Ricoh helps College drive up value for money, cutting £500,000 off print costs and freeing up staff teaching time

Croydon College has integrated a Ricoh Production Print solution into its existing enterprise-wide print systems as part of its initiative to deliver value for money across College services. Not only has the Ricoh solution protected existing investment, it is on course to save the College £500,000 over five years. It has also made printing services more efficient and cost effective and ensures staff spend time in front of students, not printers.

Executive summary

Name: Croydon College
Location: Croydon, South East London
Size: 650 staff, 8,300 students
Activity: Further and Higher Education

Challenges

- Deliver value for money across all College services
- Increasing and unsustainable cost of printing
- Existing print room equipment and operation old and outdated

Solution

- Ricoh Production Print

Benefits

- Saving £500,000 on print costs over five years
- Integrated, best of breed solution protects investment and improves efficiency
- Increases teacher time in front of students instead of in front of printers
- Improves the quality of print material used in teaching
- Ricoh presses 1p per page compared to 4p on a desktop printer
- Make printing faster and more efficient by automating processes and operations

Challenges

Croydon College, in South East London, is one of the largest providers of Further and Higher Education to students in and around the South East of England. The College offers academic and vocational qualifications, including AS/A levels, BTEC Certificates and Diplomas and NVQs via full or part-time courses. The College is spread over two campus sites close to each other in Croydon.

Croydon College recently won accreditation as University Centre Croydon and entered into a strategic partnership with the University of Sussex enabling it to offer students University of Sussex awards for College degree courses.

Like all education institutes, Croydon College faces the continuing challenge of making sure it delivers value for money on all its services and print is no exception. The College was already well underway with a programme to install multifunction products (MFPs) around the campus and the College wanted to look at how it could make its central print function more cost effective.

The central print room equipment was getting old, the existing contract was coming to an end and overall print costs were too high. In one year, print costs had doubled. The College put out a tender to improve the central print room service, which was won by Ricoh.

Mark Watson, Print Services Manager at Croydon College, says, "One thing that has impressed me about Ricoh is the service it offers to the education sector in terms of understanding and delivering solutions that fit well within education. Compared to many other suppliers, Ricoh listens to what education needs and looks at how it can deliver products and services to us in the future. Also impressive are things like the sustainability credentials of Ricoh - the equipment which seems to consume very little power in standby mode and Ricoh's UK-based printer recycling and refurbishing facility. "

Solution

The College has deployed a Ricoh Production Print solution comprising two high-volume Ricoh mono presses and a high-volume Ricoh colour press. The presses have booklet makers attached.

The College was well into a programme of replacing its desktop printers with MFPs from another supplier. However, one of the efficiency and cost benefits of the Ricoh equipment has been its ability to integrate with the College's existing print management software. It means that when required, any print job sent to an MFP can be re-directed to a Ricoh printer without the need for complex software conversion or manually transferring the job to the Ricoh printers.

The College is also trying to reduce the amount of human intervention required when printing. The fact that the Ricoh presses can handle finishing functions to a print job, such as dual staple, two-hold punch and card covers, continuously makes printing more efficient. In addition, the Ricoh presses are able to handle a wide range of paper sizes down to A5 and especially thicker paper stocks. For example, the College has been able to use the Ricoh presses to pre-print 300gsm post cards ready for mail merge printing, and produce forms on thin NCR (non-carbon copy) paper.

Other features of the Ricoh presses includes the ability to scan documents so that staff can bring in a document, scan it on the Ricoh presses and have the file saved to a specific directory. This helps staff have information ready to hand for displaying in the classroom or posting in a virtual learning environment.
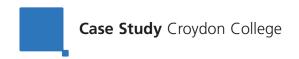
The print room is used mainly by College staff to produce material like class handouts and information booklets to support teaching. The aim for the print room, eventually, is to make it into more of a shop front and open up print services to students.

Benefits

By installing the Ricoh Production Print solution and replacing the existing equipment in the print room, the College estimates it will save as much as £500,000 over five years. The cost saving is being achieved because the Ricoh solution has been designed especially for an education environment and because the equipment is highly efficient with the cost per click less expensive. Also, the fact that the Ricoh equipment integrates so easily with existing print systems makes it more cost effective.

The College was already using print management software to manage its network of satellite MFPs and the Ricoh solution was able to integrate easily with this so that the College would not waste existing investment.

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Watson says, "Integrating software from one manufacturer with another manufacturer's equipment isn't always that easy. I'm part of a national forum on printing in education and so it was quite nice to go along there and tell colleagues that we had managed to integrate successfully the Ricoh presses with our existing systems. I don't know of many other colleges that have managed to do this."

This simple integration was important because the College had implemented a policy to move as much printing as possible away from MFPs to the central print room. Centralised printing means jobs can be done faster, to a better standard and for less cost, and it gives print room experts more control over quality of printing that is handed out to students.

The College has a policy where any job that comprises 20 copies or more should go to the print room. Each member of staff has a £50 print allowance which encourages them, wherever practical, to use the most cost effective way to print, which is the Ricoh presses in the print room compared to desktop or MFP printing.

Jobs sent to the print room are also printed very quickly and, to make the process easier for staff, they can track the progress of their print job and they also get a pop on their computer screen when it is complete.

"We did an analysis of cost per click to print and found that the print room is less than a desktop printer or MFP - 4p on a desktop compared to 1p on the Ricoh devices. But also, we don't want teaching staff standing around at printers waiting for large print jobs, so it is also about using the Ricoh resources to free teachers up to concentrate on the main job in hand – out in front of students teaching," says Watson.

The College has run a communication programme, with leaflets in pay packets and videos on the intranet, about how staff can improve the way they use print resources.

Watson says, "Print Services at Croydon College has a strong commitment to strengthen and improve the learner experience through the provision of a responsive print service. Although information is going digital, having a physical handout in a classroom does supplement the learning process. Pupils have different styles of learning – some visual, some hands on and some need paper-based information. So the value for money and efficiencies we've achieved with the Ricoh print solution play a key role in education at Croydon College. In fact, lecturers often make the print room their first port of call in the morning to collect their handouts for the day."

Ricoh Solution/Products
- Ricoh PRO 1357EX
- Ricoh PRO C720S

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