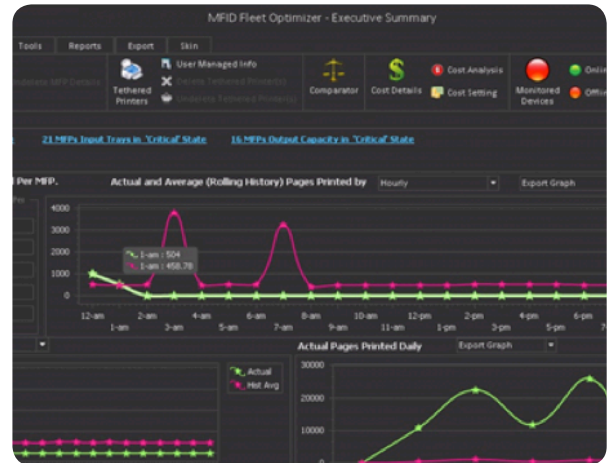
Why Symphion Information as a Service?

"Information as a Service" is remote "white glove" concierge delivery of essential information to customers that requires no additional staff and no additional IT project overhead. It's all done by your dedicated concierge team without the hidden costs associated with traditional software deployment (such as dedicating staff time, funding projects and maintaining the software) or the security issues associated with software as a service deployments (such as having sensitive data transmitted and stored in the vendor's data center off site on servers shared by multiple customers).

Concierge Service Provides:
- Dedicated team of expert professionals
- Familiarity with the customer's enterprise and priorities
- Remote software installation, implementation and solution administration
- Remote delivery of ongoing services
- Availability to respond quickly as needs arise

Five Strategies You Need to Know

With thousands of print devices to manage, healthcare organizations can more effectively and efficiently address the following through concierge service:

1. uptime;
2. service and supply needs;
3. inventory, usage and management;
4. billing issues; and
5. device security settings.

1 Concentrate on uptime rather than response time

Most device fleet service contracts promise to measure response time. In other words, they expect you to grade them on how long it takes them to respond to the notice or to start service once a problem has been discovered and reported by one of your busy professionals.

In this scenario, however, patient care and other workflows are already interrupted while someone calls the help desk and waits for service. Like IT service contracts, it's time for device fleet management to evaluate availability — uptime — as the true metric.

This higher degree of transparency and accountability in service level agreements (SLAs) gives a fleet management team concrete current and historical information and trends. With the right information in hand about when devices are due for routine maintenance, how supplies are being used, when usage maximums will be reached, etc., the team can actually prevent downtime and service calls — all while demonstrating clear cost savings for the organization.

Print Information as a Service is reducing disruptions in patient care and administrative processes so there is less downtime and more uptime. This reduces financial loss and errors due to systems that operate reliably and continuously.

2 Take charge of your services and supply needs

Some may say that as long as devices are handling routine printing and copying as needed and can be repaired when they break, that's good enough. However, with a focus on uptime rather than response time, this approach proves to be inadequate and costly.

Central to the problem are the indirect costs associated with the time it takes to identify and report issues to a help desk, followed by time wasted waiting for repairs. In this scenario, its clinicians and other staff who call the help desk to say, "the toner is out," "the paper is jammed," or "it says it needs maintenance." What's more, from a clinician's perspective, sending a medication list or discharge instructions to a different printer because the most convenient one is broken only wastes more time and increases frustration — for both clinicians and patients alike. Add to that the direct cost of calls to the help desk to manage supplies, maintenance and repairs.

Potential Annual Help Desk Cost Reductions

Imagine a large hospital with a busy help desk to understand how optimal print fleet management can cut your costs dramatically and free up staff time:

- Print-related help desk calls per month: 500+
- Estimated costs to hospital per call: $38[4]
- Common complaints:
  - 80% of calls: out of toner
  - Other calls: paper jam, out of paper, needs service, etc.
- Potential results (individual results vary):
  - Proactive alerts enable service to bypass the help desk, so clinicians and help desk staff stay focused on patient care related activities
  - 95% reduction in number of print-related calls
  - Potential annual savings: >$200,000

[4] Estimated cost of time used by help desk staff to complete the service and time wasted by a clinician. Assumes $26/call for Help Desk and 15 minutes for a clinician at $45/hour.

