

Managed Print Services

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS PRINTING



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Welcome



In the world of business IT, printing solutions are often forgotten, or simply not seen as business critical. But imagine the detrimental impact to your business if your staff were unable to print. While few businesses will ever find themselves in such a dire situation, many allow outdated, legacy printing devices to negatively impact

productivity. Adopting an MPS solution not only ensures that your business is using the latest, most efficient printing devices, but also that those devices are always kept updated, secure and in full working order. And by moving your printer fleet to an 'as a service' solution, your finance department won't have to deal with a big, up front capital cost, instead factoring in a manageable, regular cost over the lifetime of the contract. This report will highlight the benefits MPS and how it can make your business more efficient, while also reducing TCO.

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About Brother

Over 100 years of innovation have gone into making Brother the global solution and services business that it is today.

Founded in Japan in 1908, and now operating in 44 countries around the world, Brother has continually adapted to thrive in an ever-changing market. From managed print services and web conferencing, through to printers and scanners, Brother's products and services are designed to increase efficiency, boost productivity and encourage collaboration in the workplace. Our UK team, based in Greater Manchester, is passionate about working closely with partners and customers to deliver long-term technology solutions that help businesses work smarter.

Brother takes a holistic view when it comes to managed print services, assessing the individual needs of each customer and working with a channel partner to deliver solutions that are designed to improve efficiency and productivity, while reducing overall cost.

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CAPITAL
EXPENDITURE



What is MPS?

Outsourcing management of your printers to an external provider can bring very real benefits to businesses of every size.

From small companies to the world's largest corporations, MPS has become the smart way to deliver and manage printing and related services. But what does it actually mean? In the old way of doing things, firms buy a range of printers, scanners and photocopiers for the different departments within the business. The internal IT team is responsible for maintaining that hardware, while providing ink and toner and ensuring any software works effectively and securely. In the meantime, IT managers and decision makers do their best to match the printer fleet to business requirements, while providing scanning and document management capabilities to minimise paperwork and drive costs down.

MPS takes a different approach, delivering printing, scanning and copying capabilities not through a set of products, but as a complete service. The deployment and management of all the hardware is outsourced to a single company, the MPS provider, who

also handles consumables and maintenance plus a print and document strategy, advice and support. One obvious benefit is that the workload of purchasing, maintaining and updating the firm's printers shifts from the internal IT team to the external provider, but MPS can also reduce printing costs, save time, transform working practices and boost productivity. In short, it's a whole bundle of 'win' for the business.

How can MPS Reduce Costs?

In several different ways. Firstly, MPS providers look for ways to rationalise and consolidate your printers, replacing many large, old laser printers or single use devices with a smaller number of newer, better distributed, faster devices or multi-function printers with all the necessary functions built-in. This cuts down the size of your printer fleet without compromising productivity. In fact, productivity improves.

Secondly, MPS providers look for ways to

reduce waste, helping firms make more effective use of high-quality draft modes, duplex printing and other features that cut down the amount of ink, toner and paper that the firm uses. Switching to newer printers or from laser to business-grade inkjet printers can also reduce the amount of energy your devices use and the amount you spend on consumables, though one of the strengths of MPS is that you never have to worry about purchasing consumables; printers request replacement ink and toner automatically, with the provider often charging on a transparent cost-per-print basis.

This also adds to the cost-savings. Working with a single vendor means you're not rushing around dealing with different suppliers, and all costs are visible and predictable. There's no capital expenditure on new printers, just ongoing operating expenditure that's agreed before a single page is output.

MPS also helps reduce support costs and minimise downtime. Because it's the provider's

job to maintain your printers and keep them running with a steady stream of supplies, your IT team gets more free time to focus on other projects. And while this might sound like you lose control, the opposite is true. You can decide who can use colour, set policies for duplex printing and security, or put settings in place to keep wastage to an absolute minimum. You can monitor exactly what's being printed and how it's being printed, then take steps to change that. That's good news for your environmental impact and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals as well.

