



Case Study 04

HATTA & ASSOCIATES

Achieved Optimisation of Fax Operation and PC Management by One-Stop Services



Problems

- Late response due to delay in confirming incoming faxes promptly
- Risks of failure in confirmation of incoming faxes and occurrence of cases where faxes are mistakenly taken away
- Time-consuming PC troubleshooting

Company Profile

Company name:
HATTA & ASSOCIATES

industry : Patent office

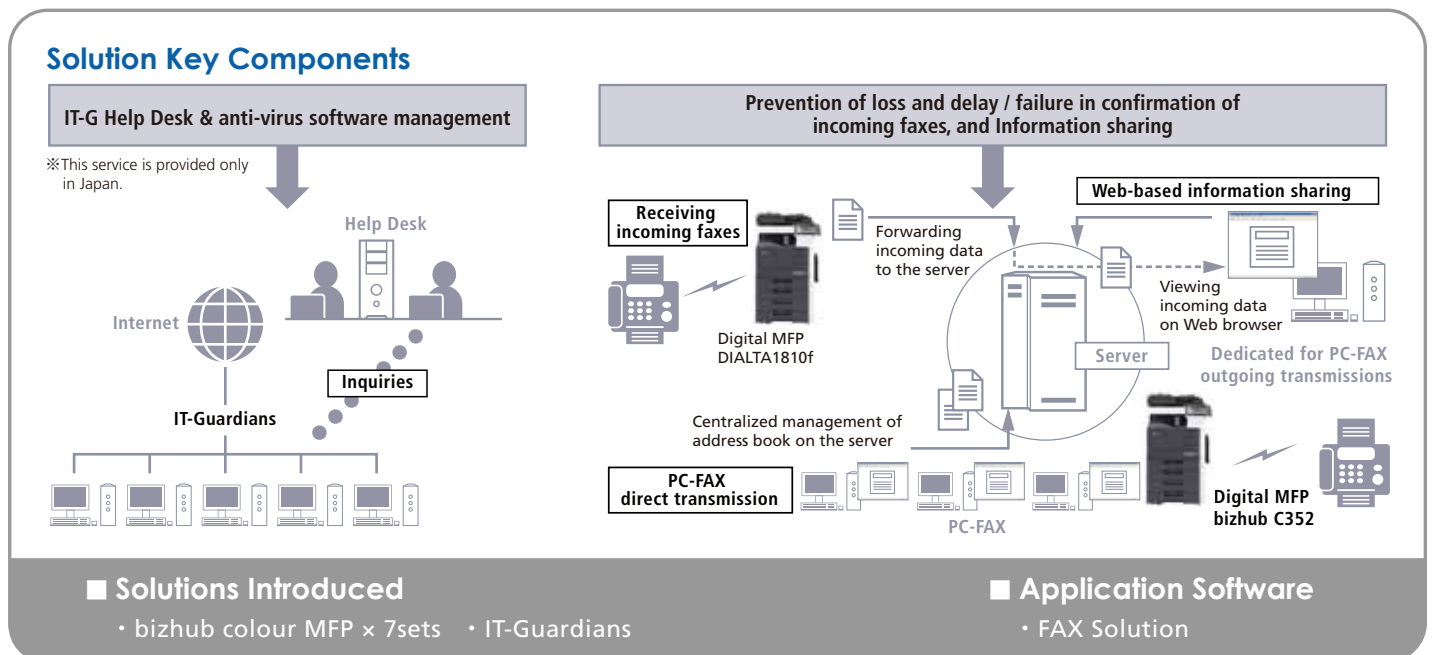
In such broad technology areas as chemistry, medical care, semiconductor, and machine, the office has significant experience and track record in application, registration, maintenance and management of intellectual property rights including patents and utility models in Japan and abroad. "Our staff members work hard as "artisans of patent application" every day. Our supreme goal is to become "living national treasures of patent application." (Mr. Hatta).

Solutions

- Automatically forwarding incoming fax data to the server has enabled the data shared online
- Introduced a system to send faxes directly from PCs

Result

- Their response to inquiries/requests from customers has greatly improved by sending/receiving fax messages online via PCs
- The new procedure successfully prevents an oversight caused by faxes mistakenly taken away.
- Regardless to their locations, staff can now share data thanks to the new system to view incoming fax documents on the web browser.
- Significantly improved convenience and job efficiency with paperless fax sending workflow.



Delay/Failure in Confirmation of Incoming Faxes Problem with PC Administration



With the vision of "Intellectual Property Artisan", Hatta & Associates has an advantage of high-level expertise in the area of designated technologies. They heavily use faxes in their daily operations, such as sending/receiving patent applications and the related documents to/from the clients and the Japan Patent Office.

Mr. Mikio Hatta, President & Patent Attorney of Hatta & Associates, asserts, "Fax is an extremely important communication tool for us. Patent information is a valuable intellectual property for our clients, and thus it is totally unacceptable that such information is leaked to outsiders before publication of the patent application. To maintain the confidentiality with our clients, it is necessary to use faxes instead of e-mails with uncertainty in information security. We also appreciate convenience of fax which allows us to check the content immediately upon receipt."

