

Why Digitizing Your Print Workflows is Such a Good Idea

And how outdated processes hold you back



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The Evolution of Processes

The myth of the paperless office was busted long ago. And rightly so – it just doesn't make sense for any business to completely abandon the use of paper. Just look at departments like HR, finance and legal that rely heavily on paper on a day-to-day basis.

The thing is, technology is changing office workflows in fundamental ways.

Smartphones and tablets mean you can access almost any information, wherever you are. The cloud is making it easier for teams to collaborate, wherever team members are. And the Internet of Things is making it easier to automate whole workflows.

Your office may never become completely paperless – but your workflows are going to change in some pretty big ways.

The key is to identify the paper-based workflows that currently slow your people down, cost more than they should and put your sensitive data at risk.

But the opportunity is a whole lot bigger than that.

Workflow transformation is your big opportunity to change the way people work together – to cut through cross-departmental silos, to find more efficient ways to collaborate, and to make your business' most important information easier to find and more secure. It's also a shortcut to happier staff, and in turn, more pleasant customer experiences.



To transform your workflows is to transform your business.

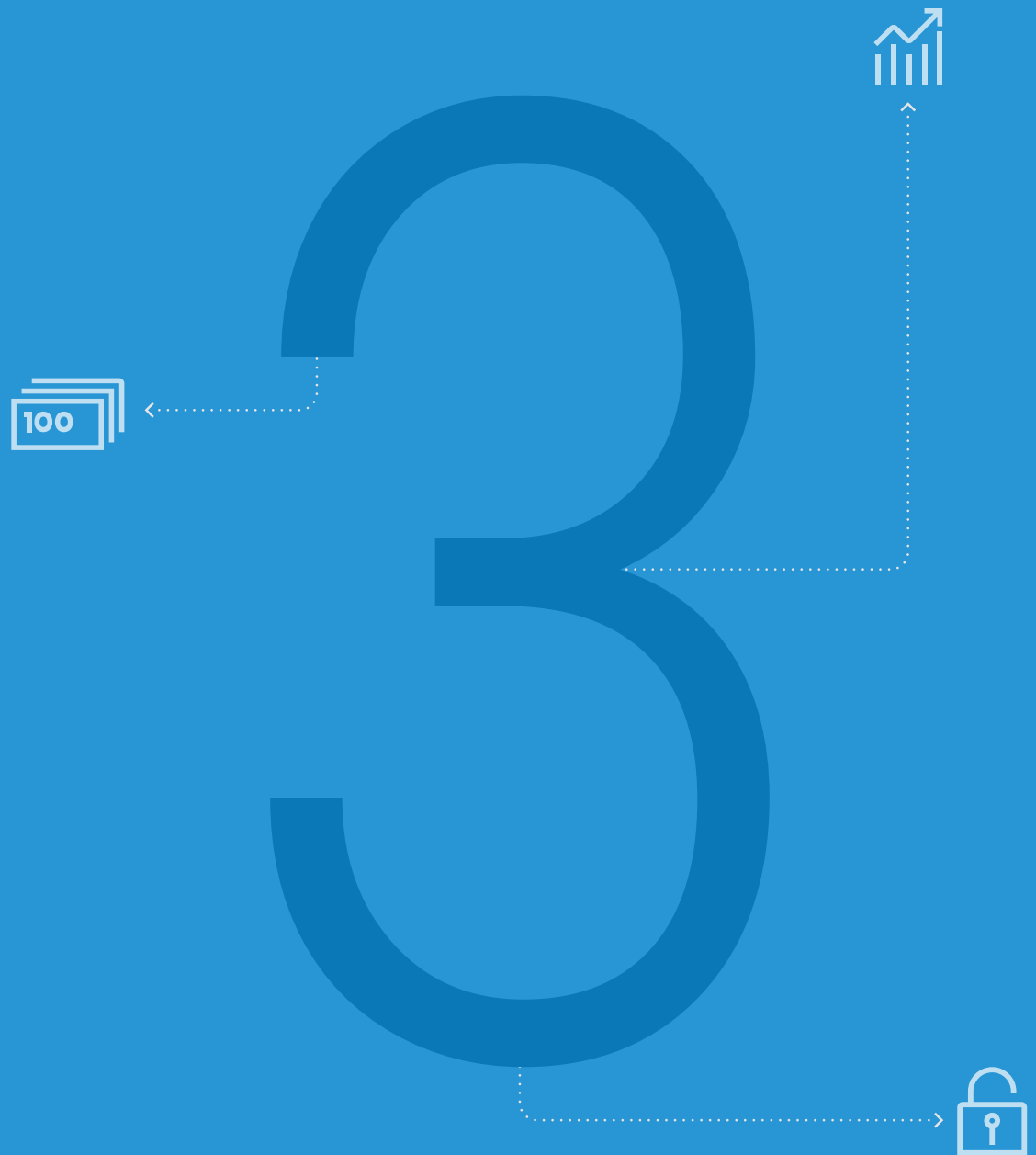
In this eBook, we'll show you all the ways paper-based workflows impact your business and what you should do about them. You'll gain insights about how to digitize paper workflows quickly and easily, and gain visibility and control over all your document processes.

