

FIVE INDUSTRY USE CASES FOR CLOUD FAX

Why your business should be looking to cloud fax technology to improve your efficiency and reduce costs.

Fax is experiencing a re-emergence on the to-do lists of IT departments, as companies realize that they can leverage the cloud to simplify this trusted form of communication. Whether in support of cost-savings initiatives, consolidation projects, or cloud-first strategies, companies are turning to enterprise-grade cloud faxing to make back-office information exchanges reliable, highly available, and secure while lowering the total cost of ownership.

Fax has been around for so long, and people take it so much for granted, that many companies barely think of it at all. When it's unreliable, though, it's a business liability. A company that has outgrown its fax system or needs to replace aging equipment will struggle with send/receive errors, loss of content, fax failures, busy signals, and other problems that impede communication and lead to negative outcomes such as unhappy customers and revenue loss. On the other hand, a company that integrates a cloud-based fax solution with email for fast and easy user-based faxing and/or with back-end systems for workflow automation eliminates cumbersome, costly paper-based processes and streamlines workflows for greater productivity and higher customer satisfaction while turning faxes into electronic data that can be protected like anything else.

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“An astonishingly large number of business workflows, even electronic ones, rely on printing out documents to be faxed and then scanning or hand-keying those documents back into electronic form at the other end so they can be reinserted into another workflow,” says Christian Barckhahn, senior director of product marketing for OpenText, provider of the leading enterprise cloud fax service OpenText™ XM Fax™. “Cloud-based fax lets you receive faxed content digitally, insert the document into an electronic workflow, or print it only as needed—and since fax technology is a point-to-point connection between sender and receiver, it’s secure, which is a main reason why organizations continue to rely on it.”

Cloud fax creates new opportunities for organizations to accelerate and automate this “first mile” and “last mile” of business processes to improve the efficiency of fax-dependent workflows. Cloud fax services enhance the value of standalone fax methods, by integrating with back-end systems and applications through prebuilt connectors or web-based APIs. This provides exponential value to companies that leverage these integration capabilities—by enabling inbound and outbound faxing directly within an ERP application, for example, or using data capture technologies to automatically extract content from a fax.

“By combining fax technology with capture technology, an organization can automate the process of receiving content such as a purchase order or loan application, extracting that content, converting it into data, and ingesting it automatically into a back-end system,” says Barckhahn. “It transforms what was a standalone fax service into an integrated, key component of workflow automation.”

Cloud fax is especially valuable to heavily regulated industries, companies that exchange sensitive information that needs to be kept secure, and organizations with key partners whose processes are still fax-intensive. In particular, cloud fax can deliver significant business benefits to the financial services, insurance, healthcare, manufacturing, and legal industries.

Financial services

The financial services industry has a high need for secure communications to comply with stringent regulations that call for protecting confidential customer information while also retaining and archiving exchanged documents. This hotly competitive market has also created a demand for new ways to boost customer satisfaction by streamlining customer service.

Financial services firms have traditionally been heavily paper-based. In the loan process, for example, a firm must track and manage dozens of documents for each application,

IT BENEFITS OF CLOUD FAX TECHNOLOGY

Maintaining a traditional fax environment puts the burden on IT to manage and maintain an entire separate on-premises infrastructure dedicated to faxing. Cloud fax removes that burden in the following ways:

- Simplifies the fax environment, by eliminating all onsite fax infrastructure
- Lowers the total cost of ownership, by eliminating the costs associated with fax machines, fax servers, fax cards and software, dedicated phone lines, fax paper, and so on and scales automatically to meet demand and eliminate busy signals, especially at times of peak volume
- Improves fax reliability, guaranteeing both high availability and business continuity by using an enterprise network infrastructure that eliminates busy signals, broken fax machines, and other problems that interfere with the ability to send or receive fax communications
- Enables indisputable auditability and electronic tracking of fax traffic
- Improves employee productivity, by making faxes fast and easy to exchange within their existing email client

“IT help desks get a fair number of calls related to fax problems and error messages,” Barckhahn explains. “Cloud fax provides an administrative portal that lets companies diagnose and address issues from a centralized, automated system that doesn’t require an on-site visit or time-consuming troubleshooting.”

often rekeying them into several disparate systems in a slow, inefficient process that costs time and money while introducing the chance of human error. Paper documents are also difficult to secure and easy to lose. A cloud fax solution replaces this burden with a secure, private electronic approach to receiving content, meaning that the document can be digitally archived or uploaded to a client’s record.

To automate the loan application process, lenders can integrate capture technology with simple barcoding to identify and route inbound content. Each loan applicant receives a unique barcode on a cover sheet to use when faxing both the application itself

BUSINESS BENEFITS OF CLOUD FAXING

Although cloud fax is especially useful to these industries, it also delivers broad business benefits any organization can take advantage of, such as the following:

- Improved security and compliance through point-to-point fax communications
- Shorter time to revenue through faster business workflows and process automation
- Increased customer satisfaction through faster documents processing and exchange
- Improved ability to expand into new markets with solutions that scale as the organization grows

Most importantly, cloud fax paves the way to future business operation optimization initiatives such as digital transformation, cloud-first, and infrastructure modernization. Indeed, a Gartner report about emerging use cases for cloud fax suggests possibilities such as services—such as food delivery, hotel reservations, and restaurant reservations—that connect mobile apps to fax in near real time; integration with cloud-based HR, ERP, and document management services; and content recognition analytics capable of parsing fax content and directing it automatically to the appropriate databases and applications.

