

Case Study: Strata Information Technology

Managed service provider (MSP) uses PrinterLogic to standardize its customer environment—while increasing its responsiveness and cost-effectiveness.



Challenges

- Printers would not deploy reliably to roaming users, resulting in high numbers of print-related support tickets.
- Following initial success, Strata IT wanted to deploy PrinterLogic to other customers in different business sectors.
- The healthcare organization was seeing high costs of color printing but was unable to identify causes and solutions.

Results

- Initial changes in printer deployment methods reduced ticket counts by half; more changes resulted in an estimated 95% reduction.
- The inherent versatility of PrinterLogic has given the MSP a uniform, scalable selling proposition, adding value to select service tiers.
- In addition to streamlined print management, PrinterLogic offered increased visibility into the print environment and shed light on opportunities for efficiency gains.

For more than ten years, Strata Information Technology has been enabling small- and mid-sized businesses to succeed with enterprise-grade IT services and support from its headquarters in Encino, CA. As a forward-thinking managed service provider, the organization's philosophy is one of "Total IT," which combines the benefits of hourly support and preventative maintenance with dedicated 24-7 responsiveness, unlimited onsite visits, and an attractive flat-rate pricing model.

In serving a wide range of customers across a variety of sectors, a key strategy Strata IT employs to remain agile and cost-effective is uniformity in its hardware and software. "We standardize everything from the networking stack—the firewall, the switches, and so on—to the servers. We use Hyper-V for virtualization and [Windows Server] 2012 R2 or later. We configure clients with the same IP address structure and the same DHCP scopes. We put printers in specific IP address ranges, and we properly configure SNMP across all the printers," explains Keith Stark, CEO of Strata IT.

This standardization limits configuration and eases troubleshooting. It also allows Strata IT to optimize for

another strategy that caters to the Total IT philosophy: centralized management.

"We have geared our supportability around doing things remotely. We don't want to go touch a computer. We don't want to go touch a printer. We want to do it from here if at all possible," Stark explains.

"During May, June, July and August, we were seeing 90 to 100 print related tickets. By December we were seeing five. It was phenomenal."

Around 2015, an IT colleague mentioned that his enterprise-scale company had been using [PrinterLogic](#) as its print-management solution. He said PrinterLogic eliminated his organ-

ization's need for a costly, resource-intensive print-server infrastructure—while improving centralized manageability.

"He was coming from a large company with thousands of employees," Stark says, "and we thought his suggestion to use PrinterLogic could solve some of the printer deployment and driver problems we faced." The deployment and driver problems Stark referred to were mostly associated with one particular medical client, a 180-person firm with eight locations.

"We had built out a remote desktop service in Azure, but it had a lot of [printing] problems, especially when users would roam," Stark says. "We were getting up

PrinterLogic

to one hundred tickets per month—everything from someone asking why their printer was printing double-sided to someone not having the right printer. And this one client only had about forty printers.”

Initially, Strata IT deployed PrinterLogic for this one client to address the root causes of the company’s most troublesome printing problems. Standardizing printer drivers and deployment scopes using PrinterLogic’s central management console “cut our ticket load in half immediately,” says Stark, “which was awesome.”

Challenge #1—Solving Printer Problems for Roaming Employees

The medical firm referenced above struggled with a revolving door of printing issues. Stark explains: “It was either somebody moved to a new office and they needed a new printer, or ‘this guy’ needs black and white, but this ‘other guy’ doesn’t. It was just printer problems galore.”

The situation was further complicated by the way real-world conditions ran up against the firm’s remote desktop environment. As users roamed to different locations, local printers wouldn’t always deploy correctly.

PrinterLogic’s seamless Active Directory integration and the ability to configure subnet-specific printer deployments were a good match. But Strata IT also wanted to establish a long-term print-management platform that would be perfectly tailored to this client’s current and future printing needs.

Solution

By using PrinterLogic’s terminal-service deployment capability, which allows admins to set up dynamic and automated printer deployments based on client IP addresses, Strata IT was able to create a more granular and permanent printer deployment strategy for high-level roaming users.

“For users who move from office to office, it’s important that they’d have the right printer when they logged into the terminal server. If I’m in Office A in the morning, but then move to Office B in the afternoon, I’m retaining the same session on my terminal server—and all of my printers are correct,” he says.

After Strata IT’s initial implementation of PrinterLogic, which resulted in an immediate 50% drop in print-

related support tickets, further fine-tuning led to even more dramatic savings. “During May, June, July and August, we were seeing about 90 to 100 tickets. By December we were seeing five. It was phenomenal.”

