

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Harper Office

E-automate and FMAudit Software Enable New Business Venture

Creating a new managed services business might seem a big challenge, but by investing in ECI technology, Harper Office successfully launched its new managed print services venture. It now has anywhere, anytime access, automatic contract billing and comprehensive management reporting.

Harper Office is a leading provider of office supplies and managed print services to companies in central London and beyond. It also supplies office interiors, IT hardware, printed matter and corporate gifts. Founded in 1986, Harper Office is based in Romford, Essex and has 15 staff.

Managing Director Ian Harper says his company is oriented towards good customer service. It has long used Progress® and Acsellerate™ software to support the business. But what more could it offer customers?

"We recognise that there are opportunities which are vertical to our core business. We identified managed print services as being one. We wanted to make it a strong element of our service offering," says Harper.

The idea was attractive but presented a significant learning curve. There's more work involved in managing printers on customer sites, rather than just shipping products.

"We have always embraced technology and have placed huge importance on its ability to provide a robust operational structure. To perform well as a managed print services supplier we required software that was built for the job," says Harper. "We needed an efficient system that would keep our costs to a minimum. A system that managed service calls, contracts and invoicing together with monitoring of devices for service and consumable fulfilment requirements."

E-automate and FMAudit software offered easy familiarity

Harper Office thoroughly evaluated three potential suppliers while learning much about managed services. It soon focussed upon ECI's e-automate® and FMAudit® software. Harper says that everything about them echoed efficiency, accuracy and automation with a superior level of reporting.



OVERVIEW

Harper Office
www.harperoffice.co.uk
Romford, Essex, UK

BUSINESS CHALLENGES:

- Finding an end-to-end solution
- Closely monitoring remote customer devices
- Implementing robust processes and workflow
- Ensuring service contracts are profitable

BENEFITS OF SWITCHING:

- Anytime, anywhere access for ease-of-use
- Produces contract invoices automatically
- Customisable service levels possible
- Comprehensive management reporting



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The new business is still only six months old but we are predicting a healthy profit in the first year’s trading. This will be in part due to the efficiency of using ECI e-automate with FMAudit.”

“ECI products stood head and shoulders above the other suppliers. We already had a relationship with ECI and had been satisfied with the products and the way they support and develop them.”

The implementation began in January 2017 with a deadline of 1st April. Harper Office soon found ECI had a “huge library of material online” including useful training videos. It explored the two applications before adding live data and then deploying FMAudit’s remotely-managed data collection agent to its customers.

Users also found an easy familiarity with many business processes such as stock or accounts. Having expected that contracts, service management and remote data collection would be challenging, it wasn’t so.

“We found these processes easy to follow and the screen interaction had a real common sense feel,” says Harper. “ECI were a huge help and the implementation went very well.”

The managed services software provided welcome flexibility

The new managed print service using e-automate and FMAudit went live on time. Remote data collection supports a series of standard and customised alerts – right down to device level. Printer meter readings are automatically collected which helps support timely replenishment.

“From an efficiency point of view, FMAudit is brilliant because we can deploy replacement consumables the next day. Customers don’t end up running out of toner.” Apart from the data collection agents, everything works in the cloud. For Ian Harper, this gives “a degree of

flexibility that I am unaccustomed to.” Anywhere, anytime access enables him to receive information from customers, dispatch engineers and to manage fulfilment. Harper Office chose to subcontract field service and this, including a customer service desk, is also managed by e-automate.

“You could create any service level and be confident in charging people appropriately,” says Harper. “I can create a whole set of contract invoices in the blink of an eye and be confident in their accuracy. I don’t even have to worry about sending the invoices out because we have automated that process too.”

ECI software help them make sound business decisions

FMAudit is also being used with some non-managed customers to help them understand the total cost of ownership and encourage the sale of consumables.

“FMAudit can help generate revenue from non-managed streams. The intelligence it can collect from a pre-sales perspective is hugely valuable when presenting a solution to new customers,” says Harper.

The real-time reporting from e-automate and FMAudit is helping to increase contract profitability as the service grows. Harper Office’s return on investment will soon be achieved and new IT-related managed services may be introduced.

“The management reporting is brilliant. It gives you the knowledge and information that you really need to make sound commercial decisions in what is an increasingly competitive environment,” says Harper.

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