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Streamlining Business: A Holistic Approach

BY: BRUCE DAHLGREN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, MANAGED ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS, HP’S IMAGING & PRINTING GROUP

This is a very unique time in the technology services industry. First, companies are recognizing the need to be more strategic about how they manage their printer fleets.

This is driven by things such as economic pressures, environmental objectives and security. We also have technology innovations such as intelligent devices, management tools and software solutions.

Historically, businesses haven’t paid much attention to their imaging and printing environment partly due to fragmented budgets, IT constraints, and the complexity of monitoring these costs effectively. Managing imaging and printing devices through a network can be a catalyst for big cost savings and an increase in office efficiency. In fact many customers have realized up to 30 percent cost savings.

Managed Print Services (MPS) offers a holistic approach to proactively lowering operational costs, reducing a company’s impact on the environment, mitigating security risks and improving office productivity. It extends from basic printer services all the way through to business process management. In fact, there are three key areas of focus when you consider an MPS engagement: Optimizing the number and type of devices, managing devices from the network, and improving the workflow by streamlining paper-based processes.

In addition, MPS also provides a tremendous opportunity for companies to reduce their environmental impact and carbon footprint by decreasing paper use, energy consumption and waste. For example, an average Fortune 1,000 company can save up to 700 metric tons of paper annually and reduce can reduce energy costs by up to 40 percent.

MPS offers organizations of all sizes a new way to cut costs, meet environmental goals, improve business processes, and ultimately, drive employee productivity. With advancements in network and IT tools, a network-based approach to MPS that includes remote management, visibility, scalability as well as flexibility, creates a strategic advantage for those who embrace it.

What Is Lean Six Sigma?

BY: WAYNE J. PAUPST, ASQ’S LEAN ENTERPRISE DIVISION CHAIR

The quality profession has experienced many methodologies through the years with some calling these fads or gimmicks. Total Quality Control and more recently, Total Quality Management (TQM) have come and gone. We have also experienced the influx of Statistical Process Control back in the 1980s, most notable from the automotive industry.

Today there are methodologies that have been adopted by many organizations that do not look to be disappearing too soon: Six Sigma and Lean, and now Lean Six Sigma.

Motorola introduced Six Sigma in the 1980s. Utilizing sound statistical methods, along with a disciplined approach to problem solving, Six Sigma caught on rather quickly. Motorola discovered that a process that was proven statistically capable of meeting specifications, on average, would shift approximately 1.5 standard deviations (sigma) over time. Their concept was to reduce the variation of their processes to account for this shift and therefore reduce the probability of defects or defectives down to 3.4 per million opportunities.

Lean methodologies or Lean Thinking is utilized in reducing or eliminating waste (Muda) from a process. Some Lean principles were actually utilized in the early 1900s by Henry Ford. Most of the common Lean principles have come from the Toyota Production System. Where Six Sigma is utilized to focus on variation reduction, Lean is utilized to eliminate non-value-added activities in all processes with the goal of improving flow, cycle times, set up times, and productivity—just to name a few potential benefits.

Organizations are now utilizing Lean Six Sigma to gain significant and rapid improvements by combining the tools and applications of both. It can benefit any organization that is willing to take the time to learn, study, train, and implement the tools and techniques.

For more information, visit www.asq.org.

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Web And Video Conferencing Grow Through Recession: Services attract new users

Not many markets experienced growth over the last two years. One that is bucking broader trends is web and video conferencing as companies large and small seek ways to collaborate and stay close to clients while reigning in travel costs.

According to Frost and Sullivan, a large growth consulting firm, the web and video conferencing market grew 19 percent to $3.5 billion in 2008. Video conferencing grew another 9.5 percent in 2009, and Roopam Jain, principal analyst, conferencing and collaboration — ICT, expects similar growth for web conferencing when those figures become available. She says these rates are in line with longer term trends.

“The last few years have seen a lot of new users as people have become more aware of web and video conferencing as well as increased use at established companies,” Jain says.

While the two technologies are experiencing some convergence, they still offer very different user experiences and price structures. Video conferencing more closely approximates face-to-face meetings, but it can be expensive. Jain puts the average cost of a room-based video system at about $6000. By contrast, web conferencing is inexpensive and runs on software that can be downloaded from a service provider such as iLinc or Citrix. It is particularly useful for collaboration because presentations, documents or spreadsheets can be shared and worked on across multiple computers. The average price for SaaS (software as a service) or hosted web conference services is $30-$40 per user per month, according to Jain. She says prices are falling as big providers bundle email, group collaboration and messaging at a single price.

Jason Walker, vice president, sales for iLinc, says his company sees strong and growing use of web conferencing among state and local government agencies and higher education institutions as well as technology and financial services companies. One major state university uses iLinc web conferencing to offer classes to students in other countries as well as to facilitate student-teacher conferences.

