



The Swenson Group  
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# Ultimate Buyer's Guide: Managed Print Services

Technology Education Series

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“Print volumes drop by 10% the moment people think their print usage is being monitored.”

- Office Tech Insider



# How Would You Describe Your Print Strategy?

Is your current print environment set up to run efficiently, or full of hidden frustrations? Frequent paper jams, toner shortages, or outdated equipment slowing you down? Maybe you're spending too much on maintaining printers or struggling to integrate your print and digital workflows. These challenges can quietly add up, costing time, money, and productivity loss.

This is where Managed Print Services (MPS) can help.

With Managed Print Services (MPS), you can eliminate these frustrations. MPS not only optimizes your print environment but also bridges the gap between physical and digital documents, ensuring a seamless flow of information. By reducing downtime, automating processes, and cutting unnecessary costs, MPS transforms printing from a burden into a strategic advantage that supports your business goals.

“60% of businesses have suffered a print-related data breach in the last year.”

- Quocirca

In this guide, we'll walk you through everything you need to know about Managed Print Services, from why it's even more important in today's digital world, how to know if your business is a good candidate for it, and what to look for in a great MPS provider. We'll also explore the differences between Co-Managed and Managed Print Services, what you need to know about Service Level Agreements, and a list of questions you'll need when interviewing a potential provider.

“Print-related expenses consume 6-9% of most IT budgets.”

- Office Tech Insider

This guide will equip you with the knowledge to make informed decisions about your print environment in the context of your overall information management strategy.

**Ready to unlock the hidden potential in your print environment? Let's dive in.**



## | What is Managed Print Services, and Why It Matters

Managed Print Services (MPS) is a comprehensive approach to managing your entire document ecosystem - both paper and digital.

At its core, MPS is about:

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 Usage Visibility & User Restrictions | 6 Automated Toner Fulfillment  |
| 2 Cost Savings / Control               | 7 Environmental Responsibility |
| 3 Removing IT Burden                   | 8 Vendor Simplification        |
| 4 Document Security                    | 9 One Invoice                  |
| 5 Equipment Longevity                  | 10 Fleet Optimization          |

However, Managed Print Services isn't just about printers and copiers. It's also about integrating your print and digital processes to create a seamless information flow.

### The Digital Paradox

Despite the digital revolution, the paperless office remains a myth for most businesses. The reality is that we live in a hybrid world. While digital transformation is crucial, it doesn't eliminate the need and the value of paper documents. Instead, it changes how we interact with them.

"Business printing is the last bastion of unstructured cost control."

- Smartsheet

### Why Managed Print Matters in the Digital Age

- **Bridge the Digital Divide:** MPS helps you seamlessly integrate paper and digital workflows. Need to scan a document and route it to your cloud storage? MPS has got you covered.
- **Security in All Forms:** With data breaches on the rise, security isn't just about firewalls anymore. MPS ensures that your printed documents are as secure as your digital files.
- **Cost Control:** Did you know that print-related expenses can account for up to 3% of a company's revenue? MPS helps you track, manage, and reduce these often-hidden costs.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** Immediate results are possible by reducing paper consumption, recycling empty toner cartridges and lowering energy costs for a smaller carbon footprint.
- **Focus on Core Business:** By removing the burden of managing your print devices, service and consumables, your IT team can focus more time on higher priority tasks.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Leverage AI and real time analytics on your entire fleet of print devices to identify opportunities and help you to make fact-based decisions.

In our rush to digitize, it's easy to overlook the humble printer.

But here's the reality: effective information management isn't about choosing between digital and print. It's about creating an integrated ecosystem where both coexist efficiently.



## | Is Your Business a Good Candidate for Managed Print Services?

When it comes to improving efficiency and cutting costs, Managed Print Services can be a game-changer for many organizations. But how do you know if your business is the right fit? Here are some key signs that MPS could benefit your business:

### 1. You're Spending Too Much on Printing

Do you know how much your company spends on printing each month? If the answer is "no," you're not alone. Most businesses are unaware of how much time and money they waste on excess printing supplies, maintenance, and energy. If printing costs keep creeping up, an MPS provider can give you a clear picture and help you slash those expenses.

