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How To Completely Avoid Copier Overage Bills On Your Copier

The easiest way to avoid the frustration from receiving a copy/print overage bill is to keep copies/prints out of your lease agreement. I have personally witnessed customers who have received as high as \$9,000.00 overage bills at the end of the year on their Leased Color Copier. Think about it this way, when you purchase a machine, do you sign a year contract for all the copies and prints you will be producing, no of course you don't. So why would you do it when you lease a copier?

So what is a Copy/Print Overage bill?

When you leased your new copier you agreed to allow the vendor to include a certain amount of copies/prints in on the lease for the next 60 months. Where did that number come from? Perhaps the salesperson had some sort of crystal ball that he or she used to determine your business practices over the next 60 months? Or is this just another method of locking you up from competitively shopping or limiting your ability to source other service companies should you be unhappy with their performance?

Actually the only person to benefit from doing such is the Copier Company Owner, period. As many of you have witnessed yourself, the industry sometime tends to have a revolving door for sales people so the chances of many of you even dealing with the same sales person at the end of your lease is slim to none. In most cases, and in their defense, this is how they were taught to sell copiers and they wouldn't know any better anyway because most of them have never purchased one.

Has anybody ever received an Underage Bill from your Copier Company?

Nope! It generally will never happen, even though 36 out of those 60 months you never even hit the amount of copies/prints you were allotted. But you can sure bet the minute you go over that bill is in the mail.

What are the benefits to the Dealer when including copies/prints on your Lease?

You commit to X amount of copies over the entire term of your lease, whether you produce them or not. This can mean massive profits for the copier company especially if they have possibly overinflated that number or you never even hit the allotted amount they gave you. They now may be collecting two to three times the amount per page than what was originally quoted to you. Example: If you are paying \$300.00 per month and you are allowed 10,000 copies your total cost per page would be 3 cents per page (\$300.00/10,000) which includes the copier, maintenance and toner. But if you were only producing 6,000 pages per month your actual cost per page would be 5 cents per page. (\$300.00/6,000)

You are absolutely their customer for the next five years even if you become dissatisfied with your service. The only way to prevent this is to pay another company for all those copies/prints and have them service your equipment. Unfortunately, because you included the copies/prints in the original lease, you are liable for those charges until the lease expires.

Should you need to upgrade earlier, any new vendor competing for your business will be faced with paying the entire lease off which includes all those copies/prints that you never even produced. This puts you in a very compromising position and will absolutely prevent you from receiving competitive bids to compare to their new proposal.

What are the benefits to you when including copies/prints on your Lease?

After nearly 20 years of witnessing the above noted disasters in accounts who were seeking every way possible to switch vendors, I believe there are none. Unfortunately, many of them had to either buy the lease out or pay more to switch vendors. The total avoidance of such practice initially would have never put them in such a position.

So how can you avoid such agreements and even stay with that vendor?

When you lease equipment your agreement is with the Leasing Company, not the Copier Vendor. You have signed a document committing your organization to a specific payment over a specific term. Many customers are under the assumption that if you lease a copier from ABC Company that you must purchase the service and supplies from them as well. That couldn't be further from the truth. If you would have kept the copies/prints out of your lease you would have maintained such freedom to obtain service and supplies from whomever you want. So never, and I mean never, include copies/prints on your lease.

Simply tell competing vendors that you will make your lease payment to the Leasing Company for the equipment and you expect to receive a bill from them on a monthly basis for the copies/prints that are produced. Additionally, let them know you expect to only pay for what is actually produced which will avoid any and all overage bills on your new machine. If any of the vendors competing cannot do so I would consider eliminating them from the process.

No Minimum Monthly Billing for has become common practice among copier companies over the last few years, ask for such an agreement. In fairness to the industry, the only time there may be a minimum is if it is a small machine that is not producing a reasonable amount of copies/prints or the monthly billing is too small for consideration.

Avoid signing any monthly billing agreements that are longer than one year. This will leave you with options if your current vendor increases your cost per page dramatically in years 2 thru 5 or you become unsatisfied with their service.

Many of you unfortunately have encountered the problems we have discussed above and hopefully this new insight will encourage you to form new or different relationships with your Vendor to get costs under control. At the same time, it will give you leverage should you become dissatisfied with cost or quality of service.

Good Luck,

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