

Established for over 80 years, Caterpillar Inc. is the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment. Its equipment is distributed through a worldwide network of independent, locally owned dealerships with 1500 outlets in over 200 countries. The United Kingdom is Caterpillar's largest base outside the US and employs over 10,000 people. Caterpillar Financial Services is a wholly owned subsidiary of Caterpillar Inc. providing specialist lease and insurance options tailored to the market sectors that use Caterpillar equipment. The UK arm of Caterpillar Financial Services is based in Hockley Heath, Birmingham.

With leasing documentation coming in from all corners of the UK, Caterpillar's offices at Hockley Heath housed a veritable mountain of paper. In 2004, Caterpillar decided that action was required to take control of the amount of paper they were handling and wanted to introduce an electronic document management system. We had been working in conjunction with Caterpillar for over a decade meeting their copying and printing requirements and because of our good working relationship, they approached us to come up with an appropriate system for them.

Given the volume of paperwork involved, the first step was to ensure that Caterpillar had suitable scanning hardware in place. We had previously supplied them with a 45 page per minute multifunctional printer (MFP) configured with the ability to scan in various ways including scan-to-folder or scan-to-e-mail. However, it was clear that this device alone would not be able to handle the volume of paperwork now being discussed, as it would have meant that the device would be very busy with scanning and this would impinge upon users who also wished to copy or print. We therefore recommended a stand-alone A3 55-page per minute flatbed scanner with duplex facility and a 150-sheet automatic document feeder. This scanner is ideal for the mixture of paperwork submitted to the office as it handles any paper size from A3 down to small items such as cheques, and automatically detects text and photo areas within a document. Along with the scanner, we also supplied Invu document management software to enable easy archiving and retrieval of the scanned images. Invu also allows users to archive other electronic documents within the same database - in Caterpillar's case this includes items such as internet credit searches which are indexed straight into Invu, thus eliminating the need to print off a hard copy.

The scanning solution has changed the way that Caterpillar Financial Services work. Once incoming paperwork is stored electronically, they can now shred the paper-based file, thus saving much valuable office space. The archive retrieval system allows stored documents to be pulled up on screen much more quickly than they could be found from an old paper file leading to much more efficient document and query handling. What is more, the sharing of information with other offices based outside the UK has become much easier.

As the scanning solution has become fully bedded in, demand for the facility has grown. In 2006, we supplied an additional black-to-colour MFP with full colour scanning facility at 600dpi, and scan-to-e-mail and scan-to-folder features, together with extra Invu licences. Caterpillar Financial Services are so impressed with the difference that our solution has made to the UK office that they are now looking into the p

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IOT plc · Northern House · Moor Knoll Lane
East Ardsley · Wakefield · WF3 2EE
Tel: 01924 823 455 · Fax: 01924 820 433
Email: enquiries@iotplc.com