“Just the savings in our personnel time alone was worth every penny. We didn’t need as many resources devoted to printer problems—and our clients are much happier with us.”

Challenge #2—Creating a Scalable USP and Adding Value to Service Tiers

The success implementing PrinterLogic for the healthcare customer—combined with the solution’s scalability—encouraged Strata IT to consider

using the platform across all of its customers with similar service needs.

“[PrinterLogic] did such a great job for one client that we wanted to push it out to the remaining clients at a comparable service level, and reduce those ticket loads as well,” Stark says. “That was a no-brainer once we did the first one.”

Extending PrinterLogic to more customers enabled Strata IT to reduce its investment in print management and create a unique selling proposition (USP) for customers who wanted more efficient printing. PrinterLogic’s versatility and centralized architecture would also benefit the MSP’s broader goal of creating a uniform environment that could be managed remotely.

“We’re a managed service provider, so our job is to make the environments the same. Some are obviously more complex than others, but from a hardware and software perspective, we try to be as consistent as possible.”

Solution

As of this writing, Strata IT had deployed PrinterLogic across ten clients at 18 locations. Adding PrinterLogic to its portfolio helped the MSP improve its services for existing customers, and it also helped bring in new ones with the promise of streamlined print management.

“One client was a manufacturing firm here in Los Angeles, where PrinterLogic was one of the things that helped us close the deal. With their old IT firm, it was just continual printer problems—nonstop. They couldn’t seem to get them under control with Windows print servers,” says Stark.

“Part of our sales pitch was, hey, you know what? The reason we do a better job is that we standardize on how we deploy printers, and we use a best-in-class solution for printer deployment—and that is PrinterLogic.”

It took only a few weeks to bring the company’s printers in line and eliminate the problems. PrinterLogic also did away with the physical print servers that frustrated the

PrinterLogic

company for so long. “We asked them it recently, and they said, ‘Printers are the one thing that we just don’t have problems with anymore.’ Their ticket load for printer-related activities is near zero. It’s been great for them. And for us.”

Challenge #3—Discovering Additional Value from PrinterLogic’s Rich Functionality

With PrinterLogic in place, the time and resources Strata IT had to spend on management dropped to a fraction of previous levels. No-where was this more obvious than with the multi-location medical firm and its roaming users.

But there were still print-related issues that had gone undetected.

“After we were rolled out for six months or a year, we got a request from the [healthcare organization’s] controller saying their printing costs were still high. We went in and, sure enough, on one of their leased printers, every single person there was printing in color...thousands of pages a month,” Stark says.

Fortunately, PrinterLogic’s centralized management console made it incredibly easy to call up an individual printer and identify the problem remotely. The question now was, could Strata IT leverage PrinterLogic to solve the default color settings, too?

Solution

Along with the increased visibility it provides into the entire print environment, PrinterLogic gives IT admins powerful tools for updating, or rolling back, individual drivers from a single repository—as well as creating and deploying custom printer profiles.

“For this client, we applied a profile so printing was defaulting to black and white no matter what. The user could change it to color if they needed to print in color. But every time they printed they had to select color manually. The cost savings from that change alone was a couple of hundred dollars per month.”

The healthcare experience also demonstrated to Strata IT that there is significant potential in using PrinterLogic’s built-in auditing and reporting capabilities.

“The reporting feature is something we can use to add value as a sales component. To us, right now PrinterLogic is a printer-management tool. But for the client, there’s a benefit in explaining I can send a report every week that shows everybody who prints and how much.”

Conclusion and Savings Summary

Stark estimates that Strata IT is saving the equivalent of up to “half of a Level 1 full-time employee per month” since implementing PrinterLogic. “We were looking at 100 tickets per month. That’s 30 minutes a ticket, or at least 50 hours. So it’s certainly saved us a couple thousand [dollars] per month, especially at the beginning,” Stark calculates. “But we just don’t run into problems with printers anymore. The biggest

printer problem we’ve had in the past three months was a bad fuser.”

“Just the cost savings in our personnel time alone was worth every penny. We didn’t need the same personnel devoted to those kinds of problems, and at the same time our clients are much happier with us.” As a result, he says

PrinterLogic is central to what

might be described as the IT MSP’s paradox: “If it’s not working, it’s the IT guy’s fault; and if it is working, why do we need the IT guy? That’s why we’ve evangelized around PrinterLogic to remind our users that it really does make a difference in their network. They’re not having these printer problems anymore, and we’ve saved a lot of time.”

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