

County tax office improves customer service with HP print and data center infrastructure

Florida's Earl K. Wood, Orange County Tax Collector migrates from legacy line printing and COBOL to HP printers, MFPs and blade servers



"Nobody's waiting anymore, because it takes less than a minute to print a bill now."

– Joe Giovanelli, MIS Manager, Orange County Tax Collector Office, Florida



HP customer case study: County tax collection office runs multiple sites with HP print infrastructure and HP blade servers for data center management

Industry: Local government

Objective:

Improve customer service, gain workflow efficiencies, modernize data management.

Approach:

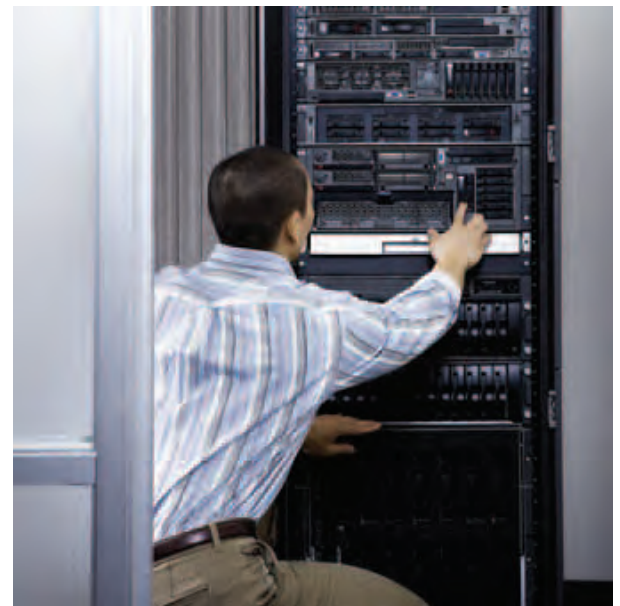
Deploy LaserJet and multi-function printers in all 11 county tax-office sites, along with Scanjet Scanners, Digital Senders and a DesignJet 120 wide-format printer in targeted locations. Migrate from COBOL legacy systems to SQL database and HP BladeSystem for data center management.

IT improvements:

- Standardize on HP platform.
- Migrate from line printers and microfiche.
- Consolidate and standardize devices with HP MFP printers.
- Migrate from COBOL to SQL.
- Gain workflow and data center efficiencies.
- Build scalable, efficient infrastructure.

Business benefits:

- Improve customer service.
- Speed workflows.
- Gain cost and storage efficiencies.
- Accommodate growing workload.
- Improve data access and utility.



A decade ago when Joe Giovanelli took on his new job as MIS Manager of Florida's Orange County Tax Collector Office, he walked into a legacy infrastructure of COBOL code and continuous-form line printers. Over the years, he has transformed the system to standardize on HP printers, bringing a new world of efficient workflows and fast customer service. Next on his agenda, Giovanelli today is transforming the storage side of his systems with a SQL database and the HP BladeSystem.

"Over the years, we've achieved tremendous efficiencies by standardizing on HP laser printers," Giovanelli says. "That translates into better reaction times for our customers, the taxpayers. In addition, right now we're migrating from our old COBOL legacy system to SQL, and the processing power will be through HP blade servers. The database will be much easier to manage."

“With HP printers and multi-function devices online, our staff is able to take care of more customers at a time.”

Joe Giovanelli, MIS Manager,
Orange County Tax Collector Office, Florida



Taxing system capacity

Florida’s Orange County—home of theme parks SeaWorld Orlando, Universal Orlando Resort and Walt Disney World Resort—counts approximately 400,000 taxpayers in a population of roughly one million persons. The tax collection function Giovanelli and staff serves includes 11 offices distributed countywide. Nine are “tag agencies,” where citizens go to renew license plates, driver’s licenses or pay property taxes. Another is the Local Business Tax Department office, which prints out business tax licenses and collects business taxes. There’s also a distribution center, where field operators store supplies for the whole system. And finally, there is the main administrative site where Giovanelli works.

Approximately 300 people work at these various locations, many of them clerks and cashiers handling walk-in customer traffic.

The busiest months for tax collection are November, when the county sends out roughly 400,000 property-tax invoices, and August, when approximately 80,000 business-tax invoices go out. Although the printing and mailing of these invoices is contracted out to a vendor, the 11 offices Giovanelli and staff equips see a lot of related work volume. For example, taxpayers may request receipts, which need to be customized, printed, recorded and delivered; the county produced close to 20,000 such receipts for tax year 2006. Cashiers serving walk-in customers must be able to fax, scan, copy and print on the spot.

In the old days, documents were produced on huge line printers that gobbled up floor space and cranked out one-sided copy at what today would be

considered a snail’s pace. Records then were preserved on microfiche, a time-intensive and inefficient process.

