

Are I.T. Managed Services Right for You?



As with many non-core-yet-essential services, gone are the days of 100% reliance on in-house resources, especially for IT. Most progressive organizations are moving towards an outsourced IT model, or a balance of in-house and outsourced. It's simply too difficult, complex and expensive for most companies to keep a team of IT experts on the payroll.

For many businesses, **Managed Services** are an idea whose time has come — an ideal way to take a proactive — rather than reactive — stance towards keeping your IT network running smoothly, and getting the most out of your technology investment.

Unfortunately, not all managed services providers are equal, despite claims. In fact, we've seen quite a few who might be better off billing themselves as *mis-managed services!*

Here are some things to ask yourself to determine if managed services are a good fit for your organization:

Why Consider Managed Services?

Choosing a managed services partner has many benefits:

- **Enjoy peace of mind** — focus on your core business while professionals keep your network running optimally
- **Be more productive** — proactively detect and avoid IT issues, and conduct preventative maintenance, to maximize productivity
- **Safeguard your organization** — ongoing monitoring and updates reduce vulnerability to viruses, worms, hackers, theft or malicious attacks
- **Stabilize your IT spend** — budget easier with predictable investment
- **Access top talent** — leverage top talent for far less than hiring your own engineers

What Can I Expect?

With leading Managed Services providers, certified network engineers remotely manage and maintain your network from a NOC, or Network Operations Center, providing:

- 24/7 monitoring of network and servers
- Backup monitoring
- Remote workstation and server patch deployment and updates
- Spyware and malware removal
- Detailed reporting on hardware, software, security and performance

- Key services monitoring (like email)
- Vulnerability assessments

IT engineers typically work remotely to prevent or correct any alerts that arise — server issues, email stoppage, failed backups — and your users have no-charge access to their support engineers for assistance... sort of a virtual help desk.

Handling of on-site and after hours support is driven by the needs of each customer, with many preferring an all-you-can-eat model with all support visits included in a service agreement. Other customers prefer to pay a discounted rate on service calls on an a la carte basis. Leading IT organizations will provide both options.

If issues can't be corrected remotely, and assuming you are not on an "all-inclusive" program, the provider should contact you to seek authorization to dispatch an engineer. Leading Managed Services providers will charge such visits at a reduced rate to help you keep costs down and minimize downtime.

Other services that may be appropriate for your organization and which a quality managed services provider should offer include:

- Router, firewall and VPN management
- Wireless access monitoring and management
- Antivirus and anti-spyware management
- Temp file removal to increase speed, security and hard drive space
- Applications management
- Workstation and server optimization
- CIO consulting services

Bottom Line: Today, Managed IT Services represent a better way of doing business for many organizations — efficient, proactive, and accessible 24/7. If optimizing your IT spend, ensuring security of data and performance of your network is important to you, talk with a reputable Managed Services provider. You may find that their comprehensive services, reliability, and affordability are a good fit.



Since 1999, CEO Charles Johnson and EDTS have been providing networking, security and managed services support solutions to Southeastern businesses. The firm provides Experience, Dedication, Technology and Solutions (EDTS) to increase productivity and reduce cost associated with IT.

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