Finally, MPS gives businesses a chance to rethink how they use print and manage printed information. It can be a chance to digitise forms and paperwork, archive old documents and change how information flows through the company. It's not a case of shifting to a paperless office, but to an office where paper is used where it's most effective – and in the most efficient and productive way.

How can MPS Save Time?

In many organisations, employees spend an excessive amount of time just dealing with printers; not just waiting for old, slow devices to print, but dealing with malfunctions, changing toner cartridges, adding paper or waiting for someone from IT to fix a problem. Switching to MPS cuts that wasted time right down, not just because the hardware itself is faster and more efficient, but because the MPS

“MPS can be a chance to digitise forms and paperwork, archive old documents and change how information flows through the company.”

provider is always working in the background to ensure that supplies are in place, regular preventative maintenance is carried out, and the right settings are configured. And because your IT team aren't involved in every detail, MPS can save their time to boot.

How can MPS help you get a more efficient printer fleet?

When you start working with an MPS provider they come in and analyse your business, your printers, and your requirements in terms of printing, scanning, copying and faxing. With a good MPS provider this doesn't mean taking a one-size-fits-all approach or – worse – pushing expensive hardware into every corner of the business. Instead, it takes a balanced approach, looking at where teams need specific capabilities, then finding the printer or printers that will match those needs.

Yet a really good provider doesn't just stop there, but looks at ways in which the business could print more efficiently and more securely plus save money. After all, it's not just a

question of the hardware, but of the major print costs hidden in the way people use and misuse printers every day. It's all about putting the right mix of printers into that particular workplace, then backing them up with appropriate software, policies and services.

How can MPS help transform the way you work and boost productivity?

MPS providers know all about printing, but they're also experts in scanning and document management. That puts them in a good place to recommend new processes or working practices that can help you reduce waste, cut down on paper-based file storage and share information more effectively. They can also help you support printing and scanning from mobile devices or even from outside the office, through the cloud. MPS can also help the business embrace more flexible working styles, by giving workers the full range of printing and scanning capabilities both when they're inside or outside the office, or allowing hotdeskers to print to the nearest printer from wherever they are. This all helps a company become more agile – and in today's markets that's always a good thing.

So, basically, MPS drives down printing costs, saves time and reduces IT workloads?

Yes. Analysts at IDC have estimated that simply moving from self-managed printers to MPS can save a business 30% of its printing costs, and there's scope to go further by rethinking how you use print in the business, more closely monitoring your printers and taking more control. MPS makes printing costs predictable, and can free up office space wasted on bulky printers and copiers so that you have the freedom to put it to more productive use. It's good for security, it's good for productivity and it's good for the environment. In fact, if you're tired of dealing with paper jams, malfunctions, constant cartridge changes and the like, it might even be good for the soul.





The True Costs of Legacy Printers

If you think keeping your existing printers is the cheapest approach, it's time to think again.

When you have existing printers you've already bought and paid for, it's tempting to think that maintaining your existing fleet will cost you less than purchasing new printers or signing up with an MPS provider. After all, office laser printers are hardy devices, some capable of lasting eight-to-ten years with a little TLC here and there. Why replace them if it's not absolutely necessary? Sadly, the real situation isn't quite so simple once you tot up the true costs of sticking with an ageing fleet. With more expensive running costs and being harder to manage and maintain, those printers could be costing you more than you expect.

Costs per page

New print engine technology, new inks and new toners are continually being developed and refined. Over the last five to ten years

nearly every major print manufacturer has delivered higher-yield ink and toner cartridges or found ways to squeeze more out of their existing consumables. The result? Costs per page have generally fallen. Where the average office laser of a few years ago might have seen costs per page of 2p to 5p for a black-and-white page and 15p to 20p for a colour page, today's more efficient workgroup laser printers can deliver both mono and colour prints at significantly lower costs.

