

What is hybrid mail?

Eliminate local document and mail piece production costs



Introduction

The term 'Hybrid Mail' is increasingly used in the modern mailing environment. However, the definition of a 'Hybrid Mail' is far from clear.

As many organisations look to generate savings within their print and mail operations, 'Hybrid Mail' is increasingly being investigated.

The purpose of this paper is to explain 'Hybrid Mail' to the individuals within many of our customers that may be charged with assessing whether this method of printing and mailing documents could be adopted within their operation.

Hybrid mail defined

Hybrid mail is all about capturing documents as they are generated from multiple locations and then printing and mailing them from a central location. This may be through an external fulfilment provider or through a centralised print and mail operation that you operate on behalf of your organisation.

Hybrid mail exists in two formats:-

'Pay as you go' – This is popular within SME's and allows small businesses to charge an account with funds and then submit documents for off site fulfilment, with charges offset against their deposit balance.

'Enterprise wide' – This involves deploying the Hybrid mail print driver across a multi site organisation to channel documents and mail for external or centralised document and mail piece fulfilment.

How does hybrid mail work?

Hybrid mail is primarily focused on the mail that is generated by your staff from their desktops. This may be a one off letter or a mail merge to multiple locations.

When printing their documents, users are presented with a simple user interface or 'Print Driver' that presents them with a series of options, prior to releasing their document for print and submission.

The options available to the user are dictated by the organisation prior to deployment. Options may include among others:-

- Whether to send the document first or second class
- Whether to print the document in colour or black and white
- Whether to print the document simplex or duplex
- Whether a promotional insert is to be included within the mail piece

Once the options have been selected, the job is submitted into a queue for print and fulfilment. Users are then able to access an administration module to see if their job is held in a queue or has been printed or mailed. Hybrid mail may also be used to capture system generated transactional documents such as statements and invoices.

What are the benefits of hybrid mail?

Hybrid mail offers a number of benefits over traditional mail preparation methods. These may include:-

Enforcing Corporate Standards

Many organisations that operate over multiple locations enjoy the opportunity to enforce corporate standards for document production. These often include:-

- Mandating that all documents are printed in mono rather than colour to realise print production savings
- Mandating that all documents are sent second class (or via the preferred postal carrier) to reduce postal costs across the organisation
- Mandating that all documents are printed duplex to reduce paper consumption
- Maximising brand identity by ensuring that only the correctly branded stationary and envelopes are used.

Eliminating local document and mail piece production costs

In addition, more and more organisations are choosing Hybrid Mail to reduce the costs incurred by individual departments or local sites in producing documents for printing and mailing.

These typically include:-

- Reduction in expenditure on materials (paper / envelopes / stamps)
- Reduction in expenditure on capital equipment (printers / mailing equipment)
- Reduction in labour costs incurred with manually inserting documents

Reduction in postage costs

Hybrid mail can often lead to a reduction in postage costs. As well as offering the option of mandating the postage class to be used, many organisations are able to leverage volume based postal discounts by channelling their print and mail production into a single location.

By using pre set triggers to release jobs, organisations can release mail as volume bands are hit. This reduces the cost per mail piece and results in savings.

Support an agile Workforce

One of the key advantages of Hybrid Mail is the ability to support an agile workforce. Users can download the print driver from any location and submit jobs for printing and mailing centrally. This means home based employees do not have to source materials locally and saves them valuable time. For organisations moving towards an agile model, this ensures that all costs are tightly controlled.

How do I get started?

As Hybrid mail involves centralising document production and fulfilment, it is advisable to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged early in any project implementation.

In our experience, many individuals retain a preference to retain local control over their document and mail piece production and this can often delay any project implementation.

At Pitney Bowes, we believe that we have a unique proposition in relation to Hybrid Mail. Not only have we developed the capture and workflow software, but we have also developed an intelligent interface with our range of mail insertion equipment. This provides comfort at department level as updates are supplied from a central print and mail room that documents have been successfully processed as planned.

Furthermore, this also allows organisations to source the full suite of software and hardware from a single provider and simplifies the project deployment process.

Through Hybrid mail many organisations generate significant cost savings. However, in order to display a true return on investment, it is important to understand the current costs incurred locally in relation to document and mail piece production. Your potential supplier should be able to help you with his subject.

Common applications

The organisations that we are actively working with to deploy Hybrid Mail tend to be organisations that operate over multiple locations that have little control over the way documents are produced and controlled.

We have seen strong interest across NHS Trusts and in Councils who are looking to create 'Shared Service' hubs for document processing.

Conclusion

For organisations moving towards an agile working model, or where mail is generated from multiple locations, valuable resource is wasted preparing documents for mailing.

In addition, enforcing corporate identity standards is often an impossible task. This results in non customer friendly documents produced in non standard fonts and using incorrect branding.

What's more, many individuals have little appreciation for how mail is priced. As a result costs are easily leaked.

For organisations that operate in this kind of environment, Hybrid mail may well lead to significant cost savings.

By channelling all documents to a central location for printing and mailing, Hybrid mail will ensure production costs are kept at a minimum, corporate identity standards are enforced and that postage costs are tightly controlled.



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