



MANAGED IT SERVICES + Your Business

= SUCCESS, PEACE OF MIND, SECURITY, COST SAVINGS, AND COMPLIANCE

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Value of Managed Services
Whitepaper



Overview

Your business becomes more dependent on technology every day and ensuring your network is operating at full capacity can be overwhelming and crucial part of any business. In most organizations, this ranges from hardware, such as servers, workstations / PCs, printers, to software systems such as a database, email or web applications. These IT systems are increasingly more advanced with technologies like virtualization and cloud computing becoming part of the infrastructure. Advancements in technology make managing these services a complicated endeavor. Businesses are continually facing challenges in scaling and managing their IT infrastructure while effectively reducing costs. System stability, availability, and performance are critical to running a successful organization. Managed Services gives an organization's decision makers control over which services will be managed by the IT company, and which ones will be kept in-house. In addition, it gives their users access to a team of technology experts, who are just a call or email away. As their needs change, the services can be tailored and optimized. A Managed Services solution provides continuity of business operations with constant network monitoring, fault detection, active virus prevention, and system administration. This white paper will discuss how Managed Services work, why companies choose them, the business value of Managed Services, and what to look for in a Managed Service Provider

What are Managed Services?

Managed Services provide powerful enterprise capabilities to businesses for a monthly fee. Constant network availability and monitoring, expert support, and IT services are made available at a level that the business could not normally achieve on their own. Organizations can choose which services they want managed by the MSP and which they choose to keep in-house. A Managed Services solution is comprehensive and focuses on the overall health of a business's IT resources. A Managed Services Provider (MSP) provides a solution that is not limited to a warranty on a single piece of hardware, or support for one specific software application. Unlike traditional warranties, the MSP provides overall management, monitoring, and support of the enterprise network and any hardware and software components that the customer desires. This includes acting as the liaison with 3rd party support vendors for specific hardware and applications as needed. An MSP can also look for ways to optimize overall performance of the entire system. They may recommend moving a software application to the cloud (private or public) to eliminate an out-of-date server that is slowing down business operations.

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Why Managed Services?

Managed Services give companies access to expert engineers to maintain their network without the need for costly technology refreshes or the high initial investment of capital into IT operations. As mentioned, it also gives their users access to support for a fixed cost. According to CompTIA's 4th Annual Trends in Managed Services report, below are the top five reasons identified by organizations on why they use Managed Services.

1. Increased efficiency / reliability of IT operations 56 percent of companies list this as the main reason for working with a managed service provider (MSP). Often, organizations have over-burdened IT staff with employees who may lack the skills and training for certain tasks or can't handle the whole of the company's network on their own. In response, these companies recognize the value of working with an outside technical support team. From the CompTIA report: "60 percent of end users describe their managed services engagement as a collaborative arrangement with their internal IT department, suggesting that certain IT areas fall into the MSP bucket, while others remain in house." Not only does IT outsourcing help with having an extra team of IT experts able to troubleshoot and remediate issues that arise, clients benefit from having access to the latest technology and business-grade solutions that maintain uptime and profitability, such as remote monitoring and management (RMM), backup and disaster recovery (BDR) and cloud computing. Investing in these tools increases the reliability of organizations' IT infrastructure. Investing in the managed services business model tackles existing labor constraints and prevents internal IT departments from always having to play catch-up.

2. Enhanced security/compliance Laptops, desktops, smartphones, applications, tablets, servers, operating systems, browsers, wearable technology and the like all store and transmit data and thus require the strictest security measures. No organization wants to become the next headline in a high-profile data breach or data loss incident. For example, the Anthem data breach, which implicated one-third of Americans and compromised the medical data of nearly 100 million individuals. The importance of working with an IT solutions provider who understands HIPAA regulations, for example, and how to supplement them with additional managed security protocol, policies and procedures is crucial. As CompTIA's study finds, security and data protection is critical to every organization. Along these lines, compliance is becoming even more of an outsourced IT adoption driver for organizations, especially with regard to PCI security standards, since many businesses offer e-commerce on their websites.