What's more, you don't have to opt for laser printers throughout the business. New business-grade inkjet printers offer laser-like performance of up to 35ppm, and can be faster to print the first page. High-yield cartridges and smear-resistant, efficient pigment inks mean great black-and-white or colour output that looks professional and lasts like a laser print. These advances in business inkjet

printing mean that organisations that have stuck resolutely with laser technology now have a viable and cost effective alternative.

With MPS, the bundled costs of consumables, media, services and the printers themselves means cost-per-page will be higher than those figures, but these lower running costs help today's MPS printers achieve lower TCO than older, self-managed fleets. Better still, those costs are visible and controllable; you know what you'll be paying overall per page when you sign up.

Other running costs

Of course, cost-per-page isn't the only metric that matters. Printers use a lot of energy, and the more you have, the more significant that becomes. Newer models, however, are much more efficient. Where an older workgroup laser printer might use 700 to 800W while in

use and 20W in standby, a new workgroup laser printer might use around 500 to 550W in use and under 10W in standby. A business inkjet might take that down to 30W and 6.5W. Throw in more effective, energy-saving sleep modes and other power-saving features, and a modern MPS fleet will have a definite, positive effect on the electricity bill.

Combine that with the further savings of consolidation, switching many, large printers for a better balance of printers of different sizes, and there are serious opportunities to save.

Fewer cost-saving features

Do your existing printers have effective, high-performance duplex printing enabled? If not, you could be missing out on a feature that could save you up to 40% of your paper costs, according to some studies. Meanwhile, modern high-quality draft and eco-printing settings could use up to 50% less ink than standard modes, while producing output that's easily good enough for internal usage – and often good enough for external use as well.

With older printers, you could also be bereft of management features that prevent or discourage wastage; features that restrict the use of colour, make duplex printing the default, or switch on pull printing, so that print jobs only print when actively requested from the printer. It's a feature that sees drastic reductions in the number of printed pages left abandoned in the output tray.

Lost productivity

Old printers waste valuable time, which always has an impact on the bottom line. If your old printer trudges along at 20ppm, then moving to a 30ppm printer will see print jobs finished in two-thirds of the time; five copies of a 60-page report could be printed in around 10 minutes rather than 15. That's without taking warm-up times into account, which could add another twenty or thirty seconds to the final time. It might sound like small beer, but think of the times when you're trying to print something vital and time-sensitive while a colleague churns out those reports, then



multiply that over all the printers in your company over 260-odd working days per year; those wasted hours start adding up. And that's just when the printer's working properly. Every paper jam and every malfunction means more wasted time that could be used more productively. Downtime could even result in delays that make you look unprofessional, or lose business.

What's more, newer printers may have time-saving features. Take follow-me printing, for example. When you can release a print job from any printer on the network, you can do so, say, from the high-speed printer next to the boardroom where you're in a meeting, rather than the slower printers sitting next to your desk downstairs.

Maintenance, management and security

Provided parts are still available, you can keep an old office printer running for many years, but it gets a little like an old car in that, past a certain time the maintenance gets more expensive. Keep having to replace motor parts

or the imaging drum and the costs soon mount up, and that's without calling out technicians or the burden of using in-house staff to fix paper jams or solve other issues. Moving to new printers will reduce these costs immediately, along with the associated downtime. In fact, adopt an MPS strategy, and printer management and maintenance isn't your problem anymore.

Newer printers also have better tools for maintenance, management and security, making it easier and less time-intensive to manage the hardware in the office, implement usage policies and improve printer security. Options like pull-printing, cloud-printing and printing from mobile devices have gone from being expensive extras to standard features, while NFC and ID-card based authentication are no longer the preserve of larger businesses. With more threats out there and greater penalties for data breaches, that's good news for businesses of every size. Is it really worth the risk of doing without them?

Again, shift to MPS, and many of these concerns are offloaded completely. The MPS provider deals with the whole business of printing, leaving you and your teams to focus on your business instead. Maintaining your old printers might seem to help you keep costs low in the short term, but in the long term you'll miss out on cost-saving opportunities, while facing expenses and uncertainties that just aren't factors with MPS.

