

Case Study: Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities

The Current Service

The Glasgow based print service provides a service for both Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities.

The litho printing is based at Strathclyde. There were previously four copy centres, one on each main University campus and two at remote Faculties of Education. This has been reduced to three (and will be reduced to two in three years time). The value of the in-house work peaked at £1.5M in 2003 and copy volumes are now declining. This decline is the result of:

- The HE Copier Contract and academic departments placing digital printing equipment at the disposal of staff who undertake their own copy work at what is a greater cost but seen as more convenient. Staff budgets are top sliced so the total cost of producing departmental work is never revealed. The copier/printers at Strathclyde are, however, centrally managed with a consolidated bill and internal recharging managed centrally. This brings some savings.
- This devolved approach, and the lack of a proper document output strategy, is leading to a long term decline in centrally produced print/copy volumes.
- Web content management systems are used on both campuses and all students must access these via portals to obtain student notes, exam results, etc. all to be down-loaded (and paid for) by the student to any output device that is convenient to them.

Print buying is coordinated by the Print Unit and Learning Services (previously AVS). There are nine companies on a Glasgow-wide metropolitan framework agreement. A framework agreement has also been set up for design services which again is co-ordinated by the print manager and Learning Resources Design Manager. There are a number of approved print buyers in the University (around 12) who can use the framework agreement directly. Approximately 50% of jobs using the framework agreement are handled by a centrally based estimator.

In-house jobs are benchmarked for VFM and in general it is cheaper to undertake volumes of less than 3000 two-colour in-house.

Online ordering is available. Administration is undertaken using the Shuttleworth system.

The Journey to the Current Service

Ten years ago the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde (situated in Glasgow) had print services that were not cost effective. Neither were run as businesses and a merged service was considered leading to the joint service that is seen today.

A generic online ordering system was developed in-house (the Zeatal system) to prevent reliance on any copier supplier.

This has been a great success story where members of staff from two universities have worked together to produce returns of not less than 5% to both institutions every year for 10 years.

Positive Messages from this Case Study

The shared service was ahead of its time – the funding councils are only now looking to promote the idea of shared services. The business model is fully costed with a fully funded rolling five year capital replacement programme.

Some Issues

As in some institutions devolved budgets have led to anarchy in terms of output management. This leads to inefficiencies, additional costs and a less sustainable situation (financially and environmentally) than might be desirable.

Acknowledgement

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