



Vision Express see benefits of paperless stores

Vision Express use Fujitsu 5110C scanners to convert paper patient files to digital format

About Vision Express

Vision Express is one of the UK market leaders in the retail provision of spectacles and high-fashion eyewear. The company employs more than 3,500 people across the UK, Ireland and the Channel Islands in over 200 stores. A true innovator, Vision Express opened the UK's first 'one-hour' Opticians in 1988 and remains the pioneer of a genuine one-hour service today. Vision Express achieves this by continually embracing state-of-the-art technology.

Going Paperless

As part of a new patient management system, which aims to store all patient information electronically, Vision Express has chosen to install Fujitsu 5110C scanners throughout their 200 stores nationwide.

The scanners will be used to capture external information that new customers bring in to the store, including prescriptions and doctors letters, building up electronic patient files instead of the paper files traditionally used.

The overhaul of the way in which Vision Express deals with patient information was implemented to solve the problem of lack of storage space and to safeguard against data loss in the case of a disaster.

The Storage Issue

Because Vision Express stores are primarily retail units they have very little space for admin storage. Office and storage space is at a premium, with very little room to store patients' paper files. This lack of physical space has forced an investment in procedures to store all patient information electronically, on a computer system rather than in a filing cabinet. Fujitsu research has estimated that disposing of three filing cabinets is the equivalent of a business gaining an extra desk – space that is valued at a minimum of £500 per year.

Ashley Edwards, Vision Express's IT Manager explains: "Our stores do not have the space for enough filing cabinets to keep all our patient records. The situation has recently worsened, as the details we hold on our customers are personal medical details and are governed by the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which requires us to keep information for seven years."



By scanning in patient documents, Vision Express plans to make all customer information digital, removing the need to copy and file paper.

“The scanners are used for capturing information that patients bring in to the store, for example, a note from their doctor or an old prescription. This information is then saved on our system rather than in a paper file. Even the notes the optometrist makes will be saved on the system, rather than written down.”

Because information at Vision Express was traditionally paper-based, the scanners will also be used for back-scanning old paper files to enable them to archive the information on their system.

It was a key concern in choosing a scanner that it could cope with different media – from appointment cards to fax paper. The automatic document feeder on the 5110C enables it to deal effectively with different paper thickness and texture with no reduction in quality.

Disaster Recovery

A further reason for storing all information electronically is to protect against data loss caused by a disaster. Paper-based documents are rarely considered by businesses when planning for disaster recovery, but losing paper can cause substantial inconvenience, time and money in recovering the lost information. The easiest way to avoid this is to scan it to a digital format, so it can be backed up electronically.

Size is Everything

Ashley explained that the main criteria for choosing a scanner model were reliability and size.

“We have previously used Fujitsu flatbed scanners, so we knew that they were extremely reliable. We chose the 5110C because it provides high quality scanning, but is small enough to fit on any desktop. Some of our stores are very compact. So we simply couldn’t afford the space that some flatbed scanners require.”

Space is at a premium in any office, particularly in a retail environment. Fujitsu’s 5110C is the perfect choice, standing upright, with an automatic document feeder; the scanner has a surprisingly small footprint – not much larger than a phone book.

In addition, the scan-to-print function on the scanner means that stores do not need to go to a print shop to use a photocopier for simple copies of documents.



Easy to Use

The 5110C is a plug-and-play scanner requiring minimum installation. The one-button scanning controls are so instinctive that virtually no training is needed for users to be able to operate it. This was a prime concern for Vision Express, as the scanner is not used by specialist admin staff, but by all members of the team – from sales assistants to optometrists.

Ashley comments: "The scanners have been so easy to use that I haven't had a single call out from any of the stores since implementation. For an IT manager that's a strong indicator of success."

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