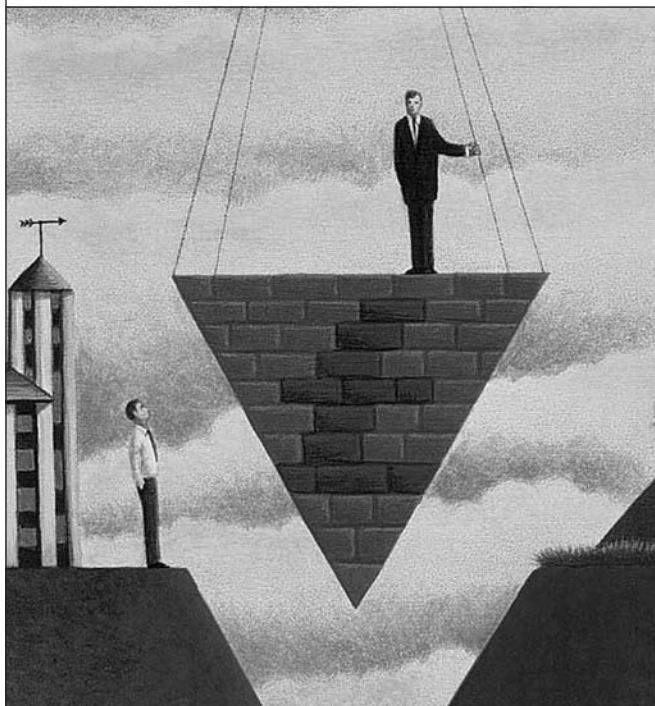


# Considering Color?

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Color printers traditionally have been viewed as expensive, so they have had limited use in business — mostly in the high-end sales and marketing environment.

That is beginning to change, and color printers are becoming more commonplace for everyday use across the enterprise. Why? Prices have dropped, but there's more. Color printers today are more versatile and productive than ever, as manufacturers continue to ramp up feeds and speeds, print quality and user-friendliness. The return on investment (ROI) now makes sense, even for smaller businesses.

Marketplace statistics back up the notion that color printers are gaining popularity in business. According to Gartner, the research analysis firm, "U.S. shipments of color printers will surge at a 20 percent compound annual growth rate through 2009, fueled by demand from businesses for premium image quality."

The growing popularity of color printers mirrors that of high-end televisions. They are becoming affordable, and people want the better quality that comes with the more sophisticated device.

## Documents That Resonate

Beyond that, businesses have come to recognize that color documents register better with the people reading them.

These conclusions are backed by research conducted by printing expert and author Don Jones. In his book, *The Definitive Guide to Office Color Printing*, 2004, Jones noted, "Color communications can improve comprehension by 75 percent over black-and-white communications. Readership of color documents can be 40 percent higher. Training materials printed in color can accelerate learning from a rate of 55 percent to a rate of 75 percent."

Because color-printed documents dramatically improve readership and retention of information, businesses increasingly use color for many more types of documents than they did previously, including spreadsheets, financial reports, presentation handouts, RFPs and proposals, business forms, memos and internal newsletters.

Flexibility is another factor. Companies have better control over last-minute revisions than they might have with documents outsourced to a professional print shop.

## Gaining Speed

The print output speeds of color printers have increased significantly over the past few years. According to Gartner, "Two years ago, most business color copiers had speeds between 6 ppm and 15 ppm; a few had speeds about 20 ppm. Today, 20 ppm is the norm, and several business color devices are in the range from 28 ppm to 30 ppm."

The upshot? Faster speeds lead to better productivity — from both the printer and employees.

### **Better Software, Better Control**

Most people think of color printers as mere mechanical devices, but it's the software “under the hood” that plays a large role in driving the advances in color printing today.

Businesses using color printers are taking advantage of sophisticated LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) technology that is built into the printers to control which employees can use the printers. Doing so ensures that the printers are used by the appropriate personnel while saving wear and tear on the printers and reducing the amount of consumables (ink, toner, paper and so on) they use.

Another option is to use a preconfigured driver granting certain groups or departments access to a color printer for black-and-white printing only. To further manage printer resources, printer fleet management tools can regulate the amount of print jobs per user, according to a predetermined quota per time period ratio.

Additional security-related features available with new color printers are extremely useful for accounting or financial employees. Today's color printers, for example, can save a document within the printer's memory and require that a PIN number be entered to print the secure document.

### **Picture Perfect**

Perhaps the most notable improvement in the newest generation of color printers is the dramatic upgrade in print quality. Printer manufacturers have put a lot of research and effort into improving the quality of color printing. Canon, for instance, performs high-precision color measurements using supercomputer simulations to find optimal color nuances from combinations of 270 trillion colors. Hewlett-Packard (HP) works to continually enhance its toner and other consumables for improved quality. All the hard work pays off: Research conducted by HP indicates that “Color persuades, by increasing participation as much as 42 percent, as shown in a study on phone directory ads.”

With such dramatic improvement in color printing quality, businesses can employ in-house printing compared to outsourcing color documents to print shops. And with the lower costs and dramatic improvements in productivity and quality made over the past few years, color printers make good business sense, even for smaller companies.

To learn more about how color printers might help grow your business, contact SARCOM at [inquiry@sarcom.com](mailto:inquiry@sarcom.com).

