BUYING GUIDE • Fax Machines

Fax machines come in all sizes and prices to fit any workplace environment, and most now double as convenience copiers. Choosing the right model for your needs requires consideration of your fax volume, paper handling requirements, special applications and total cost of ownership.

SELECT YOUR FAX MACHINE BASED ON THESE CRITERIA

LASER TECHNOLOGY Fax machines based on laser technology produce excellent quality text and graphics and typically have a lower cost per page than other print technologies, particularly laser models with high-yield toner and drum combos. Laser fax machines are best suited for mid- to large-size offices where a wider range of high-performance features are required.

INKJET TECHNOLOGY Fax machines using inkjet technology generally carry a mid-range acquisition cost, offer high value and superior output quality. The more versatile models feature full-color capability for faxing, copying and sometimes even printing. They are ideal for home and small office use as well as low volume departmental and corporate environments where their color copying capability represents a significant added value.

RIBBON TRANSFER TECHNOLOGY Fax machines using ribbon transfer technology generally offer the lowest acquisition cost but usually have a higher cost per page than laser or inkjet models. They offer convenience and ease of use, particularly those models packaged with pre-assembled print cartridges. They are ideal for light-volume faxing or copying and generally provide space-saving designs.

OTHER FEATURES TO CONSIDER

MODEM SPEED Modem speed is an important consideration if your fax volume is high and it is important to free up the phone line as quickly as possible.

AUTO DOCUMENT FEEDER (ADF) CAPACITY The higher the capacity, the more pages you can load for unattended faxing and copying.

PAPER CAPACITY The higher the paper capacity, the less often you have to reload paper. This is especially important if you tend to receive high volumes of faxes after hours and want to avoid out-of-paper situations. Higher performance machines may come with dual paper trays or the option to add a second tray, enabling them to handle higher volume applications or to load letter paper in one tray and legal in the other.

AUTO DIALING & BROADCASTING Auto dialing enables you to store fax numbers in the machine for easy retrieval and helps eliminate misdialed numbers. Broadcasting lets you scan a fax into memory just once, and then send it to multiple locations.

FAX SECURITY Higher performance models may offer additional security features such as password controlled access and memory backup in the event of power outages.

FAX MEMORY Memory enables a fax machine to store incoming or outgoing fax pages. The amount of memory required to hold a page depends on the density of the image. Consider a model with a large memory capacity and dual-access capability for use in departmental or multi-user environments.

DESIGN Design considerations are important when you're looking for a machine that complements your home or office décor or when size constraints are a concern. Consider unique designs, such as models incorporating a flatbed document glass for faxing and copying bound documents.

FAX VOLUME Cost per page is an increasingly important consideration as incoming fax volume increases. Laser models with high-yield consumables may offer a lower total cost of ownership than lower cost inkjet or ribbon transfer models that have a higher cost per page.

PC CONNECTIVITY & NETWORKING Consider models with built-in PC interfaces if you want to make a safe investment in a machine that will be capable of addressing changing application requirements. Higher performance models also provide the capability of supporting multiple users on a network.