7 Advantages Line Matrix Printers Offer Over Laser Printers

For businesses that print a vast amount of multi-part forms and barcode labels, durable and efficient printers are a top priority. Laser printers are often touted as an upgrade to line matrix printers, and many people will have you believing that line matrix printers are loud, difficult or expensive to operate, and outdated. These misconceptions couldn't be further from the truth. Line matrix printers offer customers quite a few advantages that laser printers simply cannot match.

1. Total Cost of Ownership

Although the cost of the initial investment should be taken into account when purchasing printers, it is important to think about the total cost of ownership when comparing line matrix and laser printers.

- Laser printers typically require a smaller upfront investment, **but the cost per page for laser printers is typically 6 times greater than that of line matrix printers.**
- For line matrix printers, the cost of cartridge ribbons accounts for less than 10% of the total cost of ownership. Toner greatly impacts the total cost of ownership for laser printers, sometimes accounting for 90% when all is said and done.
- This operating cost differential over time is very substantial and will grow exponentially as print volumes and coverage increase.

2. Printer Downtime

- Laser printers are very sensitive to humidity, temperature, static electricity, dust, and other airborne particles – all of which can lead to premature failure, frequent paper jams, print quality issues, and more. They also feature light duty plastic cabinetry as well as delicate internal components that come with a long list of placement and care requirements to ensure proper operation. Altogether, these factors make it likely that laser printers will require a great deal of maintenance.
- In contrast, line matrix printers are specifically designed to withstand harsh environments. They are typically designed with stored energy shuttle matrix technology, metal cabinetry, sealed electronics, a heavy-duty operator interface and rugged user touch-point controls. The reliable design of line matrix printers minimizes downtime and maximizes the life of the printers themselves.

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3. User Intervention

Like every piece of workplace equipment, printers become burdensome when something needs replaced or if they're not doing their job. If the printer's problem isn't immediately obvious – or if there are no replacement consumables – users have to waste unnecessary amounts of time.

- **Laser printers** require multiple consumables to be replaced at varying intervals. Some of these consumables include toner cartridges, fuser units, transfer rollers, paper tray feed rollers, and printer feed rollers.
- **Line matrix printers**, on the other hand, only require user intervention when the cartridge ribbon needs to be replaced. This greatly simplifies the printer maintenance process.

4. Electrical Consumption

Now more than ever, businesses need to be cognizant of the impact they are having on the environment. The consumption of electricity is something businesses should take into consideration whenever purchasing equipment.

- Laser printers need to heat up hot rollers in order to function, so they typically consume around 3 times as much energy as line matrix printers; line matrix printers are much friendlier to the environment.

5. Continuous Forms Media vs. Cut-Sheet

- Line matrix printers utilize continuous forms media, which maintains the order of printed documents much more easily than the cut-sheet method of laser printers.
- The paper feeding reliability of tractor fed continuous forms media will always be superior to that of friction fed cut-sheet media.

6. Business Continuity

- Making a shift in output technologies is never a small task, especially when multi-part forms are used. In addition to the complexities and business process changes required to manage multiple separate sheets of output, the risks and operating costs of migrating multi-part apps to laser printers grow exponentially with the number of copies required.

7. Sustainability

- From the standpoint of electrical consumption, consumables materials (no chemical toner, etc.), and consumables waste, line matrix printers are a far more sustainable, affordable, and environmentally friendly technology choice than laser printers.