“Options like pull-printing, cloud-printing and printing from mobile devices have gone from being expensive extras to standard features.”



MPS, CapEx and OpEx – what it all means for business IT

Managed Print Services can be seen as part of a wider trend in IT spending, but why does the shift from CapEx to OpEx matter?

Adopting an MPS strategy can transform how and where a business uses print, but you can also see it as part of a wider trend in the way businesses handle IT investment. Where companies used to purchase software, updates and licences, they now pay monthly or annually for cloud-based solutions which either run from or update from the cloud. Where companies used to purchase their own servers, storage and network infrastructure, they may now rent processing power and capacity from the likes of Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure.

Few companies would invest in their own email systems when Office 365 and G Suite are so affordable. And why buy desktop and laptop PCs when even hardware's now available as a service?

All these services have key benefits in common, including cost-efficiencies and the ability to scale the service upwards and downwards to cover changing business needs. However, the most important thing they have in common may be the way they shift IT spending from Capital Expenditure (CapEx) to Operating Expenditure (OpEx). This can

have a major impact on the whole way the business runs.

CapEx refers to the funds a business uses to purchase products or services that enhance its ability to create profit. In the old way of doing things, the company purchased a new laptop, application or printer because it played a crucial role in the productivity or support infrastructure of the business; it either enabled the company to generate profits or supported the work that did. OpEx refers to the expenses the business incurs while doing business, including all running costs and ongoing

services and expenses.

Like those other services, MPS involves shifting what would have been a CapEx investment – the purchase of new printers, scanners and multi-function devices – into OpEx. You're not buying new hardware but paying the provider to deploy that hardware in your business as part of its service to you.

There are two key benefits here. Firstly, where CapEx means a risky investment, made upfront before you can expect any return, OpEx means spending less in the first instance, making what might have been unaffordable affordable, at least in the short term. Secondly, CapEx and OpEx work differently in terms of how you claim the costs against tax. With CapEx, you may be able to claim the full cost of an asset against your tax liabilities in one year under the Annual Investment Allowance, or a portion of the full cost over several years. With OpEx, the costs are fully deducted from the tax owed for the accounting period in which they are incurred.

CapEx does have some advantages; once you've paid for your application, laptop or printer you don't need to pay any more, barring any consumables, running costs and maintenance involved. CapEx investments are also assets of the business, which investors

“MPS involves shifting what would have been a CapEx investment – the purchase of new printers, scanners and multi-function devices – into OpEx.”

may see as a sign of growth. However, OpEx spending is easier on company finances in the short-term and predictable in the long-term. It makes the business easier to scale, and you can use the money you're not spending upfront to fund other long-term investments that could enhance future profits. That's particularly attractive to start-ups or smaller businesses with plans to grow.

Combine the advantages of OpEx spending with the benefits of MPS, and shifting to MPS only becomes more attractive. When you purchase printers, scanners and copiers, you're investing in hardware that can depreciate in value fairly rapidly. What's more, the older it gets, the more it degrades in performance and grows more expensive to maintain. After five to eight years it will need replacing by new hardware, leaving the company responsible for disposal of the old.

Shift to MPS and your printer fleet is

continually monitored and regularly assessed, with devices updated and replaced as and when necessary to deliver the appropriate service. The MPS provider is responsible for all hardware throughout its lifespan, and you shouldn't ever be left trying to eke out another year from ageing hardware while you wait for funds to become available for a replacement. When you pay on a per-print basis, there's no need to worry about a printer's lifespan and no fear of sudden hardware failure leaving a dent in the finances; your print costs become predictable in a way they never can be when you purchase and manage your own devices.

Even when MPS might seem like the more expensive option, it tends to win out when it comes to Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) across a period of several years. If you want to reduce risks, control expenses and give space for the company to scale, it's simply the most efficient way to go.





The MPS advantage

Mike Mulholland



Mike Mulholland, Head of Services and Solutions at Brother UK Ltd, takes us through the advantages of MPS and what it could do for your business.

