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REDUCE COSTS AND IMPROVE CUSTOMER LOYALTY WITH A STREAMLINED DOCUMENT OUTPUT APPROACH

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Organizations are discovering the importance of partnering with a single-source provider

Whether you're a part of a financial institution, insurance provider or energy and utility company, customer communications such as statements, invoices, service alerts and customer service reminders often act as the face of your organization. With continued use of mobile devices, e-adoption and other emerging technologies, customers may never enter your place of business or interact face-to-face with your employees. It's vital to use your regular communications to keep meaningful connections with your customers.

As customers increasingly opt to receive electronic communications rather than paper, organizations must still deliver both traditional mail as well as electronic documents, forcing many organizations to work with multiple providers to meet their document output needs.

Managing multiple vendors not only increases complexity, security risks and costs, but also makes it more difficult to implement an omni-channel customer communications strategy. Organizations are discovering the importance of partnering with a single-source provider that offers both print and electronic communications solutions, employs proven e-adoption techniques and has demonstrated expertise in data security to help them implement a comprehensive approach to customer communications.

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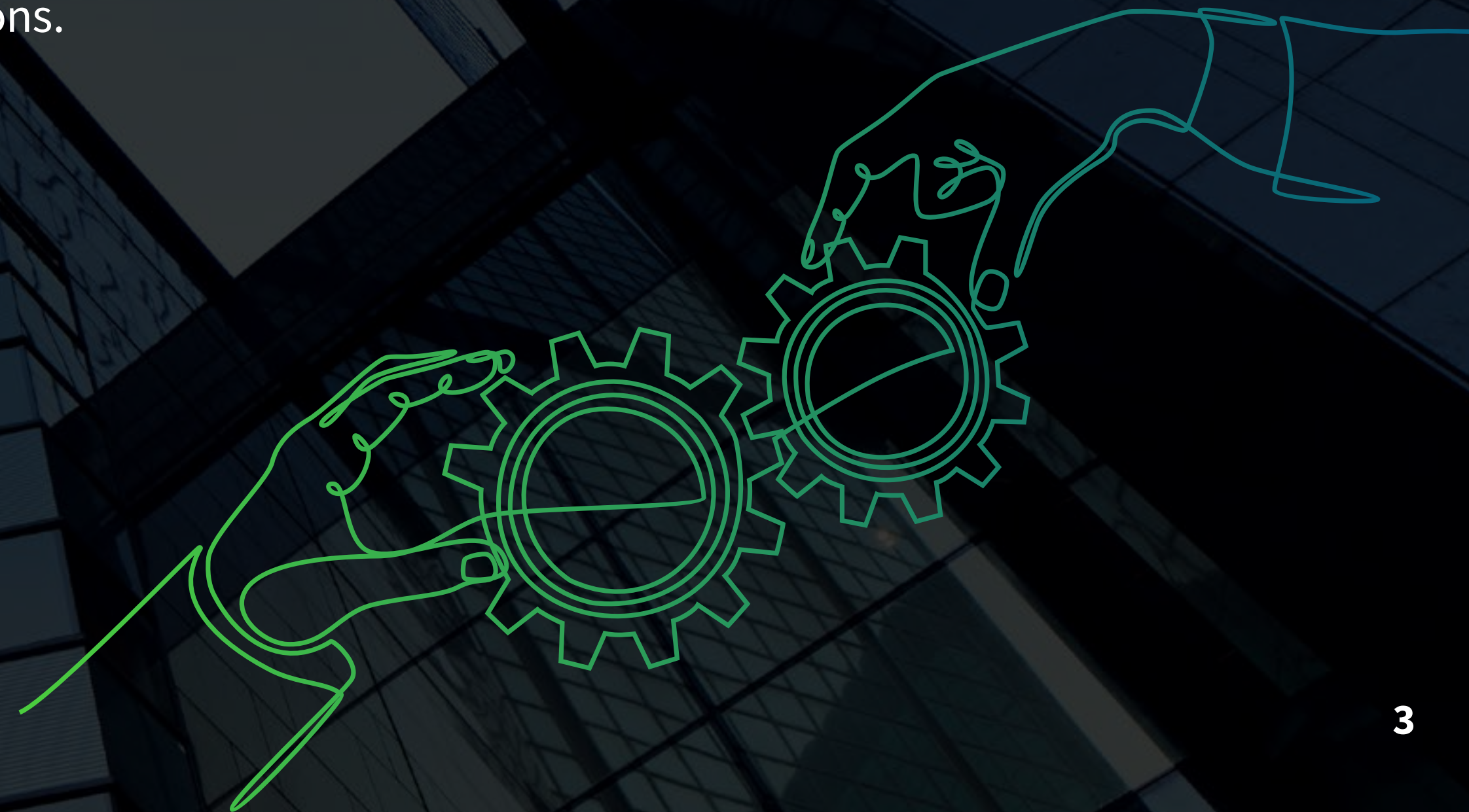
The benefits of a strategic approach to document output

Customer communications are a vital tool for deepening customer relationships, cross-selling other products and services, and promoting your brand and reputation. Before choosing a document output partner, it is essential that you understand the importance and benefits of a streamlined approach to document output.

