



MANAGED IT SERVICES: Why Hiring an Expert Makes Sense

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That being said, not all companies are going in that direction. Why the hold-outs? Misguided fear of breaches or lack of control are often the reasons. For many companies that realize that dealing with a qualified managed IT support provider can drive revenues up while driving expenses down, they are heading in that direction in droves. We will get to the nitty gritty in a little while, but first:

Managed IT Support: What is It?

Managed IT support can be whatever you want it to be. A managed support provider (MSP) can provide as much or as little support as you like. They can pretty much take over your

entire IT, they can provide certain predetermined services, or they can work hand-in-hand with a company's existing in-house IT team. They can also replace the "break & fix" services many smaller companies use before they realize that prevention is better (cheaper, more cost-efficient, more productivity-efficient) than constantly repairing out-of-date, out-of-warranty, equipment that is probably only barely doing the job. Break & Fix: something goes wrong, you call them, they fix. The more times things break and you call them, the more money they make. A good IT service provider will analyze and determine when it makes more sense to replace old equipment, probably arrange excellent lease terms, update it as necessary, and then make sure the equipment is properly maintained to guarantee the longest life possible.

Managed IT Services: Monitor – Manage – Maintain

Most small to mid-sized companies cannot afford the expense of having people monitoring their IT networks around the clock but it is this monitoring that often prevents any interruption in

the availability of an IT network. Stuff happens. Discovering small problems before they become major events is one of the primary benefits of using a third-party service. This is one of the true value propositions of using this type of service. You have expert technicians actually in front of screens 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. (Many MSPs have their own teams overseas so that their work schedules are day-time where they are, yet overnight here in the USA. NOTE: These teams should be full-time employees of the MSP whose time is fully dedicated to monitoring, managing, and maintaining the networks of the MSP's clients.) Not only are they able to perform routine tasks when your office is closed, so as to not interfere with the work of your office, but it keeps you from coming in one morning to some very unpleasant surprises.

What to Expect with a Managed IT Services Provider

Your managed IT services provider should function as an extension of your in-house team, whether that team be IT personnel or the executive(s) in charge of IT for your company. An incoming MSP will work with the system you already have in place, and work with you to protect and improve that system. They will generally not take up office space as they will work from their own facility, however, they may spend significant time on your site at the beginning of an engagement.

Although you may choose to use only some of the services offered, the services of an MSP should include:

The monitoring and management of your IT network, from basic service to extensive service packages that can include

security, data storage, disaster planning and recovery, updates and patches, document security and management, tech help desk, firewall maintenance and monitoring, intrusion prevention and detection, and operation restoration. These should all be covered in detail the Service Level Agreement (SLA) you will be signing with your provider.

Today's technology is evolving at lightning speed. This is good in that new ways to improve all aspects of your business are coming at you almost daily. This is not so good in that it's hard to keep up. While better ways to run your business may be something you understand and have the expertise to evaluate properly, are you equipped to select the best IT technologies that need to be in place to safeguard your company? Few business executives are. But MSPs with decades of experience have the skill-sets required to cut through the marketing crap put out by application providers and dig deep to select the very best, most cost-effective solutions for you.

It is because of the ever-increasing complexity of IT solutions that MSPs themselves have become more complex, more sophisticated companies, today offering services that were unknown not so very long ago. Today's technology is becoming ever more entrenched into every part of a business. A good MSP not only keeps your network safe and secure, and up and running, but often contributes to how essential business functionality is developed and handled.

Equipment is evolving as quickly as is software. Basic computers have given way to virtualized servers and now to cloud-based (off-site) services. And for some companies, the best solution is a hybrid that combines on-site and off-site.

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Why an Expert Managed IT Services Provider is a Good Investment

Managed IT services, the concept of a 3rd-party managing another company's IT network for a set fee, is still a fairly new concept, and one that still elicits concerns about giving up control of a part of the business that has become more and more essential, and with which many business owners and executives are uncomfortable. Interestingly, while MSPs are often brought in to deal with security issues, actual or potential, there still exists the concern that opening up the business to a third-party increases security threats. Others are concerned because they fear that by shifting their IT functions to an MSP, they will be abandoning the large investment already made in technology.