"16% of all IT Help Desk Calls are print related."

- Office Tech Insider

### 2. Your Printers Constantly Need Maintenance

Are printer jams, service calls, and downtime slowing your people down? If your team is frequently dealing with malfunctioning equipment, it's not just frustrating - it's a productivity killer. MPS ensures that your printers are always up and running, with proactive maintenance and support.

### 3. You're Using Multiple Vendors for Hardware, Service or Supplies

Do you have multiple printers, scattered across departments, all using different vendors for supplies and maintenance? An effective Managed Print program will help you to centralize control, giving you full visibility into your print environment with one, capable partner. This can eliminate confusion, provide consistent service levels and cut costs.

"20% of printed pages are left unattended at the printer output tray"

- Office Tech Insider

### 4. Document Security Concerns Are Growing

With sensitive data being printed every day, how are you safeguarding it? Printer security is often overlooked, yet it's crucial in preventing data breaches. MPS includes enhanced security protocols to protect confidential information, ensuring your business stays compliant with industry standards.

### 5. Sustainability Is a Priority

Looking to reduce your company's environmental footprint? MPS not only cuts costs but also reduces energy consumption and waste by optimizing how and when you print. It's a win-win for your budget and the environment.

### 6. Your Team is Struggling with Remote or Hybrid Work

In a hybrid work environment, managing both physical and digital documents can be tricky. If your team is spread across multiple locations or working from home, MPS can help streamline document management and enable secure printing from anywhere.

Do any of these points resonate with you?

It might be time to consider partnering with an MPS provider.





# | What to Look for in an MPS Provider

Choosing the right Managed Print Services (MPS) provider is like picking a business partner. You want someone who understands your needs, has the right expertise, and can grow with you. Here's what to keep an eye out for:

## 1. Comprehensive Assessment Capabilities

A top-notch MPS provider should:

- Conduct a thorough analysis of your current print environment
- Create an inventory all your print devices, volumes & costs
- Understand your business processes and goals
- Identify inefficiencies and security risks
- Provide a clear, data-driven proposal for improvement
- Interview key users

**Red Flag:** If a provider offers a one-size-fits-all solution without a proper assessment, keep looking.

## 2. Broad Range of Services

Your MPS provider should offer more than just printer maintenance. Look for:

- Hardware procurement and management
- Supply fulfillment (say goodbye to toner emergencies!)
- Print policy development and implementation
- Document workflow optimization
- Print security solutions
- Environmental sustainability programs

**Bonus Points:** Providers who can integrate print and digital workflows seamlessly.

## 3. Cutting-Edge Technology

In the fast-paced world of technology, you need a provider who's ahead of the curve. Check if they offer:

- Modern, energy-efficient printing devices
- Advanced monitoring and analytics tools
- Cloud-based print management solutions
- Mobile printing capabilities
- AI-driven predictive maintenance

**Pro Tip:** Ask for a demo of their technology platform. If it looks like it's from the 90s, that's a bad sign.

## 4. Robust Security Measures

In an age where a single data breach can put you out of business, security is non-negotiable. Your MPS provider should offer:

- Secure print release functionality
- Data encryption for documents in transit and at rest
- User authentication methods
- Compliance with industry standards (like GDPR, HIPAA, etc.)
- Regular security audits and updates

**Remember:** Your printer can be a backdoor to your network. Make sure it's locked tight.



## 5. Scalability and Flexibility

Your business isn't static, and your print strategy shouldn't be either. Look for a provider that:

- Allows you to upgrade / downgrade devices
- Offers flexible contract terms
- Can scale services up or down based on your needs
- Provides options for both short-term and long-term engagements
- Has experience with businesses of various sizes and industries

**Warning:** Beware of low-cost programs that include older / used devices.

## 6. Stellar Support and Training

Even the best technology is useless if you can't use it effectively. Your MPS provider should offer:

- 24/7 technical support
- Proactive maintenance
- On-site and remote troubleshooting
- Comprehensive user training programs
- Regular check-ins and performance reviews

**The Human Touch:** Great support isn't just about fixing problems—it's about preventing them and helping you when you need it.