“We had these old-type dot-matrix printers here all over the place, with cartridges and continuous forms,” Giovanelli recalls. “One of my first priorities was to replace these.”

“When people come up to the counters to make payments, the cashiers have HP LaserJets right there to print their licenses or their tax bills.”

Joe Giovanelli, MIS Manager, Orange County Tax Collector Office, Florida

Standardizing on HP infrastructure

Giovanelli’s solution was to standardize on HP equipment, from digital scanners to wide-format printers. Today the tax collector’s print infrastructure includes 40 HP LaserJet printers, nine HP 4345mfp devices, 15 Scanjet scanners, two Digital Senders, one DesignJet 120 wide-format printer, an HP Color LaserJet 4730mfp and an HP Color LaserJet 5500 printer. On a wall in Giovanelli’s computer room sits a computer-network map—produced on the DesignJet 120—detailing the locations and assignments of each machine.

The 40 HP LaserJets are distributed throughout the 11 tax-office locations. The distribution center uses theirs to print purchase orders and other documentation. In the customer-facing offices, printers stand ready at cashier windows to produce invoices and receipts on the spot for walk-in taxpayers.

“When people request receipts, it’s a considerable difference in speed when we’ve got a LaserJet printing 20 pages a minute, where before you had line printers printing maybe two pages per minute,” Giovanelli says. “Nobody’s waiting anymore, because it takes less than a minute to print a bill now.”

“One of the benefits is that we’ve standardized on the same printers throughout the organization. So, we’re easily able to consolidate the supplies we need. And, the printers are very reliable.”

Joe Giovanelli, MIS Manager, Orange County Tax Collector Office, Florida

In addition to the LaserJets, each of the tag agencies has an HP 4345mfp device—integrated with Informa Software’s ImageQuest (IQmfp) electronic filing system to easily scan, categorize and index documents for convenient web-based search and retrieval.

“Prior to that they had separate fax machines and copiers,” Giovanelli says. “We consolidated equipment for efficiency.”

The tag agencies and certain administrative managers have Scanjet scanners to scan and fax documents. The HP Color LaserJet 4730 is located in the main office for administrators to copy, fax, and print bills as well as produce color copies and business correspondence. Two HP Digital Senders are used to create and distribute electronic copies. Finally, Giovanelli uses the HP Color LaserJet 5500 to print software instructions and other documentation.

Faster workflows, better customer service, easier data access

The benefits of all this printing power are substantial. Walk-in customers are served promptly. Fast, reliable and easy-to-use equipment enables staff to work efficiently. Standardization allows employees to move among offices with ease, with no equipment learning curve. Supply costs and storage needs are minimized.

“One of the benefits is, we’ve standardized on the same printer throughout the organization, so we’re able to consolidate the amount of supplies we need,” Giovanelli says. “And, the equipment is very reliable. We need minimal service on these printers.”

Meanwhile, all the networked intelligence has enabled Giovanelli to supplant the cumbersome microfiche system with digital document storage and retrieval—simplifying the crucial task of keeping accurate tax records.

“We’re redesigning our old COBOL legacy system to be on a SQL database, and the processing power will be through HP blade servers.”

Joe Giovanelli, MIS Manager, Orange County Tax Collector Office, Florida

“Now we create an image in our system of the tax bills,” he says. “If for research purposes we need a copy of a previous tax bill, we print it out on a digital laser printer. We’re trying to get away from microfiche and do everything with PDF files.”

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

Enterprise printing; data storage and management

Primary hardware

- HP 4345mfp
- HP Color LaserJet 4730mfp
- HP Color LaserJet 5500 Printer
- HP LaserJet 4350 Printer
- HP DesignJet 120 Printer

- HP Scanjet Scanners
- HP Digital Senders
- HP BladeSystem

Primary software

- ImageQuest (IQmfp) from Informa Software

HP Services

- HP Extended Support Package 24x7



Next up: migrating the data center

Looking at an ever-increasing tax-office workload, Giovanelli intends next year to purchase the HP CM 8060mfp, for more capacity in color printing, color copying, color scanning and black-and-white faxing. And now that he has established a high-functioning print infrastructure, Giovanelli is turning his attention to data center management. Working again with Informa Software, the county recently purchased five HP blade servers. Built on a modular infrastructure, the HP BladeSystem is designed as a cost-effective, change-ready, energy-thrifty and time-smart building block for

modern data centers. In next year's budget, Giovanelli intends to augment the blade system with the HP StorageWorks Tape Library for high-capacity data storage and web-based remote management.

"We're in the process of redesigning our old COBOL legacy system into a SQL database," Giovanelli says. "With the new technology and the blades, our systems will be much easier to manage."

"Our goal is that all of these improvements will benefit our customers with more efficiencies, faster service and an ability to easily manage data," he says.

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