



A Guide to Managed IT Services

GUIDE

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Using technology effectively is never as simple as plugging it in and turning it on. Just deciding which technology is appropriate to use is difficult; then, once installed, systems need constant monitoring, frequent patch installations, periodic upgrades, and, hopefully, rare intervention to resolve problems.

Providing the necessary oversight and support that IT needs is time consuming and expensive; in smaller enterprises, your team may not have the expertise to support all the technologies you use, and even in larger enterprises, the daily grind of support can pull your team away from project work that has greater business value. Managed IT services solve those problems.

What Are Managed Services?

Under a managed services contract, the managed services provider takes over the management, maintenance, and monitoring of systems on an everyday basis. The provider has 24x7 responsibility for the operations of your technology infrastructure, including routine maintenance, capacity management, and problem resolution.

Managed services are **NOT** the same as:

- X Consulting services.** Consulting services are offered on a project basis to address a specific problem. Managed services are provided on an ongoing, subscription basis to support the ordinary IT needs of the business.
- X Infrastructure as a Service.** Cloud providers offer Infrastructure as a Service, with the cloud provider managing and supporting the physical server and storage infrastructure. Making efficient use of the available infrastructure and monitoring the status of your business applications remains the responsibility of the enterprise.
- X On-call support services.** On-call support services help to resolve problems after they've occurred. Managed services providers proactively work to prevent problems from arising as well as solving them; they commit to delivering a specific level of service reliability.
- X Outsourcing.** With outsourcing, you surrender complete control of your IT assets. The company to which you outsource decides how the technology services will be delivered. With managed services, you don't give up control, unless you want to, and you have full visibility into how your IT services are delivered.



What Is the Scope of Managed Services?

There's a broad range of managed services available, including desktop support, server support, security services, and backup and disaster recovery services. Some providers may offer more specialized services such as managed cloud, managed containers, and managed big data services. You can pick and choose from the service provider's offerings to receive a customized level of service that meets your business needs. Common services include:



- **Infrastructure audit.** The managed services provider will assess your existing infrastructure for vulnerabilities and other deficiencies, and develop a proposed corrective action plan to improve security, capacity, and other performance metrics. Strategic advising and proactive design services ensure your IT technology strategy aligns with your business goals.
- **Help desk.** By providing virtual help desk services, the managed services provider becomes a single point of contact for end users who experience technology issues. The provider is responsible for escalating issues to third party vendors if necessary to resolve the problem.
- **24x7 Monitoring.** Managed services providers offer 24x7 monitoring of system status spanning the entire range of physical and virtual servers, desktops, network components, and applications. Remote access capabilities allow the provider's on-call staff to log into servers without being on site, enabling corrective actions to begin immediately.
- **Mobile and email support.** Email services ensure that email servers are reliable and secured to be safely accessed both inside and outside the office, while mobile device management ensures end user devices are provisioned and managed to protect company data.
- **Desktop and server support.** Managed services providers offer desktop and server support beginning with configuration and deployment. The provider can install software, including upgrades and necessary patches, and troubleshoot any end-user issues.



- **Security services.** The managed services provider can help protect your network and data through installing and configuring firewalls and by deploying and updating antivirus and other security software.
- **Backup and disaster recovery.** Through implementing a robust, monitored backup process and a reliable restoration process, the managed services provider will protect your business from outages due to system failures, natural disasters, and other crisis situations.
- **Vendor management.** A managed services provider can oversee your relationship with your vendors, beginning with writing the Request for Proposal, assisting with vendor selection based on your defined criteria, and managing the vendor's work to ensure a quality deliverable.
- **Custom projects.** Every company's IT requirements are unique, so the support the managed services provider offers can be tailored to provide the precise level of help your company needs.



What Are the Benefits of Managed Services?

The overall result of managed IT services for your business should be a robust technological infrastructure receiving an enterprise level of support. This support level results in multiple technical and business benefits.

Technical Benefits

1. Access to technical expertise that in-house staff can't provide. A managed services provider is in the technology business and will have a team filled with certified experts in multiple technology domains.
2. You'll be able to respond more quickly to new IT requirements or to integrate new technology into your infrastructure since you won't have to wait for your team to become familiar with the technology.
3. Your IT infrastructure will be more robust and reliable, integrating best practices to ensure high levels of availability and security. Because systems are patched and upgraded on schedule, you can take advantage of the latest features as well as reduce your risk level.

Business Benefits

1. Systems have less downtime since they are up-to-date and monitored, with any problems addressed immediately. Service level objectives commit the managed services provider to achieving reliability according to specific metrics, and proven backup and disaster recovery processes shorten the time to bring services back online.
2. Internal technology teams are able to focus on business needs rather than routine systems support. You're better positioned for growth because you aren't limited by the capabilities of a small internal team.
3. Reduced support costs due to subscription based or fixed price contract agreements. These terms can simplify your budgeting and cost less than providing continual training in new technology to an internal team.



How Can You Get the Biggest Benefit From Managed Services?

You'll get the biggest benefit from managed services if you select the right provider and work effectively with them. Consider the following questions before signing a managed services contract:

Question:

Is the company experienced in providing services to your kind of company?

The technical solutions that work for smaller companies may not scale to larger organizations, and the solutions that are effective in large enterprises may be too expensive in smaller settings, so providers need to understand the option that will work for your environment and budget. In addition, the provider should also be familiar with your industry and its specific security and compliance requirements.

Question:

How does the provider allocate its resources across its multiple clients?

Managed services providers are a cost-effective way of accessing technology expertise because the cost of keeping that expertise on the provider's staff is shared by all the clients of the provider. But because that expertise is shared, you'll want to be certain you'll have access to it when you need it, even if other clients need the same expertise at the same time.

Question:

Who will manage your account?

Specific members of the managed services provider's team should be assigned to your account, letting them get to know your infrastructure and your business's technology needs in depth.

Question:

Does the managed services provider offer the services you need?

Not every managed services provider offers every possible service. Some are focused on networks and infrastructure and may offer limited application-level services. A provider may offer remote support but be unable to provide onsite support in your location. Be certain you know what you want to accomplish by using managed services and that the provider you select can offer the support you need.



Are Managed Services Right for You?

Managed services can help almost any business meet its technology goals; in a recent CIO magazine , more than two-thirds of the surveyed businesses reported using a managed services provider. For both larger businesses (more than 100 employees) and smaller ones, making IT more efficient was the major reason for using these services. Improved information security as well as cost savings were additional drivers.

Prescient Solutions makes managed services as simple as working with your own team. We take ownership of the problems we handle while providing you with full visibility into the work done to your systems.

to start investigating managed services with a complimentary Managed IT Audit that assesses your infrastructure and identifies recommended services.

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About Prescient Solutions

Prescient Solutions has been providing managed technology services both on site and remotely to small, medium and large enterprises and government agencies for 20 years. With certifications in key technologies spanning hardware, software, network, security, and other specializations, our team has the insight and experience to address the technical challenges that are holding back your IT team and your business. For more information about Prescient Solutions, or to request a complimentary IT consultation, call [888-343-6040](tel:888-343-6040), or visit www.PrescientSolutions.com.