Nevertheless, in spite of concerns such as these, research within the industry shows more businesses moving in this direction, and those that do are pleased with the choice. How big is the industry? It is now estimated that globally over \$193 billion will be spent in 2019 on cloud computing and managed IT services.

What Makes a Successful MSP/Client Relationship?

First, the obvious: the competency of your managed IT services provider. Next, as they say, the devil is in the details and the details need to be carefully spelled out in your Service Level Agreement (SLA) with your provider. According to InformationWeek magazine, the most important elements of an SLA are:

- > Response time
- > 24 x 7 x 365 Support
- > Data & Systems Security

Why Companies Need Managed IT Services

To fully understand this, we have to look back a bit on the history of computerization. If you are old enough to remember when desktops were connected to main-frames so large that they occupied entire rooms, when backups were done on punch-tapes, and your IT "department" was a single guy who was also reminding you to dump your unneeded files because they were taking up too much room, then you know that this was not that long ago. How do we compare this to today's computer networks? Think power, think storage, think about the sophistication of today's software, but also think about the sophistication of today's cyber criminals.

To be fully in control of your data, your network, and your security, you need a team of experts who understand the complexity and the risks of today's technology. To be painfully blunt and direct: you cannot afford all the expertise you need to properly run your company's IT. If your company has grown to 100 employees or more, it may be time to consider doing everything on your own, but even then, your budget will limit you to just a few executives and technicians to handle the full-range of your IT. This is why we also offer co-managed IT, when we team with your in-house people to provide the total support you need. But if you are the typical small to mid-sized business with 10 to 100 people on your payroll, providing the needed level of expertise without breaking your budget will be a daunting task.

In today's modern businesses, Information Technology touches virtually every aspect or department within a business. IT is essential to sales, marketing, R&D, production, shipping, accounting, HR, and others. Each department likely has its own requirements, software, security concerns, etc. IT can no longer be a one-size-fits-all solution.

So, let's get into the nitty-gritty of why it pays to seek the advice of the experts working for a MSP:

For a small to mid-sized business to perform (and keep up to date on) all the tasks required today is expensive. Part of the value the MSP brings to the table is cost reduction. The MSP also converts certain capital expenses into operating expenses which could have tax benefits. Your computing capabilities increase with the MSP managed cloud, and today's rapidly increasing complexity is well-handled. Consider these facts per Citrix:

- > 61% of employees now work at least part time out of the office
- > The number of devices used within an organization has increased by 72% in just a few years.
- > The typical employee will use a minimum of three devices in work related activities.
- > 90% of companies enforce passcode rules and regulations.

It is easy to see how difficult it has become for a company with a small (or no) significant in-house IT department to keep up. And for a company that would like its IT team to focus on strategic initiatives instead of daily operational tasks, well, the choice is clear.

Factors that have led to MSP growth:

- > The increasing complexity of technology today and its rapid obsolescence
- > Ever increasing need to cut costs
- > More regulations that require compliance and that fall

outside the capabilities of typical small to mid-sized business's IT departments

- > More concern with security, including the security of your IT network, particularly when using a third-party cloud
- > Expecting your in-house IT team to focus primarily on revenue generation rather than on time-consuming daily tasks
- > Having people who are experts in these areas handled them

All that said, there are still reasons why some organizations have resisted. Nevertheless, proper due diligence on the part of a company's management and careful selection of your MSP can overcome these objections. These include:

- > Fear of losing control over your IT network and the data stored within
- > Finding a third-party you can trust that will look after your network and make sure it is secure
- > Understanding what your Service Level Agreement covers
- > Choosing the right MSP, one with the experience and expertise necessary to accomplish what you hired them to do

Here at Novatech, we have been providing IT support for small to mid-sized businesses of every type for more than 25 years. We work with attorneys and medical practices, contractors and manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. You name the industry and we probably have the experience and expertise. Our technicians are highly trained in most of the applications businesses use today and we are constantly providing additional IT education.

The Managed Office Experts at Novatech empower businesses to increase productivity, lower costs, minimize risks and drive growth through Expert Guidance in consultation, design, implementation and support of cutting-edge business technology. The Novatech portfolio of Managed Office solutions liberates clients to focus on running their business – leaving the tech to an award-winning provider with over 25 years of industry-leading experience. How can we help?