If I'm an IT decision maker for an SMB, what's the advantage of going for MPS over simply replacing my old printers?

Well, either way, at some point you're going to have a new device, with the perception that you're going to be benefitting from the latest technology. But the thing is, are you? Will all the devices you purchase have the latest firmware or the features that can give you the control, the efficiency, the security and the sustainability you're looking for?

When you're purchasing an MPS you're purchasing a complete solution based on a thorough investigation of your needs. And once you've got MPS, you've got the benefits of continual assessment along with direct access to the manufacturer, so that you'll be able to benefit from all the developments that happen over time – things like security updates or rapid changes to firmware. You're not on your own. We know where every one of our MPS customers is. We know what they've got and we know the configuration and status of their devices. If something happens, there's an opportunity for us to react to that methodically and ensure that our customers benefit immediately.

What can MPS do to reduce ongoing business costs?

When we go in to see a customer, one of the first things we do is see if there are grounds for a conversation. Do they know what they've got in terms of assets? Do they know where those assets are parked or what they're producing? Are they fit for purpose? Do they have a service contract? Do they know what

that costs? Do they know where they get their consumables or how to get the best price? Do they even know if the consumables in their cupboards are still in life?

Most customers will look at me and say 'I can't answer nine out of ten of those questions.' What that says to me is that they've lost control and no longer know what their printers are costing them. Therefore, their costs can be reduced by introducing things like lifecycle management, budgeting and smart procurement. We can also bring in cost avoidance, through security management, design, maximising productivity and reducing waste. And if you've got an efficient solution then you're buying what you need to fulfil your demands and not paying more than you need to pay.

What if I have existing laser printers that are still working fine. Can't I save more by sticking with these rather than signing up for an MPS contract?

It's not so much about whether those existing printers are working as about the consequences if they stop working. There are some beautiful vintage cars on the road. They're still running and getting from A to B. But would you like your paramedic to be driving around in one of those? No, because there's a much higher chance that beautiful car is not going to get that paramedic to you when you need them most.

The consequences of sticking with an old device are sometimes hidden, and can work at various levels, from running out of toner when you want to print some essential

document – a tender or proposal – to the device breaking and your IT department being too busy to fix it. These consequences cost money, and the benefit of having a robust, managed service that focuses primarily on user satisfaction is that you have maximum availability of print when you need it most.

Managing and maintaining printers can be a pain for small businesses. Will MPS help reduce the workload?

We work in many sectors, and we tend to find that IT divisions are looking for relief. They're working beyond capacity, so anything that we can do to relieve them, and even add some capacity back, is well received. Many look at MPS as a way of moving their printer infrastructure away from their IT team and placing it in a safe pair of hands. Companies welcome that, and also regular business reviews. We can help them with the tactical stuff – working within the SLA – but we can also have strategic conversations.

What do you think Brother brings to MPS as a provider?

We understand that no two customers are the same. When it comes to designing and implementing managed print services, there's no one-size-fits-all. Now, there are some companies that profess to be MPS vendors. Their literature might look nice and they use some very eloquent marketing materials, but as soon as you scratch the surface you find that there's not a lot underneath.

We're different. We've got real people with real bums on real seats, waiting to be utilised; program managers, service managers, pre-sales technical consultants and channel partners – a whole balance of people, infrastructure, resources and tools that can help our customers get to a smart solution that meets their needs.

“ We know where every one of our MPS customers is. We know what they've got and we know the configuration and status of their devices. ”



Balanced Deployment – what does it mean and why does it matter?

Ensuring that companies get the capabilities they need in a cost-effective printer fleet.

Balanced deployment is a key part of Brother's MPS strategy. Focusing on productivity, availability, security and efficiency, it guides Brother's pre-sales technical consultants to create solutions that target the specific needs of the individual business; not just monthly workloads and copying requirements, but office geography and 'soft costs' of printing, where the business loses productivity in small, unnecessary ways.

