Karlson unite with both Ricoh and Equitrac to help the CWU print less and do more

The Communications Workers Union (CWU) is the biggest union for the communications industry in the UK and has 250,000 members who work for organisations such as BT, the Post Office and many more. Individual members are involved in a diverse range of activities from engineering and computing, to clerical, retail or financial functions.

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Around 200 employees are based at the CWU headquarters in Wimbledon, South West London, where the in-house communications department is also located. The equipment within the print room had become outdated, no longer able to meet the demands of the organisation and the CWU wanted to produce more literature in-house rather than outsourcing. The CWU had also identified the need for an electronic job ticketing system but was not happy with the one supplied by the incumbent.

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Karlson completed a full analysis of the costs and implications to the CWU before making its proposals. The first stage of the project comprised the replacement of the print room equipment with a combination of full colour and high-speed black and white copier printers. Karlson also supplied both online and off-line booklet maker systems. This equipment provided CWU with a variety of finishing techniques including saddle-stitching, which was a specific requirement. The equipment enabled the CWU to meet its high volume demands with consistently high quality and reliability.

Karlson's analysis of printing costs had been a revelation to the CWU:

"As our output requirements had gradually evolved, there had been no central management or control. We had no idea what our overall printing capabilities were and what it was costing us."

Kevin Slocombe Head of Communications at CWU

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Due to the nature of CWU's industry they have access to the personal data of hundreds of thousands of people and this data needs to be stored and printed securely. By introducing Equitrac through Ricoh, the CWU can monitor, measure and manage network-wide document output. Karlson and Ricoh also introduced the Doc-Q-Manager electronic job ticketing system which allows the print room to manage its workload more effectively.

Doc-Q-Manager is designed to:

- Maximise efficiency through better prioritisation of workload
- Deliver urgent jobs faster by splitting them across several machines
- Allow print room staff to preview and manipulate jobs on screen
- Improve accuracy of job specifications by displaying product options on job tickets.

Bill Todd of Karlson UK explains,

"We recommended Doc-Q-Manager from Ricoh because it is user-friendly and fully meets with the customers' requirements. We took full responsibility of ensuring that the product fully integrated with the print room as well as the network accessed by 200+ users. The print room is equipped with Ricoh machines and works on a MacIntosh platform whereas the rest of the office is PC-based, so the solution couldn't be platform specific. As Doc-Q-Manager resides independently on a server, there is no conflict with the systems in the communications department."

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The new systems and procedures have not yet been fully implemented throughout the CWU, however:

"We are now able to work much more efficiently. For example, Equitrac ensures that users automatically send jobs over a certain size to the print room so that they can be produced more cost-effectively. I believe that there is already a greater awareness of efficiency, and now we have introduced departmental budgeting we really are noticing a difference."

Phil Bowerman, Head of IT

Karlson have helped the CWU truly print less and do more – to date they've achieved better in-house print quality, obtained valuable management information to control costs, made significant impact to their carbon footprint obligations and improved efficiency throughout.