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3. Proactive approach to maintenance This is a benefit of managed IT services that is discussed a lot because it is so important. Most organizations don't want to have to think about their daily IT operations. They don't want to have to second-guess the reliability and speediness of their network connection. Similarly, they don't want to have to worry about what the state their IT environment will be when they commute in to work each morning. They choose to work with an MSP because of the ability to provide 24/7/365 coverage. Services like RMM and managed security services detect potential disturbances and vulnerabilities, allowing the resolution of these problems before they develop into more critical threats. Fully managed IT support can often troubleshoot and remediate glitches or bugs before the organization is any the wiser. A CEO doesn't have the time to verify that the backups his company has taken actually worked. That's where Managed Services comes in. In working with the right MSP, key executives can take advantage of proactive BDR solutions that offer business continuity by combining RMM intelligence with regular, encrypted backups, cloud computing capabilities and IT virtualization.

4. ROI/cost savings One of the biggest business values of managed services is greater cost savings. IT budgets consist of many items: hardware costs, software and network infrastructure costs and maintenance costs, to name a few. Recall how in point number one we state that MSPs can offer all the latest technology. This in turn smooths out the latter listed maintenance costs that accompany outdated hardware, which internal IT departments may not have the budget to upgrade. Don't forget about the expense of IT labor, which can be the most volatile over-time. Many companies need to reduce the size of their IT department because the cost of paying their current staff is far too high. It could also be the case that the company has no dedicated IT team and employees are forced to compensate by performing technical tasks that are outside of their core area of expertise, slowing productivity and preventing the business from being able to grow. With the managed services business model, companies are able to more easily predict their IT costs on a month to-month basis. Freeing up more staff time to devote to higher value projects they're properly equipped to manage increases productivity overall.

5. Free IT staff to work on strategic projects Finally, an organization's IT employees can increase productivity by concentrating on those projects and assignments they're the best suited to tackle. As already established, the cost of labor is significant for any business, but especially for those who may have a smaller IT budget. As such, business owners want to ensure that they are getting the most out of what they're paying for. It doesn't make sense for a company to pay a full-time employee with little-to-no experience to migrate them on premise Exchange servers to Microsoft Office 365 when they could outsource the same task to an IT support technician with the appropriate level of skill and experience, at a fraction of the cost. Managed services will help companies maximize employee productivity and satisfaction. By partnering with an MSP with a help desk call center, for example, internal IT staff can free up time wasted recovering emails and resetting passwords and instead focus on strategic, revenue generating objectives. Managed Services help a business better utilize individuals' IT talents, increasing operational efficiency and decreasing employee turnover.

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The Business Value

Managing the IT services of an organization takes a wide array of skills and tools. One of the most appealing reasons for using an MSP is the access to network management resources, cloud storage, and highly trained IT experts without having to make the large up-front investment. The benefits are not just financial though. Here are some of the key benefits of a Managed Services Solution. Reduced Costs The up-front cost to a business for developing the staff, purchasing the hardware infrastructure, and maintaining the enterprise network can be quite extensive. The business decision to use Managed Services results in cost savings in the following ways:

- Network Security
- Hardware Procurement
- Traditional Service Fees
- IT Department Costs (IT operations, developing new-staff, etc.)
- Electricity Usage
- Interruption of Business Operations

Reliable Budget Managed Services allow the IT budget to be set at a monthly rate. This helps to keep unexpected IT costs from cutting into resources that could be better spent growing the business. Scalable and Flexible an MSP will work with your organization to increase or decrease service levels according to changing business needs. This allows the business to grow without worrying if your IT infrastructure can support additional employees or customers. The MSP can work with your organization to ensure new business applications or processes can be adopted without the need to increase in-house IT staff.

Expertise

An MSP has highly trained engineers on their staff to support IT needs. MSPs will have personnel trained in many technical areas:

- Network Security
- Server Management
- Storage
- Enterprise Architecture (Switching/Routing)
- Disaster Recovery
- Virtualization
- Cloud

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Innovative Technology

MSPs have the latest network management software, hardware resources, virtualization capabilities, cloud storage, and other technologies that are made available to the customer as needed. This allows businesses to enjoy access to the latest technology without maintaining the systems themselves.

Peace of Mind

An MSP is responsible for providing service availability and/or the support response an organization needs. MSPs will typically have redundancy for critical systems to maintain high availability of services and assure continuity of business operations. Data can be backed up and stored off-site in multiple physical locations allowing services to be rebuilt onto a virtual server if there is an outage, for example. This helps to ensure that disaster recovery takes minutes instead of hours and customers are still able to function properly.

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