## 7. Proven Track Record

Finally, don't just take their word for it. Look for:

- Case studies and success stories
- Client testimonials
- Industry recognition and awards
- Partnerships with leading technology vendors
- Service technician certifications

**Insider Tip:** Ask for references from clients similar to you in your area.

Choosing an MPS provider is a big decision. The right partner will do more than manage your printers—they'll help transform your entire document ecosystem, driving efficiency, security, and cost savings across your organization.



# Managed Print Services vs Co-Managed Print Services: Choosing Your Print Management Adventure

Imagine you're planning a road trip. You have two options: hire a chauffeur to do all the driving or share the driving with a skilled co-pilot. That's essentially the choice between Managed Print Services (MPS) and Co-Managed Print Services. Let's break down these two approaches to see which one might be the best fit for your organization's journey.

## A. Managed Print Services: The Full-Service Chauffeur

In a traditional MPS model, you're essentially handing over the keys to your print environment to an expert driver.

### What it looks like:

- The MPS provider takes full responsibility for your print infrastructure
- They handle everything from supply management to maintenance and optimization
- Your internal IT team is largely hands-off when it comes to print management

**Ideal for:** Organizations with limited internal IT resources or those looking to completely offload print management.

## B. Co-Managed Print Services: The Skilled Co-Pilot

Co-Managed Print Services is like having a knowledgeable co-pilot on your print management journey. You're still in the driver's seat, but you've got expert help right beside you.

### What it looks like:

- Responsibilities are shared between your organization and the service provider
- You maintain control over certain aspects while outsourcing others
- Your internal IT team works in partnership with the provider

**Ideal for:** Organizations with some print management capabilities who want to enhance rather than replace their existing processes.

## Making the Choice: Questions to Ask Yourself

### 1. What's your IT team's workload like?

- Lots of in-house know-how? Co-Managed might be your speed.
- Print novices? Full MPS could be the way to go.

### 2. What's your IT team's workload like?

- Constantly swamped? MPS can take a load off.
- Have some bandwidth? Co-Managed lets you stay involved.

### 3. How much control do you want to maintain?

- Love being hands-on? Co-Managed keeps you in the driver's seat.
- Happy to delegate? MPS takes the wheel.

### 4. What's your budget situation?

- Looking to completely outsource? Factor in the full MPS cost.
- Want to leverage existing resources? Co-Managed can be a more budget-friendly option.

### 5. How complex is your print environment?

- Hugely complicated? MPS brings in the big guns.
- Moderately complex? Co-Managed lets you tackle what you can and get help where you need it.

Whether you choose Managed Print Services or Co-Managed Print Services, the goal is the same: to optimize your print environment, reduce costs, and free up resources to focus on core business activities. It's not about which model is better—it's about which one is better for you. Assess your needs, consider your resources, and choose the approach that best aligns with your organization's goals and culture.





## Service Level Agreements: Your MPS Performance Guarantee

A Service Level Agreement is a contract between you and your MPS provider that defines the level of service you expect. It's like a promise in writing, outlining what the provider will deliver and what happens if they don't.

### Why SLAs Matter in MPS

1. **Sets Clear Expectations:** No more "I thought you were handling that" moments. SLAs spell out who's responsible for what.
2. **Ensures Accountability:** If something goes wrong, you know exactly who to call.
3. **Guarantees Performance:** SLAs typically include performance metrics. If the provider doesn't meet them, they face penalties.
4. **Provides a Roadmap for Improvement:** Regular SLA reviews help identify areas for optimization in your print environment.

### Key Components of a Strong MPS SLA

1. **Response Time:** How quickly will they respond to issues?
2. **Resolution Time:** How fast will problems be fixed?
3. **Uptime Guarantee:** How reliably will your print services function?
4. **Supply Delivery:** When can you expect new toner or ink?
5. **Reporting Frequency:** How often will you get performance reports?
6. **Security Measures:** How will your data and devices be protected?
7. **Cost Control Metrics:** How will they help you save money?