Let's dive in.

The True Costs of Paper

Paper-based processes often play an important role. Sometimes people prefer using print outs in meetings, some regulations require businesses to keep hard copies, and sales people often prefer having the freedom to leave well-made documents behind with prospects.

But in practice, most businesses have more paper-based processes (and more paper-based steps in those processes) than they really need. And if you're one of them, the impact of all those outdated processes could be keeping your business from reaching its full potential in three important ways.



1. They Hurt Your Bottom Line

Paper-based processes cost you directly in terms of your printers and print supplies. But uncontrolled printing will cost you a lot more.

Whether for business or personal reasons, employees abusing print will drive up your maintenance costs and supply needs. Plus, those abusing print are unlikely to be thinking about things like whether or not mono would have sufficed instead of color, which wastes even more money.

So the challenge for you is to transform your processes in ways that help you protect your bottom line from problems like uncontrolled printing. But also in ways that help you get more value from that infrastructure.

31x

Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance found that associated paper costs could be as much as 31 times the purchasing cost.¹

1. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/quick-links/office-paper>

1. They Hurt Your Bottom Line

For starters, that means identifying the biggest sources of print waste. If you've got big stacks of printed documents near your printers, that's a good sign there's room for improvement (and a big security issue, but we'll get to that in a second).

But it also helps to think about maximizing your return on investment. Your print infrastructure needs to do more than just print. It needs to help you manage the hundreds of processes across departments, and empower the people in those processes to work more digitally, too.



2. They Hurt Your People's Productivity

Even the simplest tasks can cause productivity losses.

For example, adding a signature to a paper document or contract takes time. And then the document needs to be returned and approved too.

A digital approach to the same process gets the same result, only it's easier for the person signing and it moves a lot faster.

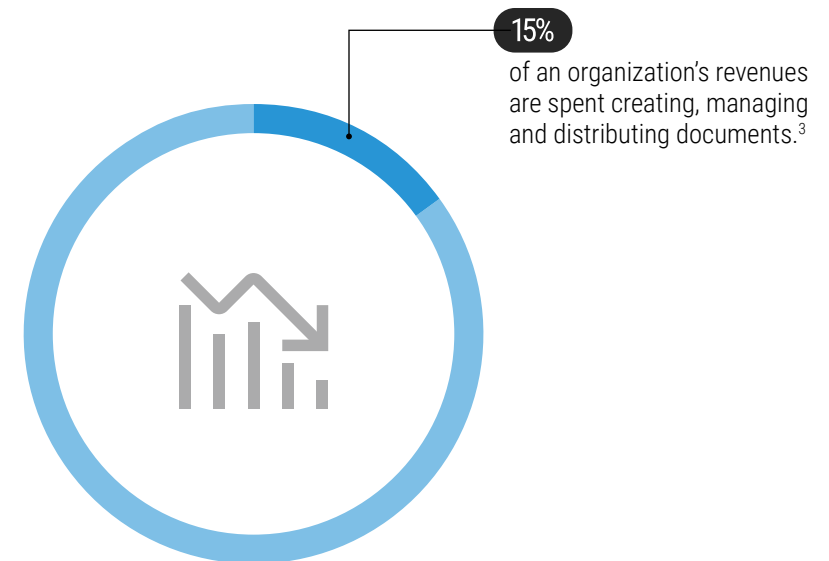
That may sound small. But the inefficiencies caused by paper-based processes can add up:

- People waiting in line for a shared central printer waste as many as 13 hours every year.²
- Teams proofreading and making edits to printed documents need to do double work when they're updating the digital version of the file.
- When executives need to make decisions based on printed documents, it's harder for them to review on the move. And their teams have to wait longer.
- Paper-heavy processes like invoicing involve a lot of steps where files are being moved from paper to digital and back. The more frequently you invoice, the more inefficient the process.

2. They Hurt Your People's Productivity

Put together, the productivity costs of paper-based processes are too high to ignore. So the challenge for you is to first identify the biggest sources of workflow inefficiency and waste. Then, simplify and automate those processes with smarter, more digital print infrastructure.

The good news is that once you've modernized, you can actually use modern print infrastructure to get data-driven insights on everything from print volumes to workflow productivity, liberating your people from making decisions based on guesswork.



3. <https://klipboard.io/8-reasons-why-going-paperless-will-rocket-your-business/>

3. They're a Security Risk

The common perception is that all threats to your data come from hackers. But the reality is that broken internal processes and procedures put documents at risk all the time.

For example, remember that big stack of uncollected documents near your printers? Suppose a performance review, acquisition statement, disciplinary action or salary breakdown is in that pile. That's sensitive data that could easily make its way into the wrong hands.



And the problem is that all-too-often it does – 60% of organizations reported print-related breaches in 2016.⁴

To deal with this, you need to ensure sensitive documents can only be printed by the right people, with the right credentials, so everyone's free to work without fear of losing critical information. More importantly, you need to ensure your print infrastructure is a central part of your security strategy, rather than an afterthought.

