

THE TIME IS NOW:

MOVE UP TO MANAGED SERVICES

A number of challenges are prompting IT organizations to use managed services instead of, or in addition to, their own in-house IT staff. As data center technology changes and becomes more complex, the difficulty of finding, hiring and training specialized IT staff is increasing.

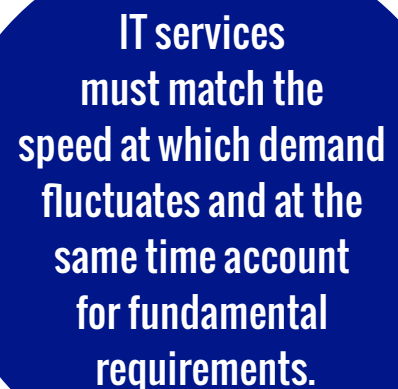
Similarly, as companies grow and new divisions or remote offices are added across disparate time zones, it is becoming more challenging to provide around-the-clock IT support. For scenarios like these, the addition of managed services is often the best answer. Working with a managed services provider can be a key way to refocus your in-house IT experts on revenue-generating activities.

Changing demand is another obstacle that IT organizations must overcome. IT services must match the speed at which demand fluctuates and at the same time account for fundamental requirements

like interoperability, availability and security. Yet, with 60% to 80% of resources spent simply maintaining the current IT environment, it is difficult to keep up with changing customer demand and new requests. Because of this, there is little room for creativity, innovation or the development of new services—creating operational risk for the business and exposing it to greater competitive threats.

The Advantages of Managed Services

There are a number of benefits that businesses can receive from engaging

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a Managed Services Provider, including access to specialized skills and increased capacity, as well as confidence that business performance will never be hindered by a lack of in-house IT expertise. With a Managed Service Provider, resources are no longer spent bringing IT staff up to speed; instead, the cost of hiring and training IT staff is transferred to the service provider, ensuring employees are prepared to meet all their customers' service requirements.

Some managed services offerings also utilize their own virtualized, scalable and elastic cloud environments. Working within these environments

translates to IT projects that are not limited by a lack of in-house infrastructure, creating more opportunities for pursuing innovation. The availability of cloud environments can also improve the flexibility and affordability of managed services.

Some Managed Services Providers offer customized service plans that cater directly to the unique needs of their business customers. Businesses can specify their service requirements and coordinate efforts with the provider to allow for specialized hardware, complex configurations and/or custom Service Level Agreements (SLAs). This allows in-house IT staff to focus on strategy and innovation rather than just keeping the IT lights on.

Depending on the provider, managed services offer an array of solutions and support for:

Hybrid IT

Looking at each application to determine the best deployment methodology for the situation—which can include multiple combinations of public cloud, private cloud, hosted private cloud, multi-tenant cloud, colocation, or data centers located at one or more client sites. Hybrid IT spans multiple clouds managed through a single pane of glass.

Managed Hosting

A full range of dedicated servers, managed hosting, managed colocation and cloud computing options

Network Services

Content Delivery Network (CDN) services, managed Internet, managed load balancing and managed switches

Managed Security

Vulnerability assessments, threat detection, penetration testing, incident response and more to identify and deal with security issues before and after they occur

OS Management

Management of Windows, Linux and Solaris operating systems, as well as monitoring and patch management

Middleware Management

Administration and monitoring services, with support from seasoned engineers, providing subject matter expertise for end-to-end support of all aspects of application environments

Database Management

Database administration, performance tuning, backup, and clustering service for Oracle, MS SQL and others.

Storage Solutions

Cloud storage, managed SAN/NAS, data deduplication, replication and backup

Managed Applications

Management of business critical applications

In addition to these features, the best Managed Service Providers rigorously test their support infrastructure and design their services with enterprise-class hardware from top vendors to give businesses the highest quality service. It's important to seek out a partner that has vendor-neutral expertise to support and maximize all of your existing systems as well. Managed services can also afford more timely patches and software updates, improving security and ensuring increased uptime. By enlisting the guidance and expertise of a Managed Services Provider, businesses can take advantage of support and service at every layer of the stack and improve their business agility.

Conclusion

Today's IT organizations face a number of new challenges: keeping up with changing technologies, finding resources to focus on innovation and keeping pace with competitors. To help meet these challenges head on, partnering with a trusted Managed Services Provider can help support and maintain your business' growth, while also helping you keep up with the constantly changing demands of today's customers. Finding a partner that can accommodate a variety of cloud

architectures, including public, private, multi-tenant and hybrid will help your IT team get the most from the resources at their disposal. Every company has unique business objectives and constraints impacting how they deliver IT to their organization. Only your company can decide what the best, or most cost-effective approach is to delivering systems and operational processes, including the addition of managed services, to your organization.