### Red Flags to Watch Out For

- Vague language: "We'll respond quickly" instead of specific timeframes.
- No penalties for missed targets.
- Lack of regular review and adjustment clauses.
- Absence of data ownership and privacy clauses.
- Limited references

### Negotiating Your SLA: Tips and Tricks

1. **Know Your Needs:** Understand your print environment before you negotiate.
2. **Prioritize:** Not all services are equally critical. Focus on what matters most to your business.
3. **Include Escalation Procedures:** Know who to call when things go wrong.
4. **Plan for Change:** Include clauses for reviewing and adjusting the SLA as your needs evolve.

A well-crafted SLA is your insurance policy in the world of Managed Print Services. It ensures you get what you pay for and provides a framework for a successful, long-term partnership with your MPS provider.



# Interviewing a Potential MPS Provider: The Ultimate Question Checklist

Choosing an MPS provider is a bit like hiring a new employee – you need to ask the right questions to ensure they're the perfect fit. Here's your cheat sheet for the "interview" with your potential Managed Print Services provider. Remember, there are no wrong questions, only missed opportunities to get valuable information!

## 1. Experience and Expertise

- How long have you been providing MPS?
- Can you share case studies from clients in our industry?
- What certifications do your technicians have?

## 2. Assessment Process

- How will you evaluate our current print environment?
- What data do you collect, and how do you use it?
- How long does a typical assessment take?

## 3. Technology and Solutions

- What brands of printers and copiers do you support?
- How do you handle integration with our existing systems?
- What solutions do you offer for mobile and cloud printing?

## 4. Security Measures

- How will you ensure the security of our printed and digital documents?
- What measures do you take to protect against cyber threats?
- How do you handle compliance with regulations like GDPR or HIPAA?

## 5. Cost Structure and Savings

- How is your pricing model structured?
- Can you provide a detailed breakdown of potential cost savings?
- Are there any additional fees we should be aware of?

## 6. Implementation and Training

- What does the implementation process look like?
- How do you minimize disruption during the transition?
- What kind of training will you provide for our staff?

## 7. Ongoing Support and Maintenance

- What are your response times for different types of issues?
- How do you handle supply replenishment?
- Do you provide 24/7 support?

## 8. Reporting and Analytics

- What kind of reports do you provide?
- How often are these reports generated?
- Can we access real-time data about our print environment?

## 9. Scalability and Flexibility

- How easily can your services scale as our business grows?
- Can we adjust our service level as our needs change?
- What's your policy on adding or removing devices?

## 10. Environmental Sustainability

- What strategies do you employ to reduce our environmental impact?
- Do you offer recycling programs for cartridges and old devices?
- Can you help us set and achieve sustainability goals?

## 11. Contract Terms and Exit Strategy

- What's the typical length of your contracts?
- What are the terms for early termination?
- How do you handle the transition if we decide to end the service?

## 12. Continuous Improvement

- How do you stay updated with the latest print management technologies?
- Do you offer regular reviews of our print strategy?
- Can you provide examples of how you've helped clients evolve their print environments over time?

Asking these questions will not only help you gauge the capabilities of potential MPS providers but also demonstrate that you're a knowledgeable and serious client. Don't be afraid to dig deep – a good provider will appreciate your thoroughness. The right MPS partner won't just have all the answers; they'll ask you plenty of questions too. They should be just as interested in understanding your business as you are in understanding their services.



# Ready to Take Control of Your Print Environment?

Managed Print Services isn't just about managing printers – it's about optimizing processes, enhancing security, and supporting your organization's broader goals. By embracing MPS, you're not just keeping up with the times; you're refocusing your resources to higher priorities.

Remember, the journey to optimal print management is ongoing. It requires commitment, flexibility, and a willingness to embrace change. But with the right MPS strategy and partner, you can turn what was once a necessary business expense into a true operational advantage.

As you close this guide and look to the future, ask yourself: Are you ready to transform your print environment and unlock new levels of efficiency, security, and sustainability for your organization?

The world of printing smarter, greener and more secure awaits.



**The Swenson Group**  
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## About The Swenson Group

The Swenson Group is an award winning, privately owned Managed Service Provider that provides IT services, document management and office equipment at a low predictable monthly expense.

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