

Case Study

education

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Florida International University

FIU Masters Campus Printing and Mail Services in an Increasingly Mobile World

"We wanted a more professional environment with stocked merchandise, more services, quick turnaround and an overall positive experience. That's what we got. I have nothing but praise for Ricoh."

*Jeff Krablin
Former Associate Vice President
of Business Services
Florida International University
Miami, Florida*



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

With two large main campuses and several satellite locations in often sunny South Florida, Florida International University (FIU) is where approximately 54,000 students come to soak up information and prepare for careers in the new world of work.

A top five university based on enrollment and ranked first in the nation in awarding bachelor's and master's degrees to Hispanic students, FIU takes its commitment to serving its diverse student body very seriously. Facilities need to be top notch. The university's 5,200 faculty and staff need expertise and creative thinking to bring their curriculum to life. Students need easy access to tools that makes their work shine—along with convenient, nearby resources to print documents and mail packages.

For all of FIU's many accomplishments, the university was falling short on providing professional grade printing and mailing services that reflected its distinctive brand. FIU is classified as a high-ranking doctoral/research university. It was first in Florida to be admitted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society. And its athletics program is part of the NCAA Division I conference. So in 2012, FIU decided things needed to change. The university turned to Ricoh to overhaul and manage its underperforming and uninviting retail printing and mailing centers, and replace its underwhelming student and guest MFP fleet with an exemplary, campus-wide solution to print anywhere, anytime, from nearly any device.

CHALLENGE

- Document centers with limited offerings
- No outbound mailing service and supplies
- Unresponsive, slow service
- Dated, uninviting document centers counter to FIU brand

SOLUTION

- Converted existing document centers into professional Copy, Print, Pack and Ship Centers
- Enlisted Ricoh Managed Services
- Implemented Ricoh MFPs, EFI M500 self-serve copy and print stations and the PrintMe App

RESULTS

- Printing centers that reflect FIU brand
- Accolades from students, faculty and staff
- Increased visitor volume
- Higher overall revenue and revenue sharing with FIU

Case Study

CHALLENGE

When FIU's Business Services department tasked its prior MFP vendor with establishing two document centers across campus to serve students, faculty and staff, they envisioned a retail-quality shop akin to a nationally-recognized printing and shipping store. What it got was something entirely different.

Its document centers had very limited offerings, responsiveness was sluggish and the look and layout of the centers was unwelcoming at best. Jobs were routinely delivered late and/or wrong, and complaints made their way into FIU's business services department. Students, teachers and staff often went off campus to find a more professional, reliable, quick-turn shop.

"Our different populations need different things," said Jeff Krablin, former Associate Vice President of Business Services at FIU. "Our staff is sensitive to security-related features for documents and they want a high level of service that's economical because they're always watching their budget. Students, on the other hand, are typically just printing a couple of pages before rushing off to class or they need to mail a package home. They need fast service, low cost and shipping services and supplies."

Working with another vendor, FIU envisioned a retail-quality document center akin to a nationally-recognized printing and shipping store. What it got was something entirely different.

FIU's document centers didn't offer shipping services at all. If students needed to send belongings like TVs, clothing or computers home, they had to leave campus to do so. The same goes for the books they rented, which had to be returned at the end of the semester. It called for another trip off campus, lugging books to a local pack-and-ship location.

FIU only had basic printing capabilities, with the prior vendor's MFPs located in the document centers and scattered remotely across campus. Maintenance issues continually plagued those MFPs. And there was no mobile printing capability whatsoever, even though a growing number of students, faculty and staff routinely prepared assignments and worked on mobile devices.

Ricoh had previously equipped FIU with MFPs five years prior, but had been displaced by the former vendor in the years since then. When FIU became dissatisfied, decision-makers in the business services department began exploring alternatives, including reestablishing its relationship with Ricoh. Top on FIU's priority list was finding a partner that could deliver on its vision for a retail-class copy, print, pack and ship center and bring its student and guest printing fleet in step with the increasingly mobile world.

SOLUTION

FIU began by inviting several vendors, including the incumbent, to perform a walkthrough of the document centers after hours so they could conduct a thorough analysis of the situation. Ricoh went a step further, observing daytime operations to identify key flaws in the current operations and talking with faculty, staff and students to learn more about specific concerns.

With a clear picture of the current environment, Ricoh was able to enlist its managed services expertise running similar centers at other higher education sites to put together a detailed proposal and win the contract. In the end, Ricoh demonstrated to FIU that it had the right plan to overhaul and improve services at the document centers, extremely capable managed services staff to take over day-to-day operation of the centers, a clear path to implement student and guest printing in all five campuses and the technology to enable mobile printing.