“Training people on a new workflow is harder than eliminating a step in a familiar workflow,” Barckhahn says. “So, wherever business processes and workflows are built around paper-based faxing, removing as much paper as possible by implementing and promoting cloud fax eases the process of transitioning to a digital workplace. It’s an easy, obvious win that prepares a company for the future.”

and all supporting documents. When the applicant faxes in these documents, capture technology uses optical character recognition to automatically transform the content into data and input that data directly into the lending system, using the barcode to ensure that all the records are connected.

The lending system can then send automated reminders of missing documentation, customer status updates, and notification of loan approvals. As a result, the loan department has fewer data entry errors; generates an audit trail for proof of delivery and processing; and, most importantly, can securely process more applications in less time to respond faster to each customer.

An automotive financing company that once needed six to nine months to onboard new borrowers can now do so in just hours with cloud fax technology, process a loan application in just seven minutes, and confirm payments on the same day. Switching to cloud fax has enabled it to attract new customers while retaining almost \$9.5 million a year in revenue from borrowers who had previously complained about slow service.

Insurance

The insurance industry is also subject to rigorous laws and regulations governing security, privacy, and business transparency. In addition, it relies on multiple paper-dependent processes that need to be streamlined to enhance the customer experience. Claims processing, for example, involves multiple forms of paper and electronic documentation, often including images, which must be entered manually, associated with the proper claim, and stored securely—all while customers wait impatiently for processing so they can rebuild a business, restore a home, or pay medical bills.

Integrated with cloud fax, electronic tools capture data directly from the claim form, input it directly to the claims processing system, and ensure that all relevant documentation is filed together. The claims system can then automatically request further information, send status updates and proof of coverage, and notify the customer of claim approval or denial. With fewer data entry errors, more-secure and -auditable data storage, and a faster response to customers, an insurer is more productive at a lower cost. In fact, one global insurance leader used cloud fax to eliminate all paper, postage, and manual processing in its claims process, cutting its fax costs in half and generating an \$8 million return on investment within five years.

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Healthcare

The healthcare industry is under tremendous pressure to control the cost of care yet still maintain and improve the quality of care by streamlining providers' access to protected healthcare information (PHI) at every step. It must also ensure that all PHI remains secure and compliant with patient privacy regulations.

When a primary care physician (PCP) refers a patient to a specialist, for example, the right PHI records—often involving large amounts of paperwork, including lab results, handwritten medical notes, and care instructions—must be delivered securely and in full to the right recipient. Even if these records are in electronic formats, they may be stored across multiple incompatible medical record systems that make sharing information difficult. And because paperwork loss and data entry errors can literally be life-threatening, painstakingly slow manual data entry or re-entry puts patient care at risk.

With cloud fax, however, the referral document goes directly to the specialist's email inbox, where the fax arrives as a secure electronic document that can be immediately reviewed and uploaded to the patient's electronic medical record. This speeds the specialist's ability to process inbound referrals, schedule appointments, and have the patient's records available in the record system at the point of care.

For a medical device company that receives more than 1,600 faxes a day, adopting cloud fax has eliminated busy signals, fax loss, and delayed responses. A high-availability system with failover and redundancy means that time-sensitive orders from doctors now reach the right person reliably and securely and get filled promptly.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing industry is under pressure to manage costs while delivering products that comply with global regulatory requirements. However, the industry still relies heavily on paper-intensive processes that require repeated manual data entry. In addition to costing time and money and introducing opportunities for human error, these paper-based processes limit visibility into the supply chain, making it difficult to spot and recall damaged or faulty products.

Replacing a paper-based fax infrastructure with cloud fax enables vendors and partners to receive and transmit necessary documentation such as purchase orders, shipping notices, and change order requests as secure, searchable electronic records.



Integrating cloud fax with capture technology that extracts information and uploads it automatically to other back-end systems such as SAP and Oracle increases productivity; even "long tail" partners who still rely exclusively on fax can transact within those back-end systems, by sending and receiving faxes in electronic form. Increased automation, in turn, creates an audit trail to prove regulatory compliance while streamlining workflow at every point of the supply chain, from purchasing through shipping to sending recall notices if needed.

Legal

Every legal case generates hundreds or even thousands of pages of paperwork that must be routed properly, transmitted and stored securely, searched for necessary information, and exchanged quickly. Legal documents that aren't in the public record must also be secured properly, to avoid the risk of exposing the law firm to penalties ranging from fines to disbarment. Accordingly, lawyers must pay large sums for inefficient, costly manual data entry and expensive delivery services while losing productivity and billable hours to bottlenecks in the process.

Cloud fax eliminates the costs and burdens of faxing and routing paper documents, by enabling attorneys to fill out and file documents in secure electronic form, generating proof that they've done so properly and in a timely fashion. When e-discovery solutions are also implemented, capture technology can automatically route incoming faxes quickly and securely to the case management system and file them with the correct cases, ensuring that attorneys can find, search, and share information quickly and conveniently during the discovery process and at any other point.

For more information on how OpenText XM Fax can help with your cloud fax needs, [visit its website](#).