Every MPS deployment begins with a pre-sales assessment phase. 'We go in with our

consultancy hat on rather than our sales hat' says Peter Shackleton, Pre-Sales Manager for Brother UK. 'We want to understand their pain points and look at how each individual operates on each device. We'll even go down to their walking times and watch people walk for two minutes to the end of the office to pick up a job. While they're at the printer you'll have people queueing and having a chat, and this all gets taken to account.'

Brother's pre-sales technical consultants also capture monthly page volumes, enabling

them to select the best products for each area based on those volumes, the length of the MPS contract and the capacity and lifespan of each device. This ensures that printers and multi-function devices are carefully selected to cope with each workload, even if that means placing two or three devices in an area to guarantee availability. It also helps consultants get a real-world assessment of a team's printing needs, so that those that require A3 printing or colour have them, but such devices aren't rolled out where they're not needed.



‘Once we’ve got that bigger picture, we’ll put together a solution based on where we think devices are strategically best-placed’ says Shackleton. ‘There are things we won’t do – we won’t put devices everywhere – but we know the value of placing devices in more areas; it gives more availability to staff and eliminates single points of failure.’

“ Looking for ways to improve the user experience for our customers is a key part of our job. ”

It’s all about enabling the right level of availability across printing, scanning and copying capabilities through a judicious selection of various print technologies such as laser, LED & inkjet to handle A4 and A3 requirements. What’s more, hardware is only part of the story, Brother has also developed BSI (Brother Solutions Interface) which enables further gains in productivity and efficiency, so that companies can integrate with custom applications or third party print management software for pull printing to cut waste and improve security, or configure printing so that, should one device fail, the print job is simply moved to the next printer. These cost-savings may seem insignificant, but they soon mount up. For Shackleton, looking for ways to improve the user experience is a key part of the job. ‘Anything we can do to make things slicker will help them and help us when the customer reaches the end of the term’ he says. ‘They’ll want to stay with us.’

Balanced Deployment in Action

We asked Peter Shackleton to take a look at an example scenario and take us through his approach. The client is an accountancy practice with 30 staff and four partners across two floors. It has two large workgroup lasers on each floor, while the partners each have a personal laser printer. The two most recently-purchased workgroup lasers are the same 2013 make and model, the others are different models from another manufacturer. The practice has been moving to a digital document management system, with two high-speed document scanners in the central admin office on the ground floor. However, there are still two copiers in a separate copy room, and the practice still needs high-quality print materials for meetings, letters and reports. All the printers and scanners are managed by a single IT manager, with consumables changed and paper-jams cleared by the staff themselves. Security is becoming a concern, too, with GDPR on the horizon and some staff with a tendency to leave documents sitting, uncollected, in the printer output tray.

Shackleton: In this scenario, you have a common centralised print fleet, sold, most likely, by a copier dealer who didn’t take into consideration the impact to productivity, efficiency and security. This kind of solution means that employees must walk a distance to collect their print jobs and usually must queue at the printer waiting for other users to finish printing. Also, due to the walking distance and the queue at the printer they generally print their documents but don’t collect their print jobs until later, once they have printed all the documents they require for that task. This poses a security risk if any of the documents are confidential. You usually see multiple piles of paperwork stacked next to the printers; jobs that have been printed but never collected,

resulting in wasted costs and increased CO2 output.

We’d introduce a print management application where jobs are stored and users must authenticate on the device to release their print jobs. This is great for security and reducing waste. We’d also ensure that all employees have access to printers within close proximity, as this reduces walking and waiting times. We’d ensure that those printers fell in line with their job function, so that they have access to the right capabilities and therefore will result in an increase in productivity. Additionally, this enables the accountancy firm to allocate print costs associated to its clients, supporting accurate billing and invoicing.