The Office has installed 7 multi-functional peripherals (MFPs) of Konica Minolta 'bizhub' series. One of them is dedicated for receiving fax, and two are used for sending (and copying). Due to the office layout, MFPs and staff members were located in different rooms. Accordingly, the staff members had to move from their room to another room to send/receive faxes, and it was rather hard to be aware of incoming faxes.

Mr. Takeshi Fujita, Vice President & Patent Attorney of Hatta & Associates, reflects, "We sometimes failed to check fax messages from our clients in a timely manner, and experienced delays in information sharing among staff members. It affected our operations. When speed is essential for patent

application, it was a serious problem."

Furthermore, they were facing risks concerning accuracy of their operations. "We did not have a method to confirm how many pages of what document were sent to us, and were always facing risks of loss/misplacement or confusion," says Mr. Toshihiro Hasegawa, Deputy President & Patent Attorney of Hatta & Associates.

In the meantime, they use PCs for their daily operations, along with the MFPs. In the absence of a full-time administrator, in case of any trouble, some staff members had to take charge of the troubleshooting, while doing their own jobs.

"We were struggling with not only troubleshooting of equipment or security software, but also assistance to those unfamiliar with PC operations. One day, we had a system trouble which made our 30 PCs unusable. If we had not restored the system by the next morning, we would have caused trouble to our clients. So we worked all the night for the recovery," acknowledged Mr. Hideo Kitano, in charge of domestic affairs Administrative Department Hatta & Associates. Because of such an administration system, "we couldn't help counting on certain staff members with good PC knowledge, and it reduced their time for their core business activities such as preparing patent specifications." (Mr. Hatta). Having suffered from such a situation, Hatta & Associates was considering outsourcing administration of their PCs to avoid negative effects on the core business activities.



Solved Problems in Transmitting/Receiving Fax Making Use of Standard Feature of MFP

To cope with such problems, Hatta & Associates introduced the solutions proposed by Konica Minolta. As for incoming transmissions, they first established a system to forward incoming data to their server so that they can view such data on a Web browser.

Furthermore, by adding the "PC-Fax Transmission" function as well as the incoming fax alert function, arrival of fax image data received by an MFP can now be checked with PCs for shared use.

"As we are now informed of incoming faxes by the alert while we are in a distant room, there is almost no delay in confirming the transmissions," says Mr. Hasegawa, pointing out the positive effect. Furthermore, "we can also check incoming faxes in two forms – paper outputs and PDF files, so we can prevent any failure in confirmation by reconciling these two. In addition, as we can now recognize an occurrence of cases where faxes are mistakenly taken away, we can deal with it smoothly."



From now on, we can use thorough considerations such as implementing data synchronization between 2 PCs for shared use, to avoid that the 2 PCs have different processing status of incoming data.

As for outgoing faxes, the PC-Fax Transmission function allowed for sending data directly from one's PC and, thus, sparing time for going to another room to send faxes. At the same time, they established a mechanism to view incoming faxes on web browsers via intranet or remote access.

"Regardless of whether we are in a different room, at home, or elsewhere outside the office, publication on the web enabled us to share information more quickly and certainly without depending on the location. Along with the incoming fax alert, the system as a whole enabled us to improve our response to the clients." (Mr. Kitano) All of these mechanisms are realized by the standard feature of bizhub. Smiling, Mr. Fujita says, "It is extremely helpful that we could improve our operational quality and customer satisfaction level without additional investment."

Significant Reduction in Time for Troubleshooting Enabled Them to Focus on Core Business Activities

Hatta & Associates adopted 'IT-Guardians *' the service provided by Konica Minolta Business Solutions Japan, as a solution for their problem with PC administration. At that time, the existing security software renewal date was drawing near. Considering the required costs and efforts for the renewal, Hatta & Associates judged it would be best to introduce the service offering not only help desk, but also anti-virus and firewall.

By introducing the service, Hatta & Associates could establish a new system for PC troubleshooting, where a staff member can call the help desk to fix the problem by himself/herself, or IT-Guardians shoots the trouble by remote control under Remote Help services in case of trouble with a PC.

"The time I spend on PC administration is reduced to roughly 5% of time spent in the past. Thanks to that, now I have much more time to concentrate on the core business." (Mr. Kitano).

At the same time, there is another advantage for other staff members. "We can execute our duties more smoothly, thanks to less wait time during troubleshooting, for example. From now on, we can use the PCs and the network without anxiety." (Mr. Hasegawa). In addition, with the back-up solutions, they successfully implemented measures against

disasters.

In this way, Hatta & Associates appreciates Konica Minolta's one-stop solutions which cover everything from supply of MFPs and tools, to establishment of the system, to operation support, stating "we are satisfied with this reliable partner, who makes adequate proposals to respond to our needs and take a quick action." (Mr. Fujita). They plan to gradually optimize their office environment, such as further efforts to paperless document storage, in the future.

"To offer higher quality services to our clients based on our advantages, we would like to make maximum use of MFPs, IT equipment, and software. We would like Konica Minolta to support us." (Mr. Hatta).

Konica Minolta continues to support the office environment of Hatta & Associates.

*IT-Guardians : This is a complete solution package, covering security, back-up, remote help and support for asset management, and users have flexible choices in plans based on their scale of business.