A strategic approach to document output differs from a tactical approach in several key areas. Instead of looking at each document as a separate customer communication, a strategic approach considers how each piece works together to create a cohesive and consistent branding experience for your customers across channels.

It also takes into account which activities and tasks your organization considers core competencies and prefers to keep in-house and which should be outsourced to a partner. The goal is to achieve premium service and maintain control over communications at the lowest cost, which is often best achieved through an application service provider.

As your organization re-evaluates the in-house versus outsourced situation at frequent intervals, an output partner can facilitate adjustments to your model as market conditions, volumes or other factors change. For example, you may elect to initially outsource color documents and transition those to in-house printing as volumes increase.

When looking for a document output partner, consider the following key benefits of outsourcing customer communications and whether the provider has the capabilities to deliver on them.

A STRATEGIC APPROACH CONSIDERS HOW EACH PIECE WORKS TOGETHER.

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Reduce costs

Customer communications can be expensive, in both the creation of the pieces and the mailing costs. A streamlined approach to document output can help you stay within budget by minimizing waste and lowering mailing costs. Postage costs are the single largest expense in document output.

Presorting, comingling and manifesting can cut costs significantly. There are several components to consider when striving to decrease variable mailing costs. The first has to do with mailing to the correct address.

The USPS indicates that over 40 million Americans change their addresses annually. Updating your addresses is mandatory for mailers who claim presort or automation rates for first-class mail. Reducing undeliverable-as-addressed (UAA) mail saves our customers thousands of dollars in materials and postage.

Another way to reduce postage costs is to replace paper with double pressure seal mailers for notices. Each mailer can save an average of 14.1 cents per piece — a cost savings of approximately 35 percent.

Reducing the number of mailings can obviously affect costs as well. However, since customer communications are so vital to maintaining relationships and customer loyalty, as well as to cross-selling additional products and services, organizations should eliminate mailings judiciously. Instead, consider combining account mailings for a single address. Likely the combined mail piece will still come in under two ounces, which saves our customers 100% of postage when compared to two separate mailings. Working with a nationwide mailer can help you take advantage of postal volume discounts using regional mail density and presort.

WORKING WITH A NATIONWIDE MAILER CAN HELP YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF POSTAL VOLUME DISCOUNTS.

Reduce costs

While postage costs are significant, organizations tend to underestimate other communications costs, such as renting warehouse or floor space to house printing and mailing operations, purchasing and maintaining expensive printing equipment, hiring and retaining trained, dedicated staff and putting security measures in place to protect the physical security of the documents. In addition, ever-changing postal regulations require that organizations have dedicated personnel to help ensure compliance.

Outsourcing the printing and mailing processes enables your organization to take advantage of economies of scale from nationwide mailers.

Of course, transitioning to electronic delivery is one of the most effective ways to reduce costs. Some customers will welcome the move to electronic delivery, while others will be hesitant to accept only electronic statements and notices. Your organization must strategically transition customers to electronic communications, using both formats while leveraging the paper documents to highlight the benefits of electronic statements and encouraging customers to switch. The right partner can make aggregator sites available for your document content, helping to increase accessibility for your customers.

TRANSITIONING TO ELECTRONIC DELIVERY IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REDUCE COSTS.

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Tighten security and quality controls

Cost reduction is an important goal of a strategic approach to document output, but organizations should never sacrifice the security and quality of customer documents for low cost. Communications often contain personal customer information, such as account numbers, addresses and even Social Security numbers. It's imperative that communications are kept in a locked environment and that the documents are sent to the correct customer. A customer who receives the wrong communications due to a double-stuff – or who fails to receive an expected document – will lose faith in your business. A document output partner should be secure by design.

Select a document output partner that has the technology processes and security expertise in place that can manage threats to your physical and virtual security at multiple points – protecting your data. True security readiness means the continuous pursuit of vulnerabilities with real-time monitoring. Your business must demand excellence across the data transmission, operational, and print and electronic delivery landscape.

