PrinterLogic

Case Study: Helion Automotive Technologies

Leading MSP leverages PrinterLogic to provide its customers with cost-saving print management options, advanced print functionality and high print availability.

Challenges

- Routine print management and regular server migrations across the entire client base were resource-intensive.

- In its ongoing efforts to find efficiencies, Helion wanted to identify and implement cost-saving solutions in enterprise printing.

- To provide superior service as an MSP, it was important to offer customers advanced print functionality.

Results

- PrinterLogic eliminates the need for print-server migrations while simplifying and centralizing day-to-day print management.

- Faster migrations, improved management and uninterrupted uptime equate to significant cost savings for customers.

- Helion's PrinterLogic-enabled customers enjoy next-gen print capabilities that are cost-effective, reliable and easy to use.

Helion Automotive Technologies is an industry-leading managed service provider (MSP) that specializes in providing comprehensive IT solutions to the automotive and heavy truck industries. The company has two large offices in Timonium, Maryland and Dallas, Texas, along with remote field offices across the United States.

As an MSP, Helion's role is unique. Its own workforce exists to support and empower other workforces. As a result, Helion functions like a natural extension of its customers, acting as an integral and seamless part of their day-to-day operations. Today, more than two decades since the company was founded, 650 dealerships and 28,000 of their employees rely on Helion for its core IT services—including end-to-end management of hardware infrastructure, software support, help-desk services, communications, cybersecurity and enterprise printing.

To best serve its clients, Helion understands that efficiency and availability are utterly essential. But there seemed to be no cost-effective way to expedite the process of routine print server migration, which was a frequent task for Helion's systems support team. The process also invariably resulted in downtime for some users.

"You don't want clients to have old hardware, so our best practices are to refresh hardware every five years. Whenever it came time to replace that with new hardware, we would have to migrate everything, with the printers being the most challenging and time-consuming of those," says Jeff Kingsmore, a Helion systems support manager whose team is responsible for cutover migrations, project builds and top-tier support.

Kingsmore began to research potential solutions and came across PrinterLogic, a next-generation print management solution that would

enable future migrations to take place seamlessly and instantly with zero downtime and no residual printer mapping issues.

"We started to look into implementing it as an MSP solution—mainly to save us time and to save our clients money on cutovers," he says. "And it turned into more of a redundancy solution for printing as well for our clients, because not only did it make it easier for cutovers, but if a server went down, the users could still print. That was a big selling point for our clients."

Helion initially deployed PrinterLogic to three of its enterprise clients, including one with 1,300 employees.

Challenge #1—Reducing Time Spent on Management and Migration

For Helion, managing close to 800 print servers for clients across the United States was incredibly resource-intensive. Along with ensuring that drivers were up to date and the servers were operating normally, Helion had to field help-desk calls whenever a print spooler crashed or a printer failed to install properly.

When the time came to migrate the servers to newer hardware, the drain on resources increased exponentially. Kingsmore estimates that a straightforward cutover migration could take up to an hour per printer.

"We had print servers that we managed that would host anywhere from ten to 30 printers. We would have to find the drivers for every single one of them. We'd have to reinstall them. Then we'd have to remap them all on workstations. That was the most time-consuming part of the server cutover. It was a big pain point for us," he says.

Solution

With PrinterLogic implemented, the print component of future server migrations will be instantaneous. In the meantime, PrinterLogic's centralized management console makes it easy for Helion's staff to carry out routine print management such as adding or removing printers or updating drivers.

"Having all of our customers in a single portal that we can manage from one location was a big thing for us. Central manageability has been great," says Kingsmore. Also, instead of end users requesting printers, Helion now leverages PrinterLogic's automated deployment methods to deliver printers to users based on Active Directory criteria—without resorting to GPOs and scripts.

"Anytime anybody's added to that AD group, they just log in and PrinterLogic gets them all the printers for their department. You can set defaults if you want to, too, so it's definitely saved us a lot of time on day-to-day issues. A lot of the calls we would get were, 'Hey, can I have this printer?' or 'How do I change my default?' PrinterLogic definitely helps with that."

> "PrinterLogic will save you time when doing a server migration. It's going to reduce the amount of help desk calls you get. It's going to make central management of printers easy."

Challenge #2—Saving Even More Costs for Customers

Enterprise customers are acutely cost-conscious, and Helion knows that saving money without compromising on service is what keeps it competitive as an MSP. By reducing the time spent on print management, zeroing the amount of time required for print-server migrations, and eliminating printer downtime during migrations and daily operations, Helion sought to achieve a threefold cost saving with PrinterLogic.

"Because this wasn't a technology that they were used to or familiar with, we had to show our clients that there was a need for PrinterLogic," Kingsmore explains. "This was something that would help us and save us time [as an MSP], and we had to show them the value of no downtime, and that over time it would cost them less money because they would be spending less on projects for us."

Solution

PrinterLogic's unique combination of direct IP printing and centralized management has enabled Helion to realize its intended cost savings. Helion is able to pass the backend, managementrelated cost savings on to its customers, and the customers themselves enjoy effortless installation and uninterrupted print availability directly on the frontend. The combined result is increased productivity.

"If I'm talking to a client," he says, "I'm going to explain the benefits of PrinterLogic in terms of money—how much money it's going to save them over time, how much cheaper it's going to be for projects, how many fewer times their people are going to have to stop working and call us. It's showing them that value and what it's going to do for them."

Challenge #3—Offering Customers Advanced Print Functionality

MSPs like Helion distinguish themselves through added value. The company's ability to offer its customers advanced functionality and meet cutting-edge requests sets it apart from its peers. By the same token, access to advanced functionality enables Helion's clients to stay ahead of their own competition.

With print servers, it was difficult for Helion to offer print functionality beyond the status quo—not only because print servers are limited in their extensibility, but because each of those solutions would have to be maintained separately on each customer's print servers, driving up management costs even further.

Solution

PrinterLogic's acclaimed Self-service Installation Portal, as well as its built-in Mobile Printing, Secure Printing and Print Auditing modules, make it possible for Helion to offer easy-touse, next-generation enterprise printing capabilities as native features.

For example, Mobile Printing allows any mobile or BYOD user, regardless of device, to select and print to any authorized network printer with a few intuitive taps. And PrinterLogic's Print Auditing puts powerful monitoring and reporting tools in the hands of both Helion and its customers so they can easily keep print activity and expenses in check.

Conclusion and Savings Summary

Helion has only conducted internal cost-saving estimates so far for the benefit of its customers, but Kingsmore says that PrinterLogic's long-term ROI is evident from the example of cutover migrations alone.

"If we were doing a server migration, it would take us one hour per printer for about 20 printers, so PrinterLogic will save us 20 hours of work per server. On average we'll do five servers per client every five years, and you can multiply that by our number of clients to get an idea of total time saved going forward," he says.

"When we start to push this out more, this can be a real potential investment or growth area for our customers. But there are the things you can't put ROI on, like the customer experience. That's another positive aspect of PrinterLogic."

"PrinterLogic will save you time when doing a server migration. It's going to reduce the number of help-desk calls you get. It's going to make central management of printers easy. It's going to make it a lot easier for you to deploy printers to whomever you want and set default printers for entire departments where you would have to do it manually before."