Walker says government agencies are particularly attracted to web conferencing because of its low environmental impact relative to business travel. Frost and Sullivan’s Jain agrees that green consciousness is a motivator for business as well. Customers using iLinc’s service can track their carbon impact on the company’s “Green Meter,” which records emissions avoided, distance not traveled and travel costs saved for each web-based meeting. To date, iLinc says its customers have saved the environment from 1.3 trillion pounds of carbon dioxide and saved themselves more than $260 million in travel costs.

“Web And Video Conferencing Grow Through Recession: Services attract new users

Did you know....

Did you know that the average employee wastes over an hour a day surfing the Internet, or “cyberslacking”? This January, Pandora Corp., maker of the PC Pandora home computer monitoring software, launched The Office Software (theOS), a new multi-functional network-based tool designed to help small business owners and department managers eliminate cyberslacking and protect corporate assets by monitoring and recording PC usage. TheOS records activity on your company’s computers and presents data in easy-to-read charts.

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Visit www.theofficesoftware.com for more information.
Big Business Tools Can Sharpen Small Companies’ Edge

Lean Six Sigma delivers improvement in efficiency and customer satisfaction for all kinds of companies.

Major multinational manufacturers—Motorola, GE and Honeywell, to name a few—have long used sophisticated quality improvement programs such as Six Sigma and Lean Manufacturing to increase efficiency, reduce defects and give customers more satisfaction bang for their buck.

Motorola alone credits Six Sigma with saving $17 billion across its various business lines from 1986 to 2004. These same strategies are increasingly catching the attention of both smaller companies and those in the services sector, as owners and executives realize they can produce similar results in their businesses.

“We can adapt the methodology and tools to just about any business, but the objectives stay the same—reduce errors, increase efficiency, increase satisfaction,” says Jeff Summers, director of quality and Six Sigma learning at Motorola University, which accredits some 600 Six Sigma “green and black belts” each year, half from Motorola and the rest from outside organizations. “Successful organizations find that as the process matures, it becomes part of their culture.”

Lean Six Sigma uses a methodology known as DMAIC—Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control—to hone business processes. It’s based on a combination of Six Sigma, which focuses on increasing customer satisfaction by eliminating defects or errors in products and services, and Lean Manufacturing, which concentrates on delivering value to the customer by reducing unnecessary activity, or waste. Six Sigma was developed by Motorola in the early 1980s. Lean Manufacturing was pioneered by Toyota and gained widespread acceptance in the 1990s. Trained and accredited “change agents”—the green and black belts—drive the process. But you don’t need an army of them. “One can lead the team,” Summers says.

At each stage, Lean Six Sigma provides specific steps, techniques and measurement tools. While the methodology is generic and data-driven, it’s the application of the techniques to each individual business that gains results.

“It’s important to understand that not all data is created equal,” according to Neil Polhemus, chief technology officer at StatPoint Technologies, whose Statgraphics line of statistical modeling software is often employed in connection with Lean Six Sigma programs. “To be effective, data analysis has to be done by subject-matter experts.”

While both Six Sigma and Lean Manufacturing got their start in manufacturing industries, Polhemus says he’s seeing increasing adaptation of Lean Six Sigma by service companies. “There’s lots of interest these days from service organizations in statistical methods and Lean Six Sigma,” he says. “It’s all about efficiency and reducing the opportunities for customers to be unhappy.”
Panel of Experts

JEFF SUMMERS
Director Quality & Six Sigma
Learning
Motorola University

Most companies tend to apply limited resources on shorter term, reactive, and critical activities. This short term view limits our success at making the jump from project to process management.

Motorola has made this transition by integrating Lean Six Sigma and Business Enterprise processes. Through this approach we eliminate the ‘initiative’ overhead, we benefit from data driven disciplines being utilized in every aspect of the business, and we are driven to align customer, business, and process needs into a single focus.

Data driven decisions, the use of charters, statistics, and tools, have become part of our process. Our belts lead and manage change as part of their day job. Management review is part of the normal business process.

Integrating Lean Six Sigma into your Enterprise Processes is a very effective way to ensure business alignment, and efficient use of resources to a much deeper level and across all organizations.

MARK J KIEMELE, PhD
President and Co-Founder
Air Academy Associates

Lean Six Sigma (LSS) is a proven initiative that helps organizations eliminate waste and variation in their products, systems, and services. From a customer’s perspective, that means better products and services delivered faster and at lower cost. For a producer, it means improving the bottom line and growing revenue.

LSS provides a powerful, disciplined, and repeatable approach called DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) for executing improvement projects. These improvement projects can be done over a span of several months, or in only a few days.

Most definitely LSS includes a powerful set of tools, but it is more than just a toolset. LSS is also a mindset. It is a thought process to enhance the way we make decisions and operate on a daily basis. If implemented properly, LSS will change lives as well as corporate bottom lines. Air Academy Associates can help your company make this change happen.

TOBY LAVIGNE
Vice President Global Marketing
Hubcast

Cloud Computing is bringing to print what it has already brought to services like travel, banking and enterprise applications; freedom and efficiency.

