



How to Choose the Right Document Scanner for Your Business

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Whether you're a large corporation or young startup there is one tool your business needs in order to scale — a document scanner. Filing cabinets are only useful for so long, as your business scales so will the amount of documents you need to store. The time it takes to organize and physically store these paper documents can be cumbersome and reduce operational efficiency. Document scanners

not only save precious time, but also ensure your documents are more secure and accessible than when physically stored on-premise.

A [document scanner](#) is a digital device that converts paper documents into a digital image format for further editing, image or text recognition, and digital storage, and more. Quality document scanners reduce paper waste, increase efficiency, and boost productivity within your business.

When you start thinking about purchasing a document scanner for your business you'll want to ask yourself some questions before you make the decision. This blog will provide guidance so you can feel confident in choosing the right document scanner for your business.

Types of Scanners

As you begin researching you'll first want to understand the different types of document scanners available to businesses. Overall most commercially available scanners produced today have similar basic features such as USB 2 or USB 3 interface, scans 8.5 x 11 or legal size in black and white, grayscale or color, supports scanning resolutions from 72 dots per inch (DPI) to 600+ dpi, and supports user-selectable brightness and contrast settings. You can argue that most scanners perform the same process, each takes a paper document and converts it into a digital format; however, as the price of the scanner increases different features become available.

Consider how often you'll be scanning. For low volume scanning flatbed, sheet-fed, and portable scanners are a great option. These scanners can range from \$100-\$500 and require you to insert each page individually. With a usual throughput of 1-10 pages per minute, you would want to use these types of scanners if you need to scan a low volume of documents. These types of scanners require all scanning to be performed in-house, which can take up a lot of time for

the person responsible for the task, depending on document volume. That said, if you are looking for a lower-cost, easy way to scan a few pictures or documents, these are a great option.

Mid-range scanners are usually the most popular and come in around \$500-\$2000. These scanners have the basic features of a document scanner as well as an automatic document feeder (ADF) which takes away the manual labor of scanning one document at a time. Some in-scanner processing such as image rotation, de-skew, and auto cropping may also be included. With an increased throughput of up to 70 pages per minute these scanners are great for mid volume scanning and are perfect for businesses looking to become paperless.

If you are looking for a document scanner that can intake decades of documents and images, consider a higher-quality, bulk document scanner. These scanners are priced above \$5000, with common models coming in the \$15000 range. If comparison shopping on price alone, you might feel a bit of sticker shock — but don't cancel them out just yet. These high capacity scanners are certainly an investment, it is one that provides a high return on productivity in the right use case. You would primarily find these scanners in high-volume scanning operations such as a centralized enterprise document capture office. These scanners have a more durable construction than low-end scanners and require less frequent replacement of consumables. The high level of accuracy, reliability, and quality make these scanners perfect for businesses with regular large volumes of documents.

Now that we've discussed the types of scanners available at a high-level, let's go into what questions you should ask yourself before making the purchase.

What Types of Documents Will You be Scanning?

First, understand the types of documents you'll need to scan. The information in your documents can vary, but what you'll want to assess is what type of document you'll be digitizing and what you need to do with the content on the page.

Need to scan some old records in your filing cabinet to clear up some space? Consider a document scanner that can handle high volume work. Some documents may need to be rotated, deskewed, or cropped. Or perhaps you are scanning documents that have a combination of black and white pages and color pages. Understanding the granularity of your document needs will help determine what other features you may need in your document scanner.

Will It Integrate With Your Current System?

Unless you are planning to scan your documents onto a hard drive, you'll need to make sure your scanner can integrate with your current system. Whether it be your CRM or file storage system, research what types of technologies your chosen scanner can integrate with. You want these digital documents to be easily accessible to you and your team to increase efficiency within your business.

When integrating a scanner into your existing system, it is important to know how scanned documents will be searched and retrieved. Your indexing scheme should include whatever common terms your workers use when finding a document, such as SSN, Name, Document type, Invoice numbers – the indexing terms may vary from department to department and your Document Management system

should support the easy creation of new index and query screens as they are needed.

What Documents are Updated Frequently?

There are documents, such as records, that need to be retained for regulatory compliance or occasional reference. These types of documents usually just need to be scanned and stored. On the other hand, there are documents, such as invoices, that need to be active within your business. Documents that need to be updated or changed throughout your business process should not only be scanned but also make sure that they can be edited or signed digitally.

By understanding what documents you use frequently, you can make sure that scanned documents and the information they contain flow seamlessly within your processes. By thinking this through, you can avoid introducing a scanner that leaves no way to edit or modify the document once it has been scanned.

How Important is Speed?

When it comes to speed you may think that the scanner with the fastest throughput is the best option for a large amount of documents. However, speed doesn't matter as much as you think. Let's assume I have a large backlog of corporate documents that must be captured. When deciding on the model of scanner needed to accomplish this task, you may assume that faster capture is better – in other words, get the fastest throughput scanner you can afford.

This is not an intuitive decision. If it takes your indexing operators 30 seconds to enter database index information for a typical 5-page document, it doesn't much matter if it takes your scanner operator 3 seconds or 2 seconds to capture it. So long as your scanner can keep

your indexers supplied with documents, you have maxed out your throughput.

On the other hand, the longer your average document is in pages, the more impact a fast scanner will have. If you are scanning a 5-page document but indexing takes 30 seconds, you can use any reliable document scanner. If you are scanning 300-page documents and indexing takes 30 seconds, scanning speed is a real consideration. Speed matters more and more as indexing time decreases in relation to scanning time.

Getting Started

Now that you have a basic understanding of document scanners, you can start thinking about the actual buying process. Be sure to look back at these questions to help you understand exactly what you want to get out of a document scanner.

If you are looking to become paperless, you'll also want to consider a document management system (DMS). Once your documents are scanned, if you don't have any automation software that can allow these documents to integrate within your business process, then what is the point? With a DMS you will be able to utilize features such as workflows and integrations that can help your scanned documents seamlessly flow through your business process. Our team of experts here at Mindwrap are always available to help you find the correct document scanner and move your business forward through our document management system.

Questions on the process? Contact us today and we'd be happy to discuss what a transition looks like for many of our past clients. See in real-time how small businesses can transform their document management with Optix.