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APPLICATION STUDY

Clovis Unified School District Unifies Copiers with Production for a More Efficient Workflow

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The Challenge

California, like most state and local governments, is always facing tough economic pressure. Budgets are tight. Demands are high. And parents and politicians continue to raise expectations for educators, the system and their investment in public schools.

Bill McGuire, associate superintendent of administrative services for Clovis, sums it up this way: "Recently, the state has faced deficits and has had to cut funding. Yet this year we're adding 600 students. Our constant challenge—do more with less."

To keep pace with unprecedented growth and the community's pressing education needs, Clovis has built a new school every year for the past 20.

Not surprisingly, Clovis generates 88 million copies a year.

Teachers were spending way too much time tied up in the document production and management business. Instead of focusing on education, class preparation and student instruction, teachers and staff were tied up with labor-intensive administrative chores.

Today, more than ever, school districts need professional staff in the classroom teaching kids, focused on instructional activities, not prepping class materials, copies and documents.

Teachers were getting frustrated. Costs were going up.

With 1,650 teachers, it didn't take long for lines to bottleneck at the various school copiers, creating frustration and extra work that took teachers away from their core educational responsibilities. Adding to the pressure, teachers' daily copy jobs ran on stand-alone copiers, pushing the machines beyond capacity and driving up operating and maintenance costs for the district.

Reluctance to let go.

Many teachers were hesitant about giving up control of their important documents. Despite the wait at the copier, they knew their copy jobs would be ready by class time. Nevertheless, they were soon to discover the advantage of scanning.

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The Solution

After talking and listening to administrators, teachers and other employees, RSA proposed a completely integrated solution.

Part of the solution for Clovis was already in place. They already had a significant graphic arts department with a powerful production printing capacity. The strategic breakthrough hinged on a simple, powerful idea:

What if we could find a way to connect the power inherent in the production printing department to the teachers' need for fast, reliable, high-quality documents at their schools? And reduce the time and effort spent making those 88 million copies per year.

By replacing outdated stand-alone copiers with multifunction printers (MFPs) at all 39 school sites, forming an integrated "hub and spokes" document management system for the entire district. By streamlining the scanning process from the school sites to their central print shop, the solution would eliminate teachers standing in line and dramatically reduce the cost per copy.

The scanning solution.

Clovis installed multifunction systems in all 39 of their schools. Now, instead of making their copies on small equipment pushed beyond capacity, teachers easily scan their jobs to the central print shop.

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Users receive a confirmation page so they know they'll get their printed job delivered back the next morning by 9:00. Today, their jobs run on high-speed printers designed to handle production-level print runs in the millions. So teachers can get back to more important aspects of their jobs—lesson plans, class instruction and student needs.

"Our print shop, though it operates more hours, actually costs less to run and requires two fewer employees."

Bill McGuire
Associate Superintendent of
Administrative Services

To streamline the process and leverage the functionality of the multifunction systems, Clovis incorporated solutions from two business partners, Rochester Software Associates Inc. (RSA) and Equitrac. RSA's software enabled automation of the receipt, ticketing and batch printing of scanned jobs at the print shop. Equitrac introduced a solution to automate document accounting procedures across the enterprise, including network prints, walk-up copies and centralized print production.

According to Cheryl Smith, graphic arts acting department manager, "This saves us up to five minutes per job and when you multiply that times 300 jobs a day you can see that this is saving us a lot of time and money. The new way is just a matter of releasing the jobs, and we are taken out of the accounting business and placed back into the printing business."

The Results

By migrating the bulk of document production to their existing print shop, multifunction systems put the power of the print production shop in the hands of the teachers, saving class preparation time.

"We've been able to lower expenses as compared to what it would have cost with other vendors." Says Bill McGuire. "Our print shop, though it operates more hours, actually costs less to run and requires two fewer employees." And now that the multifunction systems at the school have the bandwidth to support print migration, the district will benefit from additional cost savings down the road.

More than a vendor relationship—a partnership.

"Together we've come out with an incredible solution that benefits our school district and will help other school districts save time, money and teacher resources. Working with them has been a joy," according to Michael Johnston.

"The quality that was going to come out of the relationship was very exciting and I knew it was going to be pioneering work," says Steve Weil, assistant superintendent for educational services. "It was fun."

Saving time, reducing frustration, getting back to the basics.

Clovis has begun to reap the benefits. Lines at the copy machine are gone. No longer worried about sending out their jobs, teachers spend more time focusing on education instead of copying. The school district is saving money and controlling costs, and at the same time their major print production asset is fully leveraged.

Today, print production, school and administration sites are linked into an efficient integrated system. Now, the Clovis Unified School District truly is a unified district when it comes to copies and documents.

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