

Case Study: Edinburgh University

The Current Service

The current print service offers a one stop shop for print for the University. The printing may be undertaken in-house or outsourced but is centrally managed. The print manager is responsible for the in-house print service and for print buying. There are two copy-centres – one on each main campus.

The inplant offers two-colour litho printing up to SRA3 and digital copying in monochrome and colour. Direct mailing services using variable data are also used. A service level agreement with the University is in place to indicate which services will be offered in-house to make a clear distinction with the framework agreement for outsourced print.

Print buying is managed by the print manager who has a print buyers' group of 23 people within the University who are provided with training and a print buyers' guide. They access the framework agreement directly. There is 6-monthly monitoring of the agreement. Designers, both in-house and external must use the framework agreement. Quality management of print and service is undertaken centrally as is the relationship management with suppliers.

The manager is also responsible for the University's use of the national framework agreement for copiers in departments. The University is trying to get heads of department to look at having appropriate levels of equipment and to look at moving to multi-function devices. An audit service is offered. The audit offers a whole life costing for equipment and an indication of potential savings. Sustainability is a key driver for audit and change. There are some departments and areas of campus where change is facilitated by building layout of office arrangements.

The print unit also procures paper for the University and the main stock is an 80% recycled stock. It is hoped to move to 100% recycled. The paper is delivered direct to departments with the print manager handling complaints. Local tendering has resulted in better prices than the national paper agreement. The University has been a case study for WRAP (the Government organisation encouraging use of recycled products).

Open days and roadshows have been very successful. Volume is going up and costs are going down.

All the procurement aspects of the print service are funded by the University as the service brings considerable savings (£0.4M per annum estimated).

The Journey to the Current Service

As with many universities, change started with the need to reinvest in equipment and the need to move to digital workflow. The changes started around 2000. This resulted in the move to an approach of print management covering in-house and outsourced print.

At the same time as the framework agreement was developed, the University made some investments, for example in digital copying, computer-to-plate and a new management information system (move from Shuttleworth to Prism). Changes in process enabled increases in efficiency of administration. The service also moved towards electronic submission, ordering, order confirmation and proofing. Some developments have been supported by the University's MIS section. The move to electronic submission and proofing reduced the requirement on pre-press.

A lot of work was done on team building. The staff needed to see themselves as a team and to be more highly motivated and productive. A service ethos was also built.

As part of his development, the print manager undertook an NVQ in Purchasing.

A web site including prices was also developed.

Positive Messages from this Case Study

The partnership between the Procurement Office and the Print Service has been key to the success of the service. The initial investigations used IBIS (sector programme for evaluating spend) to predict the potential savings and make the case for change. The savings can be significant. By funding the cost of the

administration of the print buying service, the University will help get buy-in by not adding additional costs to individual jobs to cover the fixed costs of the service.

Using a print buyers group is different to many institutions, but supporting the group through training and a print buyers' guide has made this effective.

Some Issues

The student association's print and copy requirements are not bundled in with the rest of the University's requirements.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Karen Bowman and Stuart McClean for discussing the service at Edinburgh University.