

'Document Wastage' costing Utility Industry £102 million a year

Pitney Bowes study finds that poor printing practice hits costs at a time when UK firms need to watch the bottom line

UK businesses are losing an estimated £2 billion pounds a year due to "document wastage", the inefficient and sometimes unnecessary printing of work-related and personal materials in offices, and the utility sector is one of the big losers, a new Europe-wide study by mailstream technology specialist Pitney Bowes reveals.

The UK's utility industry presents a major opportunity for document production savings: £102 million a year based on the 2008/9 figures. Across Europe, utility firms stand to reap cost savings of up to £761 million, the Pitney Bowes study shows.

According to the report, UK firms could have saved an estimated £2,159 billion on printing costs in 2008/9, up from £1.95 billion in 2006, if they had implemented more cost-effective document printing policies. The most costly UK industry in terms of document wastage is retail, at an estimated £688m a year.

The report also found that, at a time when companies are looking to cut spending in the face of a recession, businesses in major European markets are costing themselves an estimated £13 billion a year by failing to adequately manage rising workplace printing costs – a trend it dubs "document wastage". The white paper, *Counting the Cost of "Document Wastage" in Europe*, pulls together industry and corporate data from across Western Europe, including teleresearch from European Top 1000 companies and figures from EU and governmental organisations.

In the report, Pitney Bowes points out that, typically, colour printing run through a centralised facility can be done at a tenth of the cost of the output from a desktop device. By utilising print management software, implementing controls, monitoring output and reorganising document production equipment to run this activity through a centralised facility, companies could cut overall costs in this area by 10% to 30%.

Pitney Bowes' research showed that the spread in recent years of high-bandwidth communications and its attendant capability to send large attachments, along with the growth of email and web usage, has actually increased printing in most offices as employees print much of the information they receive and find online. This trend has been accompanied by the widespread use of desktop colour printers – the most expensive form of office printing.

In addition, the study found that 50% of UK firms allow employees to use printers and photocopiers for personal purposes and, of those, 57% did not monitor such usage.

Richard Thompson, Managing Director Pitney Bowes, says: "In our own experience, we have seen that at least 75% of the businesses we work with have no strategy for dealing with document output – despite the fact that this has become a growing business cost.

“We’ve found that even the smallest companies can achieve dramatic savings if they bring their printing and document production under tighter control.

“Even in centralised, high-volume document production facilities, it is possible for companies to cut costs and make these more efficient – for instance by combining administrative, customer service and promotional output volumes and printing on lower-cost equipment.

“With companies facing a tough economic climate at the moment, every business – from the corporate giant to the SME – is looking for ways to improve returns and cut production costs. Eliminating ‘document wastage’ is one straightforward way of achieving better cost efficiency and getting a healthier return on investment in office print facilities.”

For further information contact:

Annex Achieng

annex@lindsellmarketing.com

020 7402 0510

About Pitney Bowes

Pitney Bowes is a mailstream technology company that helps organisations manage the flow of information, mail, documents and packages. Our 35,000 employees deliver technology, service and innovation to more than two million customers worldwide. The company was founded in 1920 and annual revenues now total \$6 billion. More information is available at www.pb.com.