



Pandora Thought IT Looked Innocent Enough at First Too

Trying to manage your own IT systems can sometimes unleash a world of evils.

Let's face it, someone's got to keep tabs on the business technology, it shouldn't be the person who's also running the shop. The last thing you need is the distraction of worrying what sort of unhappy surprises might jump out at you if you tinker with the computer networks. The good news is, you no longer have to. Relax, it's not a myth, it's managed services.

Today, a growing number of companies are tossing that Pandora's Box of technology concerns and opting to outsource their IT Operations to a third-party expert. The trend is fueling the rise of the 'managed services' business model and quite literally changing the way technology is delivered and consumed by companies of different sizes, across all industries.

Managed services providers (MSPs) deliver 24/7 remote monitoring, management and remediation (in the event that something goes wrong) of your entire network or specific parts of it. Among other things:

IT updates occur automatically from a remote location Server down? Immediate notification and troubleshooting Middle-of-the-night help desk question? A phone call away

It's peace of mind and it's backed in writing.

Trust Factor: Why Long-Term Services Contracts Work

The key to successfully transitioning your business to an MSP model centers largely on the support agreement. A well-crafted

MSP plan all but eliminates any perceived risk factors related to IT outsourcing and remote management. By engaging with a proven and experienced business partner, you're assured:

1. No Surprises

The MSP contract illuminates specific expectations for the services provided, duration of the terms, etc. Other elements include:

Pricing consistency: You know exactly what you will be paying each month. Prices are fixed for the duration of your contract and change only if you decide to add new services.

Dedicated sales and technical team: Enjoy the familiarity of working with the same service and support team each time you call.

Assessments: Our staff will fully assess your existing IT operations and make recommendations for the type and scope of services you will need before the contract begins. This ensures the most urgent issues receive immediate attention.

Termination policies: We will establish terms and conditions by which you can cancel your subscription model without being exposed to system outages or a lack of coverage.

2. Ironclad Service Level Agreement

The service level agreement (SLA) is the cornerstone to any MSP contract. It establishes **clear** performance measurements for your IT operations and recourse when the agreed-upon metrics are not met. Bottom line: the SLA ensures that, as your technology service provider, we are driven to achieve the same positive performance goals that you are — and we're rewarded the same way, too. Among other areas committed to in the SLA:

Establish types of services provided (storage on demand, remote security monitoring, network monitoring, etc.)

Determine scope of services provided (monitoring and problem notification and/or full-scale remediation when something goes wrong; help-desk services; etc.)

Determine expected performance levels for everything from uptime to throughput

Set up regular reporting and reviewing process

Establish incentives and penalties for performance exceeded or unmet

Set clear policies for security and data management by the MSP staff

Establish provisions to update the SLA as needed to accommodate company growth or other changes reflected in IT.

3. Value Add

One of the main perks of the managed services model is the value it allows us to deliver over and above the daily running and troubleshooting of your IT systems. Remote monitoring enables us to capture all manner of system performance data, which can be delivered to you as regular reports used to:

Analyze key performance trends and make appropriate adjustments to your IT infrastructure or applications stack.

Identify bottlenecks, key spike times for Web traffic and other variables that, once addressed, will shore up business performance.

Automate the process of capacity planning for future IT requirements so you are able to set clear priorities and make informed budgeting decisions.

Hope Not Needed

While Pandora may have found Hope waiting for her at the bottom of that 'gift' box, you won't need it. The contract-based MSP model enables you to stick to what you do best at your company, while leaving IT in the hands of experts who are driven to achieve the same outcome you desire: IT systems that do what they're supposed to do at a predictable price. A well-designed, customized SLA provides insurance against risk and the accountability that makes signing a long-term contract for IT services a sound business choice.



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