Pharos Systems

History

Pharos Systems provides integrated print and PC management solutions to a variety of markets including higher education, corporate entities, governmental institutions, and public library systems. The company's product portfolio includes applications designed to help customers run their systems more easily and cost-effectively with powerful network management and control tools. Pharos Systems pioneered cost recovery software in the higher education marketplace more than ten years ago, and continues to lead the industry today. Headquartered in Rochester, New York with offices in Auckland, New Zealand, CEO Kevin Pickhardt leads a company with a worldwide network of technical specialists who work with customers to implement new systems without disrupting current workflow. Products include Uniprint®, Blueprint™, Off-The-Glass™, and SignUp™. Most organizations report a reduction in paper waste of between 40 and 60 percent once a Pharos Systems solution is put in place.

Pharos Systems blossomed from a decade-plus observation and analysis of organizational issues relating to printing and copying habits. Kevin Pickhardt brings more than two decades of experience in document management, with 17 years at Xerox. Kevin held the role of vice president of the Industry Solutions Group in the late 1990s, leading a division providing document management products and services to colleges and universities around the world. In this role, Kevin frequently used print management software produced by Pharos, a company then based in Auckland, New Zealand. While working closely with Pharos at Xerox, Kevin met with the president and founder of Pharos, Geoffrey Shaw and the two discussed and shared a common vision for the future of Pharos. Kevin was intrigued by the idea of helping Pharos achieve its goals globally, and decided to become a partner in the firm and secure additional investors. Kevin eventually assumed the position of CEO of Pharos in 2001.

Background

Pharos Systems products are used in 49 states and in over 19 countries. The demand for products that reduce waste is rapidly growing in all sectors. Pharos recognized the need for organizations of all sizes to more efficiently control their assets and IT resources, enhance services and productivity, and sharply lower document output costs overall. The product portfolio offered by Pharos Systems is designed to serve the needs of different markets with highly reliable products that help save time and money. Over the past decade the number of institutions requiring tracking and scheduling of printing or the secure sending and outputting of print jobs is on the rise. For example, hospitals might wish to print a patient's file, or a financial services firm might need to output a client's confidential financial profile. Insurance providers, accounting and law firms, and engineering companies also require the efficient and secure printing of data. Libraries have the need to better manage and control patron printing, and schedule the output of information. Academic institutions have an acute need for print management, as staff supervisory resources and paper waste become a growing financial issue.

Pharos Systems makes its clients' jobs easier and their investments more productive. Even the company name – derived from the world's first known lighthouse and the second tallest building in existence – reflects the company's commitment to innovation and advanced technology. The lighthouse named Pharos was built in 290 B.C., and considered so ahead of its time that it was designated one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Pharos Systems believes that its products and services help customers navigate through everyday business challenges, just as the Pharos lighthouse shed light on any obstacles.

Situation Analysis

Pharos Systems benefited from having an extensive knowledge of the print management needs of the marketplace. Kevin Pickhardt's experience at Xerox and the New Zealand office's research and development efforts made the team acutely aware of the amount of waste that occurred in computer labs and libraries all over the world. One statistic cited indicated that for the 16 million students in North America's 4,000 universities, the waste for one year comprises 400 acres of trees and would stack 700 miles high. By recognizing the need to eliminate this waste and better manage printing, Pharos Systems quickly established a niche in the academic print management marketplace.

The software products developed by Pharos Systems enable computer users to send a job to a printer, "hold" that job for later printing, then authorize and optionally pay for the printing itself at the printer. Vital statistics for each document such as number of pages, type of printer, and finishing options are held at a Release Station near the selected printer. This process enables customers to correct errors such as sending a print job multiple times or sending a wrong file, without wasting paper by printing a job unnecessarily. It also allows organizations to implement cost recovery strategies with a "pay for print" system enabling them to account for and recoup their costs by charging for printing. Pharos Systems assigns both cost and accountability to the printing process directly to the end user, giving them a clear incentive to limit their printing and copying. Pharos Systems discovered that a more strategic approach to print management improves client satisfaction and service. Less waste and happier customers ensures a "win win" situation for everyone.

Conclusion

Pharos Systems enjoys a strong position in the marketplace, with additional growth forecasted in the coming years. With 800 customers globally, Pharos is committed to developing the best print management products available by continuing research and development efforts and constantly improving its offerings. Six of eight Ivy League schools use Pharos Systems products, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* identified implementing print accountability as the "number one way colleges can cut Information Technology costs."

Pharos Systems combined its expertise and innovative approach to create print management solutions for its clients. In three years, Kevin Pickhardt and his team have developed a Rochester-based company with a global reach and a measurable impact on efficiency and productivity. The company now employs more than 60 people. The level of knowledge and development expertise offered by Pharos Systems makes the company a solid, focused industry leader.