Five Strategies You Need to Know

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Instead of reacting when there is already a problem, such as an empty toner cartridge, fleet, service and supply needs can be better optimized with available, meaningful information *(see sidebar 2 "Potential Annual Help Desk Cost Reductions")*. Proactive monitoring and alerting enables you to predict toner levels, supply stocking needs, preventive maintenance needs, etc., based on history and past usage. This makes it possible to forecast, schedule and map out technician visits for cartridge changes and other services efficiently before they are needed — avoiding downtime, wasted clinician and administrative assistant time and help desk calls altogether.

3 Stop guessing about device fleet inventory, usage and management

There is more to effective device fleet management than supplies and service calls, though. Understanding your organization's inventory of print devices — their best uses, locations and expected lifecycle for example — enables extensive cost and utilization analyses and trending by device, by group or department, or enterprise wide. Knowing when certain devices are overused, underused or near the end of their lifecycle allows the fleet management team to take proactive steps, such as replacing devices at the optimal time or adding devices in high-use areas.

Healthcare organizations can achieve even more efficiency by assessing staff needs against device type and location to optimize workflows. With careful management, unnecessary and accidental printing can also be reduced, which saves on costs for materials and services, including toner, paper and device maintenance. Actively manage inventory as well by continuously monitoring the location and status of all devices — even when they are moved unexpectedly.

By constantly revealing inefficiencies, you can optimize the fleet, resulting in lower costs and better service. This not only helps patient care and other processes run more smoothly, it also increases satisfaction for clinicians, other staff and patients throughout the organization.

4 Avoid billing issues from common anomalies

Even small issues can have big downstream impact. For example, what if the multifunction devices get the click counts wrong? In many cases, these devices report inaccurate volumes that lead to incorrect billing and time-consuming audit and correction processes.

Rather than correcting this misinformation after billing has occurred, a device fleet team can address it on the front end with alerts that a "click count anomaly" may have occurred. The team can proactively compare print volume to historical device duty cycle over time and accurately report the information before it ends up in incorrect billing. This avoids wasted time and costs, and instead creates a proactive, efficient system for the entire organization.

5 Reduce risk by managing print device security settings

Modern imaging devices of all kinds, such as multifunction devices, printers and scanners, enable more functions than ever before. From these devices, it's now possible to access the internet, store data on internal hard drives or USB thumb drives, email electronic documents, open communications ports, automatically download software updates, download applications and more. While these functions provide great support to operations and convenience to users, they also open the entire enterprise to more risk of security breaches. To compound the problem, imaging devices — unlike servers — are too often ignored or not tightly managed as part of enterprise security strategies.

With Print Information as a Service, you can identify and audit the security settings on these devices directly. This enables you to understand and optimize enterprise settings on an ongoing basis to reduce security risks.

A Summary: Make the Best Use of Your Resources

When it comes to print device fleet management, healthcare organizations can put comprehensive information about uptime, service and supply needs, inventory, and common issues to work to reduce costs and make the best use of devices, supplies and other resources. By taking advantage of an Information as a Service approach, the management team benefits from a wealth of data about the fleet along with expert, personalized service.

Information as a Service solutions provide dedicated service that delivers meaningful intelligence to enable powerful results without requiring new projects, increasing overhead or exposing the enterprise to new security risks. It opens up new opportunities to make informed decisions and achieve optimal results. The outcome is an efficient work environment where the print device fleet functions seamlessly and cost-effectively in the background — allowing staff to focus on patient care.

To learn more about Ricoh solutions for healthcare, visit ricoh-usa.com/healthcare

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