

INSURANCE COMPANY PUTS PREMIUM ON NEW PRINTING SOLUTION FOR DATA CENTRE

THE
DOCUMENT
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FUJI XEROX



Xerox DocuPrint 180 helps printing staff make overnight deadlines on time.

It's 10:00 p.m. And while most offices at **AXA Asia Pacific**, Australia's second largest insurance and financial institution, are now deserted, the lights are still on in the company's mainframe computer as it automatically switches over for night duty. Like clockwork, it begins to download a wealth of renewal notices, insurance policies, statements, cheques and bills. These make their way electronically to the "heart" of the financial giant's downtown Melbourne location – the data printing centre.

Inside, two print operators prepare the **Xerox DocuPrint180**, a cutsheet laser printer, for the graveyard shift. From now until the wee hours, the two operators will configure the printer for various jobs and monitor the DP180 as it prints bills and notices in batch mode at lightening speed for mailout to AXA customers across Australia the next morning.

Worth over \$254 million in Asia Pacific alone, this French-based financial institution offers life insurance, super, managed funds, trusts, private health cover, home loans and a plethora of other products and services. As a result, AXA Asia Pacific generates a wealth of printed material which forms the basis for the 50 million impressions AXA's data centre now produces annually.

And while growth is generally good for a company, it was causing some headaches in the data centre. Before they installed the DP180 in December 1999, increased printing requirements from AXA's various divisions began to strain the centre's resources with the centre's former in-house printing equipment unable to keep up with the demand. *"It just wasn't working as fast as we needed. There were frequent breakdowns and we were getting concerned,"* recalled Services Output Manager **Melissa Stack**.

The data centre is an internal service provider which has to meet the printing demands of several AXA divisions ranging from health policies to home loans. With the old equipment, deadlines were sometime missed, which caused tension between clients and the data centre. In addition, most clients were demanding quicker turnaround times.

"Our print volume was going up and so was the demand to produce everything faster," said Stack. *"It used to be that people could wait a few days. Not anymore. People want it done today because of the way the market has changed. They can't or won't wait around for output."*

"Compounding our problem was the fact that some of our clients were beginning to look to outside printers to get their jobs done," she added. *"As a result, we had to find another solution or things would be looking pretty grim for the centre."*

CASE STUDY

AXA ASIA PACIFIC

"IT APPEARED IT COULD HANDLE THE VOLUME WE GENERATED AND WAS ALSO RELIABLE"



AXA Asia Pacific turned to Fuji Xerox in Melbourne for advice, having heard that Xerox had the fastest machine on the market -- one that had been used successfully in other data centre environments. Account Manager **Wolfgang Schmidt** and the Fuji Xerox engineers accordingly suggested the DP180, which had been launched in 1999. A high-speed, high production volume laser printing system, it could print 180 impressions per minute and handle up to four million impressions per month. It could store volumes of paper, print on a variety of paper stocks and offered continuous run capabilities, ensuring less operator intervention during the night. *"It appeared it could handle the volume we generated and was also reliable,"* she said.

Schmidt agrees that this was the machine for the client. *"In the data centre environment, operating 24 hours a day, our customers measure reliability and equipment performance in machine/printer uptime. Downtime is deadly for profitability. We knew this machine is a dependable workhorse that could provide uptime like nobody's business,"* he said.

The printer configuration that AXA eventually purchased was a DP 180 MX LPS, which was channel-attached to the mainframe computer. However, because AXA has migrated applications such as cost systems and accounting to other platforms, the machine was also configured to handle LAN output with a third party software solution from SOLIMAR, allowing for more data stream flexibility, explained Schmidt. In addition, the AXA DP180 was installed with new MICR (magnetic ink character recognition) toner technology to print codes on all printed materials so that banks would charge AXA less when customer cheques were processed, resulting in *"considerable savings for the insurance company,"* explained Schmidt.

Like all new arrivals, the new machine took a bit of time to settle in, but it was warmly received by a number of the data centre's output staff. *"Fortunately, we have staff who had worked with the machine before in other work environments and these people were really were impressed we were getting one here so that made the transition easier,"* said Stack.

On night duty

The DP180 completes all the printing, finishing and mailing of applications processed by the mainframe. It works throughout the night, receiving all the jobs processed by the mainframe during regular business hours including bills, renewal notices, policies, fund statements, on-demand benefit booklets, internal reports – printing

between one and a half and two million impressions a month.

"We always schedule and do advance planning because we know there are certain jobs going out every month that must be completed, but you can't always predict what the total demand might be. Having a high-speed printer like the DP180 gives us a better feeling of control. Knowing the system is reliable and is performing at top speed means we'll get all the jobs done on time and have happy clients," said Stack.

The DP180 has brought a new level of efficiency to the data centre, helping print jobs get out the door much faster than before. *"Prior to getting this machine, we had many different job set ups and media requirements. Our operators had to go through many steps to ensure that jobs printed with the right media needs. Now, the DocuPrint 180 lines everything up in a queue, waits for the right media to become available and prints it in a timely manner. We can leave the machine for a length of time and it reduces operator intervention, which is a good thing."*

She is also grateful for the service provided by Xerox. *"They spent a lot of time with us when we were choosing the solution and now engineers come and check the DP180 regularly on a preventative maintenance basis and we haven't had any major problems. I know they are there to help us."*

Schmidt agrees: *"The data centre operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Melissa knows that if there is a breakdown with the DP180 on a Sunday afternoon or midnight on Tuesday, we'll have an engineer there quickly to fix it, so that she can continue to offer her clients good service."*

A new confidence to seek business

Six months after installation, Stack estimates that Fuji Xerox has helped reduce stress levels within the centre and boosted customer confidence. *"What it has enabled us to do is go out and increase our business, something we hesitated to do before. And some of our previous customers are coming back because they see we are getting results and making those turnaround times."*

"It is such a pleasure now when people ring me and ask if they can have something printed and I can say yes and you have my word it will be done. We're working hard to redevelop trust so that our customers will know we'll always get it done right and on time for them. I can thank this machine for improving our situation greatly."

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