According to the ICO,

62%

of incidents are caused by human error, far outweighing other causes like unsecure webpages and hacking, which stand at 9% combined.⁵

4. Quocirca, Managed Print Services Landscape, 2017

5. <http://www.computerweekly.com/news/450297535/Human-error-causes-more-data-loss-than-malicious-attacks>

How to Turn Your Paper Workflows into Digital Ones

Given the costs, inefficiencies and security issues that come with having too many paper-based processes, it makes a lot of sense to start transforming your paper workflows into more digital ones. You can do that in a number of different ways.

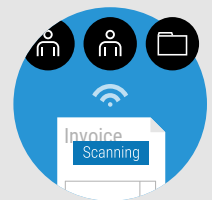
You can [connect your print infrastructure to digital applications and cloud systems](#) like Dropbox and Google Drive so it's easier for users to print files from all the places they're being stored.



You can [simplify mobile printing](#) so sales people are free to print from the road, and customers are free to print from offices.



You can [use your printers to automate workflows between different systems](#), for seamless connectivity across projects. For instance, you can automate many of the steps in an invoicing process by ensuring files get sent to the right folders and people as soon as they're scanned.



How to Turn Your Paper Workflows into Digital Ones

But before you get into the specific changes you'll need to make, it's worth following these four steps to make sure you're solving the right problems and recommending the right solutions.

1. REVIEW YOUR PROCESSES

The first step is to take a closer look at your processes. Very often, even the most common processes go undocumented (or at least the way they're executed in real life doesn't reflect what's been documented). The key is to look for processes that call for serious improvement. That might be processes that rely on a lot of paper or even processes that contain a lot of clunky, repetitive tasks.



Managed Print Services (MPS) offer advanced analytics that can help you quickly identify clunky workflows with a high print output.

One of the smartest ways to understand how information flows through your organization is MPS, which offers analytics on your devices, users, documents, processes and print data, plus maturity assessment tools to help you identify any bottlenecks.

2. CHOOSE A PROCESS

Select a process from your shortlist that can be digitized and automated with minimal office disruption or re-engineering required. You're looking for something that can have a big, demonstrable impact on the people involved – while still being relatively easy to digitize or automate.

If you're struggling to decide, go for the process that executives are most interested in transforming. By proving to them you know a reliable route to digitization, you'll be able to get their buy-in for broader transformation later in your journey.

How to Turn Your Paper Workflows into Digital Ones

3. TRANSFORM THAT PROCESS

Identify the process users, and involve them from the start. Hold a workshop on day one so you can map out the existing process and highlight core issues and objectives together.

Then, map out your agreed vision. To do that, you'll need to assess any potential effects on other processes or departments and specify costs and expected results.

4. REPEAT

Once you're happy with the results of your first switch from print to digital, you can apply the same method to other processes. The benefits of each iteration will grow exponentially as each of your newly-optimized processes start coming together and your people become empowered by efficient, more streamlined processes.

Over time, you might even decide to focus on whole departments that are particularly paper-driven like finance, HR and legal, that could be liberated by digital makeovers.

If you're unsure, talk to the experts.

You may be surprised how readily processes can be automated without changing anything fundamental: with just the right kind of software magic to get existing systems talking beautifully to each other.

We've done it with processes as diverse as employee on-boarding, expense validation, vendor contract lifecycle management, and account opening.

Making the Most of Digitization

‘Digitization’ and ‘digital transformation’ have certainly become buzzwords. But the fact of the matter is that every organization can benefit from faster processes, better collaboration and more effective security.

This kind of workflow transformation might sound daunting, but in reality it’s incredibly valuable.



We’ve seen organizations do some powerful things with smarter paper-to-digital workflows.

- \$1.1M in annual savings⁶
- 50% fewer office print devices to support⁶
- 30% drop in printed pages, eliminating >4M pages per year⁶
- A faster turnaround for distribution of new print jobs from three weeks to three days⁶

Most important, this kind of transformation is practical too. The inefficiencies, waste and security issues are clear to see, and worth solving. Plus, the technology and expertise to make the right changes are well-established.

Your offices may never become fully paperless. But with the right approach and technology, you can lower your costs, increase your visibility and control over document processes, and get deeper, more reliable insights into how productive your organization really is.

Buzzwords aside, that’s the kind of transformation every business needs to be empowered, liberated and seamlessly connected.

We're Here to Help

Businesses thrive when people, processes and technology come together. So let us help you make that happen.

After a simple assessment or consultation, our Managed Print Services can give you a head start in switching from paper to digital workflows, with added insights and support whenever you need it.

Sound good?

About our Partnership with Xerox

Working side-by-side with Xerox, we apply our expertise in image processing, analytics, automation and user experience to engineer a flow of work customized to improve the productivity and efficiency of your operations.

We create meaningful innovations and provide business process services, printing equipment, software and solutions that make a real difference for our customers.

Contact us, your authorized Xerox channel partner.