We’d look to lead with our flagship mono and colour laser printers and multi-function devices, as cost per page is very competitive, and they have a great ROI – this soon adds up over two to three years. However, we’d recommend A3 inkjets where the customer has large A3 printers or copiers but the actual volume of A3 printing is low. A customer assessment would tell us if scanning requirements could be fully or partially covered by the multi-function printers or if they still required separate devices.

This makes it more cost-effective to have laser devices to handle the majority of the volume, and A3 inkjet devices for the low-percentage A3 volume.

By outsourcing the maintenance of the print fleet, the IT manager has more time to focus on other priorities. It will also save time for other staff - with automatic supply replenishment they will never run out of ink or toner, costs are controlled and they don’t even have to think about it.





The Brother effect

Phil Jones MBE



Phil Jones MBE, MD of Brother UK, outlines the thinking behind Brother, and talks about how small businesses can use technology to grow.

Do you think that Brother has an attitude or ethos that makes it different to other big tech companies?

We're a big tech company that likes to think small. What I mean by that is that we try to think more like an SMB than a large enterprise. We're driven by customer intimacy, the ability to be quick and understand the pain points of our customers so that we can develop services and portfolios that meet their real needs. Even the large customers who do business with us, like doing business with us because we're relationship-orientated. We're not a faceless massive IT company, but a community of people they enjoy working with because we're professional and reliable but also quick. They appreciate the high customer focus.

Does that thinking filter down into your product lines?

Yes. Brother has always been a company – and I've been here over 20 years – that does a great job of listening to its customers. We're really interested in dealing with the pain points an SMB has, which are very different from the pain points of a larger enterprise. We try and create products and portfolios that address those rather than just design a 'death star' then hollow it out to bring the price down. That's not really our style. We prefer to build products and services that are fit for purpose.

Print technology hasn't always gone hand-in-hand with environmental concern. What has Brother done to change that, and help small businesses reduce their impact?

We've been doing this as part of our core DNA for well over 20 years, trying to think about the environmental impact of our products right from design through to

end-of-life. We're thinking about how we make the product, the components we make it out of, how we recycle it at end of life, and more. Can we be a low-carbon sales office? Can our factories be zero waste to landfill, so that we minimise our footprint? I think that, right the way through from the manufacturing side, which is in the far East, over to the supply chain side and the sales and support side here, the company takes a holistic approach with a view to being as environmentally friendly as it can be.

Technology companies often feel remote from the wider community, but Brother seems more engaged. Why is that?

At Brother UK we have a simple statement that goes 'to grow ourselves through growing others'. We believe that, for us to grow as a company, we've got to be passionate about growing the people around us. And what that means is that we can grow companies, by helping them to use our technology, or by sharing strategies for growth, and that increases demand for our products and business services, which helps us grow. And in our local community we do a lot of work because I strongly believe that, as an organisation in the local community, we can do an awful lot of good.

That philosophy of community involvement and being passionate about growing people in order to grow ourselves creates a flywheel effect which affects the way we attract sales, attract customers, attract talent and attract results. If we're passionate about growing people, growing

enterprises and growing the community, we can't fail.

These are challenging times for small businesses. What can technology do to help them compete and thrive?

With so much uncertainty, people are trying to create certainty within it. What bits can I control? What bits are out of my control? If I just focus on the bits I can control, is there something I can do that will make me either more cost-efficient or help me work smarter? Is it going to require loads of time and money, or a fortune on technology professionals to help? What we're trying to communicate is that you can work smarter, and that there are things you can do quite quickly to change your game.

Quite often, small businesses don't make technology decisions without three triggers: something's broken, we're moving or we're growing. Unless one of those three happen, there's an 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' approach. We say to add a fourth one: take some time out, have a think about your future. You might be able to use something, like Web conferencing, which allows you to run your business differently. Do you run a large remote workforce which you bring to one location once per quarter, just because that's how you've always done it? Well, maybe there's a different way. Take an afternoon off, step back and look at what you haven't reviewed in a while. You could start generating some extra productivity or efficiency savings.

“ If we're passionate about growing people, growing enterprises and growing the community around us, we can't fail. ”