“Cloud Printing” saves money because it is the only true print-on-demand solution, allowing you to print only what you want, when and where you need it. This reduces the costs of shipping, warehousing, fulfillment, distribution, inventory and obsolescence. The total of these costs run 3-6 times the cost of the print itself. Cloud Printing saves the environment. Lowering or eliminating obsolescence reduces tree harvesting, and oil consumption for paper production, print manufacturing power and freight. All of these savings mean lower carbon emissions.

Like all Cloud application services, Cloud Printing saves you time. When printing in-market you can order and manage your print on your terms, not your printer’s, saving you countless calls, emails and wasted hours. Cloud Printing saves corporations money, environmental impact and productivity.

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Cloud Printing Yields Earthbound Benefits

To listen to industry experts, computing is moving to the cloud. Analysts at Gartner, Inc. last year estimated the market for cloud, or Internet-based, services (often known as Software as a Solution, or SaaS) at $46.4 billion, and they expect it to grow to $150 billion by 2013. One of those services is printing.

"Organizations are seeking ways to buy printing as a service, wanting to pay only for the final printed product instead of buying or leasing the printing hardware and paying for paper. Cloud computing for print offers the promise of lower expenses for comparable products and services," Gartner says on its web site.

Big ideas, big numbers, but it’s not uncommon to hear business people ask, “What’s this mean to my company?” The answer could be big savings—in time and money—through services like the one offered by Hubcast, one of the first companies to put cloud printing to work in a tangible way.

Hubcast’s goal is to take much of the time and expense out of printing brochures, company profiles, sales presentations and collateral materials—the basic printed materials every sales force needs. Suppose you could upload a file for, say, a new sales presentation to the “cloud” and have the exact number of copies you need delivered to the location you specify five days later? That’s Hubcast’s service, in a nutshell. The company’s technology is installed at more than 60 partner locations worldwide so it can guarantee consistency of color and quality as well as on-time delivery.

“Eighty percent of print jobs are under 7,500 copies,” says Hubcast founder and CEO Toby LaVigne. “We take time, money and uncertainty out of managing the printing process with an easy to use cloud-based application for any marketer who cares about color and quality or any company with a sales force to support.”

LaVigne estimates managing a print job through a sub-contractor takes an average of three hours. “We reduce that to about two minutes,” he says.

Hubcast, whose sales grew almost five times in 2009 over 2008, is one example of a down-to-earth application of cloud printing technology. Others are coming. HP and Research in Motion (RIM) have announced plans for a web-based application that allows users to print documents, web pages, emails or just about anything from their BlackBerry smartphones—wherever they happen to be. The service is printer-agnostic and requires simple Internet access. HP and RIM plan to make CloudPrint, which was developed by HP Labs, the company’s central research arm, available to BlackBerry Internet Service subscribers as well as BlackBerry Enterprise Server customers.

In addition, ThinPrint plans a cloud printing solution for Google Chrome. Planon has released a cloud-based print server application for BlackBerry. Other office automation and electronics companies are reportedly working on their own cloud printing applications.

Clearly, the printing forecast is for clouds.

"...managing a print job through a sub-contractor takes an average of three hours. “We reduce that to about two minutes..."
Managing Print Costs Can Mean Big Savings

Opportunity can often be found in mundane places. Take the office printer, for example.

Industry estimates peg global enterprise spending on printing at almost $175 billion, a number that is only expected to grow as the volume of digital information explodes. According to Trina Wolfgram, senior marketing manager at HP Managed Enterprise Solutions, some 200 billion pages are converted to digital content each year. That growth is fueling demand for managed print services, already a $19 billion market that is increasing at four percent a year, according to market analysts.

You don't need to be big to target printing savings. “Once a company has multiple printers and distributed workforce, it’s a candidate for savings,” Wolfgram says. HP says it has helped companies save up to 30 percent on printing costs.

The key, according to Wolfgram, is going after costs strategically, starting with an assessment of current printing practices, then developing a roadmap for improvement. While there are near-term savings from optimizing your mix of equipment and managing it effectively, the biggest cost benefits come over time from targeting printing output and workflow.

“You can achieve 10 percent of total savings from infrastructure improvements,” she says, “and another 15 percent from how you manage your printing environment. But 75 percent of the savings come from managing the workflow over time.”

She points to replacing paper-intensive practices with electronic information management and installation of so-called PIN or pull printing, which cuts down on wasteful or redundant print jobs, as just two of many ways companies can attack print costs.

There’s an obvious green benefit to printing less – fewer trees need to be pulped at the paper mill. But the environmental impact of an effective MPS (managed print services) program goes much further. Printers tend to be high energy consumers, so cutting back on wasteful printing results in significant electric power savings too. One HP customer reported an 80 percent reduction in print-related energy consumption.

“There’s a sincere desire among enterprises of all sizes and kinds to reduce their carbon footprint,” says Wolfgram. “Implementing an effective print policy—a set of agreements on how printing and imaging is going to be managed—can increase productivity, save money and benefit the environment.”

Who can argue with that?
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