

# The 2026 Office Copier Buying Guide

How to choose the right copier, avoid hidden costs, and match your print technology to the way your team actually works.



Print needs



Workflow



True cost



Lease or buy



Right partner

**DDL**  
*Business Systems, LLC*

TECHNOLOGY.  
SOLUTIONS.  
RESULTS.

# Copier Buying Is More Complex in 2026

The best choice is no longer just about speed, print quality, or paper capacity.



## Old-school checklist

- Look at speed
- Compare print quality
- Check paper capacity
- Choose the lowest monthly payment

### What this misses:

It may not show whether the copier will fit your team, workflows, security needs, or service expectations.

## 2026 buyer checklist

- What do we print every day?
- How do documents move through our business?
- What does downtime cost us?
- How will the device be secured and serviced?

### Better question:

**How will this copier improve how our team works?**

## Why businesses regret copier purchases

Many companies choose the wrong copier because the buying process never connects equipment to workflow, security, service, and document management needs.

“ **Start with workflow. Then choose the equipment.** ”

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# Understand what your office actually prints

Before you compare models, match the copier to real usage - not guesses.

## Start with these questions

- How many pages do we print each month?
- Are we printing mostly black and white or color?
- Do we scan documents frequently?
- Do employees print from mobile devices or laptops?

## Monthly volume ranges

### Small office

5,000-10,000 pages



### Mid-size organization

20,000+ pages



Underestimating volume often leads to more breakdowns, higher toner costs, and slower productivity.

## Signs your copier may be under-sized

!

### Frequent service calls

Device works harder than it was designed to.

!

### Toner runs out often

Supply planning does not match usage.

!

### Lines at the copier

Print speed or capacity slows the team.

!

### Too much manual scanning

Workflow needs are not being addressed.

## Buyer takeaway

Choose a copier built for your real print volume, scan volume, users, and peak busy times.

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## Consider workflow - not just the machine

Modern copiers can serve as workflow platforms, not just output devices.

### A smarter copier workflow



#### Workflow questions

- Where should scanned files go?
- Who needs access to them?
- Can invoices, forms, or HR documents be routed automatically?
- Do files need searchable text?

#### When workflow matters most

- Paper-heavy departments
- Healthcare, legal, education, finance, and manufacturing teams
- Organizations trying to reduce manual filing and data entry

For many companies, the copier becomes the central hub for document workflow. That is why many businesses pair copiers with document management systems.

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## Look beyond the purchase price

The real cost of a copier includes more than the monthly payment or invoice price.

### Total cost of ownership

Equipment

Toner and supplies

Service and maintenance

Downtime

Energy and waste

Device management

The cheapest copier on paper is not always the lowest-cost copier to own.

### Where Managed Print Services helps

- Monitor devices automatically
- Deliver toner before it runs out
- Reduce unnecessary printing
- Lower operating costs
- Keep equipment maintained

**20-30%**

potential print expense reduction

### Common hidden costs to ask about

- |                                                                     |                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What is included in the service agreement? | <input type="checkbox"/> How are overages billed?                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are supplies bundled or billed separately? | <input type="checkbox"/> How often will usage be reviewed?              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What happens when the device is down?      | <input type="checkbox"/> Can the provider optimize our fleet over time? |

**Buyer takeaway: compare total operating cost, service expectations, supply management, and workflow impact - not only the upfront price.**

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## Decide whether to lease or purchase

The best option depends on budget, lifecycle, print volume, and service requirements.

### Lease vs. purchase at a glance

#### Leasing may fit if you want to...

- Avoid a large upfront cost
- Upgrade technology every few years
- Bundle service and supplies
- Keep equipment current as needs change

#### Purchasing may fit if you want to...

- Own the equipment long term
- Use capital budget instead of monthly lease payments
- Keep a device for many years
- Separate equipment ownership from service

#### Decision factors

1

##### Budget

Upfront vs. monthly

2

##### Lifecycle

How often you need upgrades

3

##### Volume

Expected usage and growth

4

##### Service

Response time and supplies

### Quick rule of thumb

Leasing is common because it keeps technology current and can bundle service. Purchasing can still make sense when a business wants long-term ownership.

Ask your print specialist:

Which option gives us the best value over the full equipment lifecycle?

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## Work with a partner - not just a vendor

A good partner should focus on what will actually work best for your business.

### Vendor mindset vs. partner mindset

#### A vendor may...

- Push a model based on inventory
- Lead with hardware features
- Skip workflow discovery
- Talk price before fit

#### A partner should...

- Analyze your print environment
- Recommend the right equipment
- Configure workflows
- Secure devices
- Provide responsive service

### How DDL helps businesses choose the right copier

DDL starts with your workflow, not the equipment. We help uncover true printing costs, workflow inefficiencies, document security risks, print waste, and equipment needs.

**The result: a print environment that is simpler, more secure, and more cost-effective.**



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# Printable Copier Buyer Worksheet

Use this page during internal planning or bring it to your consultation.

## 1. Current print environment

Estimated pages per month: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of users: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of devices: \_\_\_\_\_

Color vs. black and white needs: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Workflow needs

Where should scanned documents go? \_\_\_\_\_

Departments with heavy paper workflows: \_\_\_\_\_

Need searchable PDFs or document management? Yes / No

## 3. Cost and service expectations

Current monthly print costs: \_\_\_\_\_

Biggest pain point: cost / downtime / supplies / speed / security

Preferred service response expectation: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Leasing or purchasing

Prefer leasing / purchasing / not sure

Desired refresh cycle: 3 years / 4 years / 5 years / other

Need service and supplies bundled? Yes / No

## Before you decide, confirm these five things

- |                                                                           |                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The copier is sized for your real monthly volume | <input type="checkbox"/> Lease and purchase options were compared       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workflow needs were reviewed, not assumed        | <input type="checkbox"/> Service, supplies, and response time are clear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Total operating cost was discussed               |                                                                         |

## Ready for expert guidance?

Schedule a free copier consultation with DDL Business Systems.

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