

With 15 offices and 900 lawyers worldwide, Akin Gump relies on Lexmark output devices and distributed fleet management services to keep employee productivity up, costs down and its output infrastructure in tip-top shape.

Lexmark distributed fleet management services suit Akin Gump

The Organization

Founded in 1945, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP is a leading international law firm with more than 900 lawyers in 15 offices worldwide. Among the 25 largest law firms in the U.S., Akin Gump represents regional, national and international clients in more than 30 core practice areas, including communications and information technology, corporate and securities, energy, finance, entertainment and media, financial restructuring, intellectual property, investment funds, litigation, mergers and acquisitions, private equity, and public law and policy. In its community outreach efforts, the firm commits each attorney worldwide to 60 pro bono hours annually.

The Challenge

Similar to most corporations with a worldwide presence, growth at Akin Gump concentrated on the core business. As a result, the firm's IT environment included little standardization, a significant inventory of old equipment, suffered from driver compatibility and networking issues, and lacked a comprehensive service and support policy.

With an array of about 1,200 aging printers, copiers and fax machines from several manufacturers, the firm found it necessary to maintain an inventory of consumables varied enough to meet any need. Output management, handled differently in each office, made it impractical to gauge usage and overall costs or implement a comprehensive management and maintenance plan.

"While printing is a very important part of our business, it is not our core business," said Brad Christmas, Akin Gump's Chief Information Officer. "Complaints about slowness and unreliability were stacking up as were the demands on our IT staff."

Akin Gump's fleet was littered with personal desktop printers that were not connected to the corporate network, couldn't be shared and

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were expensive to operate. Devices that were networked were placed in office locations as an afterthought and as space allowed, instead of methodically based on employee usage needs. With these disparate devices came significant driver compatibility issues that required many IT staff hours to keep up.



The cost to maintain this aging and varied fleet stretched Akin Gump's support staff nearly to the breaking point. Akin Gump decided the time was right to formulate a new, across-the-board strategy that would cut operating and maintenance costs, and allow support staff to concentrate on other core IT projects.

Akin Gump installed more than 600 Lexmark networked output devices, including monochrome laser printers and multifunction printers (MFPs). The new fleet represents nearly a 50 percent reduction in total devices, which simplifies maintenance and use of them. All the devices are connected to Akin Gump's corporate network, allowing them to be monitored, managed and maintained by Lexmark's onsite personnel and remote tools.

"We knew there had to be a better way and that outsourcing the entire function to a qualified partner was worth pursuing," said Christmas.

The Solution

Akin Gump closely examined several vendors and issued a thorough RFP that combined technology, services and cost as the key criteria. Based on a rigorous review of the responses from several vendors, Akin Gump ultimately chose Lexmark as its partner, choosing to replace its entire output fleet with a family of devices from Lexmark, including the day-to-day management of the new devices under a three-year distributed fleet management agreement.

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In 15 worldwide offices, Lexmark methodically planned the precise Lexmark device assortment and placement based on the unique needs of that group and in line with a set of deployment principles created with the firm. Akin Gump installed more than 600 Lexmark networked output devices, including monochrome laser printers and multifunction printers (MFPs). The new fleet represents nearly a 50 percent reduction in total devices, which simplifies maintenance and use of them. All the devices are connected to Akin Gump's

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Though different models from the same laser product family were deployed to closely match output capacity with user demand, the devices use the same toner cartridge family, allowing Akin Gump to eliminate the large and varied inventory it previously found necessary to keep on hand. With the tools provided through Lexmark's distributed fleet management contract, the devices automatically alert Akin Gump personnel when toner is needed in each device, eliminating the need to stock extra supplies that tie up precious capital resources. In addition, the Lexmark MFPs make frequently performed operations simple through its customizable, fully graphical touch-screen operator panel.

To free its IT staff from day-to-day printer maintenance and status monitoring, Akin Gump elected to outsource these essential services to Lexmark through a worldwide, three-year distributed fleet management agreement. A comprehensive set of realtime reporting tools with a browser-based administration portal, Lexmark's DFM offering allows organizations to track usage by device, respond to auto-generated maintenance alert messages, and order toner cartridges only as needed. The result is superior control of output assets and lower costs.

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The Results

Today, Akin Gump has more than 600 Lexmark printers and MFP devices installed in its offices worldwide. Devices have been placed strategically throughout the firm, closer to the employees who use them, instead of where it's architecturally convenient. Productivity is up, device outages are rare, and total cost of ownership is down. Standardization

on a single toner cartridge family that fits all of the Lexmark devices has allowed the firm to eliminate the varied inventory once necessary, and which tied up hundreds of thousands of dollars. Use of genuine Lexmark toner assures the highest quality results that its clients expect.

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By outsourcing fleet monitoring and hands-on maintenance to trained Lexmark personnel, Akin Gump’s IT staff can devote its resources to other core business issues. Standardization on a fleet-wide set of Lexmark printers and MFPs has simplified support, lessening the load on Akin Gump’s internal help-desk staff.

The volume and quality of fleet data provided through Lexmark’s tools gives Akin Gump the powerful information it needs in order to make

informed decisions about device placement, required changes and future improvements. “Data equals knowledge,” said Christmas. “Now we know, down to the dollar, what we’re spending on our output infrastructure,” said Christmas. “With this information, we’ve been able to rotate the fleet of devices as usage demands change. The information has been an extremely valuable asset in managing our environment more effectively.”

But, according to Christmas, it’s also Lexmark’s knowledge of the legal marketplace that really makes a difference for him, his staff and all the employees at Akin Gump.

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For Akin Gump, the jury is no longer out. Its choice of Lexmark as the firm’s exclusive supplier of networked output technology has won unanimous approval.