

The MPS to MNS Evolution: Eliminate the Risk and Cost With Network Monitoring Software

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IN BUSINESS, as in nature, evolution is vital to ensuring survival of the species. Through continuous innovation, the managed print services industry has evolved from providing a straight-up hardware product to offering full-service imaging solutions. As the industry faces the next frontier — the move from managed print services to

to solution sales, the industry faced arguably the most difficult transition in its entire history. With the advent of applications running on a PC directly connected to a multifunctional device (MFD) or, starting in 2001, inside an MFD itself, sales teams were forced to expand their activities and capabilities from merely moving boxes to solution

also placed greater demand on field technicians who were now expected to install and troubleshoot software in addition to repairing, assembling and disassembling hardware components.

A savior is born: the MPS era

In 2009 managed print services (MPS) emerged as the industry's new savior. Dealers and service providers were confident this transition would solve some of the challenges, as solutions reps were already in place to fulfill customers' expectations. Or so they thought. As it turned out, the move to MPS introduced new stumbling blocks — namely, customers who expected yet even more from their relationships. Business customers wanted more than a solution that told them when to refill paper or replace a toner cartridge. They wanted those services actually performed for them.

To make it easier on themselves, MPS providers kicked the innovation engine into high gear to get over the evolutionary hump, developing solutions and services to monitor, support and manage printer technologies as well as other assets and fleets of field technicians. Unfortunately, more than half the dealers who launched an MPS program failed, dragged down by the burden of developing and supporting these solutions without the full resources such an effort requires.

The impossible leap to MNS? Ignore the farmongers

Today, as the industry plods steadily ahead toward the next evolution — managed network services — many providers still cling to the MPS model as the only option for survival, even



complete managed network services — a new breed of services and solutions have emerged to help service providers make the leap with ease, less risk and low cost.

The new millennium brings new challenges

In 1998, as the office equipment dealer channel — and the imaging channel overall — began evolving from a purely hardware-based model

sales in order to provide the broader spectrum of services their customers had grown to expect.

Among OEMs, the transition forced a shift in business models; the major players suddenly felt the pressure to evolve or become extinct. Not only were sales reps expected to be knowledgeable about tangible items like printers and copiers, but they were also called upon to sell and support related software. The transition

issuing stern warnings about the seemingly insurmountable difficulties and costs associated with adopting an MNS model, which they deliver purely to protect their own business.

However, new technologies and opportunities are emerging that can not only reduce the risk and cost associated with the transition to managed network services but could actually close the book on the MPS chapter in the imaging industry. In fact, OEMs, dealers and service providers are well-positioned to make the leap into MNS, having already invested millions of dollars in education and training, new hires, infrastructure and certifications. So what's missing?

Network monitoring tools provide the easy, affordable solution

Robust, easy-to-use, intuitive network

monitoring tools provide a direct and seamless path to delivering the full-featured MNS solutions today's customers have come to expect. Partnering with an agile network monitoring provider that offers a flexible licensing model to support healthy margins not only makes it easy to supplement current offerings with this vital value-added service but also eliminates the risk involved in building a solution in-house. Choosing a powerful yet intuitive software solution that integrates with current offerings ensures a shallow learning curve that makes it fast and easy for existing staff to get up to speed quickly and begin providing turnkey MNS services to customers within days.

In business, successful evolution demands continuous innovation to stay ahead of the competition. Yet

evolution does not, by definition, require an entirely new invention. The ability to offer full-service MNS with virtually zero investment in staff and systems through tried-and-true network monitoring solutions promises to drive the next evolution in the imaging business. While some in the industry attempt to convince others of the difficulties associated with making such a leap in order to protect their own turf, look to the innovation leaders who are driving the industry forward with low-cost, low-risk, future-proof solutions. 

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