



CASE STUDY

CEMENT COMPANY CUTS  
COST AND SIMPLIFIES PRINT  
MANAGEMENT THROUGH  
MANAGED PRINT SERVICES  
(MPS)



# CASE STUDY CEMENT COMPANY CUTS COST AND SIMPLIFIES PRINT MANAGEMENT THROUGH MANAGED PRINT SERVICES (MPS)

The North American operations of Votorantim Cimentos (**VCNA**) have successfully rationalized their print fleet, centralized management of their devices and reduced their costs and environmental impact by implementing a custom-designed Managed Print Services (MPS) solution.

In 2006, while undergoing a major enterprise resource planning (ERP) deployment in tandem with its Brazilian parent company, Votorantim Cimentos, the VCNA IT team seized the opportunity to standardize and right-size its existing print fleet, while simultaneously upgrading its print devices.

VCNA turned to 4 Office Automation Limited (4 Office) to provide an MPS solution, and has continued to work with 4 Office, renewing their contract twice over the past decade.

“Ultimately, when looking for an MPS provider, you’re looking for someone who can provide an array of print services so you don’t have to worry about print,” said Marcio Santos, IT Governance Manager for VCNA, which includes St. Marys Cement, Canada Building Materials, Suwanee American Cement, Prestige Concrete Products and Prairie Material.

“Based on their flexibility and accommodating service level offerings, 4 Office gives us that.”

“ One of the challenges was to implement a standardized set of printers that worked with SAP, so we could reduce the management demands resulting from the mixed print fleet across different offices”

## BACKGROUND

VCNA produces cement, concrete, aggregates and related construction products for the Great Lakes region. Headquartered in Toronto, the regional operations include plants and offices in Ontario, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin. Its parent company Votorantim Cimentos is Brazil's largest cement manufacturer and the eighth largest in the world, and also has locations in Florida and California.

The company employs approximately 3,300 and their IT Group supports approximately 1,500 workstations across nearly 200 geographically diverse locations.

In 2006, VCNA sought to simplify the management of print—including supplies fulfillment and device support—across all Canadian and U.S. business units, and to ensure each unit took ownership of their respective costs.

The company and its various divisions had approximately 700 legacy print devices, consisting of a variety of models from different manufacturers, with and without network connectivity or multifunction capabilities and a number of which were incompatible with the new ERP system.

“One of the challenges was to implement a standardized set of printers that worked with SAP so we could reduce the management demands resulting from the mixed print fleet across different offices,” Santos said.

The company issued a competitive request for proposal (RFP) and selected 4 Office even though other parts of the company had standardized on Hewlett-Packard (HP) devices. According to Santos, “4 Office was chosen because they were able to cost-effectively meet both our technical and logistical requirements, coupled with the fact that they offered the flexibility required to meet special requests.”

# THE SOLUTION

VCNA partnered with 4 Office and standardized on Kyocera printers and multifunction devices (MFDs) for its entire North American operation. Models were carefully selected for each location that met the individual requirements of the business.

“We saw that 4 Office had the capability to get things done in both the U.S. and Canada,” Santos said. “Originally we didn’t know what our real costs were because every business unit bought their own equipment and supplies as required.”

Santos remarked that “Upon reviewing our existing fleet and needs, 4 Office rolled out a new print fleet across all 200 of Votorantim Cimentos North American locations over a period of only three months. This short deployment timeframe allowed all of our locations to be ready for the construction busy season.”

## VCNA LOCATIONS



“The biggest challenge was accessing all the geographically diverse locations,” Santos said. “Some were basically trailers, each with unique cabling needs, infrastructure, and environmental demands. It was monumental; far from a cookie-cutter scenario and 4 Office was with us every step of the way.”

The rationalization of its print fleet has served VCNA well. Since the last RFP in 2011, the fleet has been reduced to only 435 print devices and they have achieved an estimated 30% reduction in print costs because of the 3:1 ratio of low-print-cost MFDs to high-print-cost single function printers.

Device Category	Devices in Canada	Devices in USA	Category Total
Multifunctional	129	198	327
Printer	51	57	108
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>435</b>

### BORDERLESS BILLING AND SERVICE

In response to VCNA centralized print management strategy, 4 Office tailored a custom invoice that not only provides a quick snapshot summary overview, but also details each business unit and cost centre within business units down to individual device usage, providing the level of granularity required to accurately allocate print costs to specific business units and sub-units.

“One of the drivers for implementing MPS was to assure costs were properly allocated, enabling management to assess productivity at each site,” Santos said.

“It was all part of the bigger resource planning picture VCNA was promoting, in step with the efficiencies realized through the SAP ERP implementation,” added Hamid Ortakand, Manager for Document Imaging and Printing at 4 Office.

Support and maintenance is handled centrally from 4 Office’s Mississauga, Ontario, headquarters. Service requests are responded to by 4 Office technicians and agents on location across North America.

“When we need them, 4 Office is there,” Santos said. “If anything needs to be escalated, it is done quickly. Other service providers would force us to adhere to their time-consuming escalation processes, but with 4 Office it’s much more convenient, efficient and direct.”

“I just call 4 Office and we don’t get bogged down with filling out various request forms and approvals.”



# ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY IN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS

Environmental considerations played a big part in VCNA selection of 4 Office as the vendor of choice for printer and multifunction devices.

The work environment where the devices are being used is one that often demands extreme durability, according to Santos. "Many of these devices are being used in cement plants and sometimes get caked with cement dust, even so, the Kyocera models recommended by 4 Office still work."

The printers and multifunction devices also needed to support Votorantim Cimentos' sustainability efforts. For this reason, VCNA included environmental impact and energy usage as an integral part of its RFP. 4 Office responded and was awarded the contract based on its sustainability practices and environmentally-friendly print solutions.

"It's all part of our effort to reduce our environmental footprint. The MPS, as executed by 4 Office, improves our monthly key performance indicators," Santos said.

During their long-standing relationship, 4 Office has become an even more consultative partner with VCNA and are now looking at leveraging OCR (optical character recognition) technology to reduce printed output by integrating electronic documents into business process workflow.

"4 Office makes suggestions that help us to better meet our business needs and provides us with many options," Santos said. "They're not just service ticket takers." ■ ■ ■ ■ ■