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First up was the document centers. In just two weeks before the start of the spring semester, the Ricoh team gutted the document centers and turned them into eye-catching, retail-quality copy, print, pack and ship centers. They replaced the carpet, painted the walls, installed cabinetry, hung signage and swapped out the previous vendor's equipment with new Ricoh MFPs.

Both centers are equipped with a Ricoh MFP that allows students and staff to send their print jobs to the centers using the PrintMe app—anywhere, anytime, from any device. When they get to the center, they simply enter a code at the MFP and retrieve their printed job.

More services were incorporated into the centers' offerings, including poster printing, banner printing and a variety of binding options. Ricoh also fully stocked the centers with shipping supplies so students could mail packages right on campus.

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Key to this success was Ricoh's managed services staff who run the centers. The Ricoh team goes the extra mile to provide quick turnaround and make sure every job is correct. They also routinely advise students, faculty and staff on how to best put together their projects and the various options for bindery available to them.

"Our board of directors were so impressed with Ricoh, they now bring their important documents—often many pages that need to be bound professionally—to the centers because they know they can rely on Ricoh to do the job right," said Krablin. "Ricoh has established trust and a sense of partnership that our communities were looking for."

Ricoh also implemented self-service copy and print technology across campus so students and guests didn't always have to go the copy, print, pack and ship centers to output documents. Alongside 28 new Ricoh MFPs located around campus are EFI M500 Stations—a modern-day alternative to coin boxes that allows students to walk up to any device and easily access documents, print and pay. Students and guests can choose their document via USB, mobile device or cloud storage account, and then pay for their prints seamlessly via credit, campus or cash card.

"We needed our walk-up, self-service student and guest printing capabilities to be better. Ricoh had the right machines and the right technology—and the right level of service," said Krablin. "Our self-serve printing connects very well with our centers—one point of service from our on-campus print provider."

Ricoh also determined that FIU didn't need as many devices around campus as the previous vendor had installed. As a result, FIU was able to downsize its MFP fleet and reduce its costs. While cost savings wasn't the driver for the program, FIU wanted solutions that were competitively priced and delivered the most value.

"We didn't want the lowest possible cost. We wanted a good cost structure with the right level of services, and that's what Ricoh has delivered," said Krablin.

"Ricoh has established trust and a sense of partnership that our communities were looking for."

RESULTS

FIU now has a copy, print, pack and ship center that reflects its distinctive brand and commitment to delivering high-level services to its community members at a competitive cost. And those community members have taken notice. The center has received many kudos from students and faculty—all the way up to the university's board of directors. Use of the centers and the self-serve printers has climbed since Ricoh took over, and revenue is growing, making it a win-win for both FIU and Ricoh.

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Each student candidate has to submit marketing campaigns that enlist social media, print and email campaigns, develop ways to promote services such as the PrintMe app and suggest improvements for campus signage.

More Customers, Shared Success

The centers have become an integral part of the FIU campus service offerings. If a student is running late to class, they know they can just email their print job to the center and pick it up in time to make it to class. The university's engineering and biometrics departments know they can count on Ricoh to handle their more complicated drawings. The center has even become the go-to for printing posters for one group of students' national presentation in Washington, D.C.

The increased volume of visitors to the centers shows. By the end of 2013, the centers had served 42,000 visitors. In 2014, that number shot up to almost 60,000 visitors. At the beginning of 2015, 12,000 visitors had already used the center to print, ship or take advantage of the many other services offered—photo kiosk, notary services, passport services and promotional banner printing.

While Ricoh operates FIU's copy, print, pack and ship centers, both Ricoh and FIU share the revenue. Since Ricoh took over the centers, overall revenue has grown 36 percent and FIU's share of that revenue has increased 176 percent. FIU reinvests a portion of its share back into the centers to expand services for its community members.

"We're really in this together," said Krablin. "We like facing the challenges with our vendors and giving them the opportunity to realize they don't have to pay for everything."

Increased Awareness, Giving Back

With so many students and faculty on campus, Ricoh needs a little help spreading the word about its centers and self-serve printing options across campus. To increase awareness, Ricoh hosts an annual contest and awards \$4,000 in scholarship funds to two students with the best creative ideas to promote printing on campus.

Next Steps, Ongoing Partnership

FIU and Ricoh are about to roll out new online submission technology to make print jobs even easier to send to the centers or the remote student and guest self-serve printers. In a quarterly strategy meeting with FIU, Ricoh introduced technology that will streamline scanning of paper documents at the MFP and then automatically send that information into a student or faculty member's Blackboard Learn™ account via Ricoh's Integrated Cloud Environment (ICE). Ricoh also introduced FIU to its mindSHIFT Managed IT and Cloud Services to keep the university's systems up and running and resolve IT issues quickly.

"In our meetings with Ricoh, we're always looking at what else we can do. What's next?" said Krablin. "Rico always brings something new to the table to help us become even better. That's a true partnership."



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