Quality tracking of each and every customer communication can be handled through an automated document factory. Quality controls are included throughout each stage of the production process. Each print job must balance in each production phase. If your organization expects 100,000 notices to be printed, the automated document factory ensures that 100,000 notices are produced by balancing each individual mail piece against the quality-control sequence number assigned to each piece.

Since security and quality control are so vital to document output, your organization should be prepared to review production information on a regular basis. Transparency into the production process, project tracking and customized reports are essential capabilities that can highlight potential security and quality issues before they affect customers.

SELECT A DOCUMENT OUTPUT PARTNER THAT HAS THE TECHNOLOGY PROCESSES AND SECURITY EXPERTISE.

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Improve marketing with document design

A well-formatted customer document that is easy to read and understand improves your organization's image, supports brand consistency and reduces the number of customer complaints and inquiries. Fewer customer calls into the call center or visits to the branch office not only reduce support and service costs, but also allow your organization to focus on more value-added and revenue generating activities, such as cross-selling or proactive customer outreach.

Although white space can enhance readability of documents, it can also add pages that could increase printing and postage costs. The key is to balance the use of white space by creating documents with an eye toward design, as well as costs. For example, since the front page and the front side of the back page of a document are the most viewed areas, organizations should strategically place the most important messages in those areas.

Customer documents are an effective cross-selling tool, but again, organizations must balance the inclusion of marketing messages against additional printing and postage costs.

These messages can be fed into various online outlets and would facilitate and support the implementation of an omni-channel marketing strategy.

The number of transactions the customer has with the organization during any particular statement period will dictate how much white space is available. A customer with few deposits and withdrawals, for example, will have more space available on a monthly bank statement than a customer with many transactions. Organizations can use this white space for personalized marketing messages. A strategic partner utilizes customer communication management software with built-in intelligence to recognize white space available and will place an appropriate message. Likewise, the software will review the statement to ensure that it doesn't place a message that triggers an additional page. Messages are maximized without sacrificing readability or increasing costs.

A STRATEGIC PARTNER UTILIZES CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE WITH BUILT-IN INTELLIGENCE TO RECOGNIZE WHITE SPACE AVAILABLE AND WILL PLACE AN APPROPRIATE MESSAGE.

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What to look for in a strategic document output partner

Economies of scale, data security, quality control and document design are all key components of a document output strategy. With so many moving parts – postal compliance, readability, integrity and security of every document, and managing variable costs – most organizations find that it makes sense to partner with a document output provider.

Working with a document output provider should not be an all-or-nothing proposition. Your organization may prefer to fully outsource all of your document output, including document design. Or you may prefer to keep the document design in-house and outsource the printing and mailing to a third party. Look for a service provider that offers flexible, need-based deployment models that can evolve as output volumes and resourcing needs change. A provider that can offer design, print and mailing services is ideal.

As your organization's needs evolve, the document output partner should be able to adjust their offering to meet those needs. This approach to smart sourcing allows you to balance in-house control and outsourced cost savings to achieve premium service at the lowest cost. Working with a single document output provider that can address all output models negates the need to work with multiple providers, reducing vendor management complexity and deepening a partnership that intimately understands your business goals and requirements.

LOOK FOR A SERVICE PROVIDER THAT OFFERS FLEXIBLE, NEEDS-BASED DEPLOYMENT MODELS THAT CAN EVOLVE AS OUTPUT VOLUMES AND RESOURCING NEEDS CHANGE.

To facilitate your organization's transition from paper to electronic documents, the document output provider should be able to handle both print and electronic document delivery with a proven adoption marketing strategy.

A document output partner should enhance the customer experience while offering you a single source for your document output needs. Providing full transparency into the entire document production process can help ensure that sensitive customer communications are secure and customer privacy is maintained. Creativity and innovation are key attributes of a document output partner in order to deliver the right combination of reduced costs and impactful customer communications.

For More Information

FIS Output Solutions helps clients manage the design, printing, mailing and archiving of document output that can become an expensive undertaking for any organization. Partnering with a document output provider doesn't just help to reduce costs.

FIS offers clients a secure, single-source provider for both print and electronic communications that aligns with the specific output needs of your organization.

About FIS

FIS is a leading provider of technology solutions for merchants, banks and capital markets firms globally. Our more than 55,000 people are dedicated to advancing the way the world pays, banks and invests by applying our scale, deep expertise and data-driven insights. We help our clients use technology in innovative ways to solve business-critical challenges and deliver superior experiences for their customers. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, FIS is a Fortune 500® company and is a member of Standard & Poor's 500® Index.

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