



TECHVERA



Switching from Traditional IT
Support to Managed Services



INTRODUCTION

The business world of today looks much different than it did 10 years ago. Even five years ago! Things change amazingly fast and it's tough for any business owner to keep up.

Companies of yesteryear could get away with having one or two basic computers, a printer, and a few phones. There weren't many viruses to worry about, and the biggest scams to look out for were Nigerian princes and fake lotteries (which were fairly easy to spot and avoid).

But as companies have become more reliant on technology, things have changed. Your internet going down leads to lost customers, revenue, and productivity. Malware can completely lock you out of your computers and erase every bit of your data. Data breaches put companies completely out of business.

While enhanced technology has brought many advantages, risks have increased exponentially as criminals know how important IT is to running our businesses.

Because of this, many IT support companies realized that their services had to change with the times. Instead of waiting for something to go wrong to fix it, we needed to prevent issues from happening in the first place for businesses who depend on their technology. This is where managed IT support comes in.

Let's talk about the differences between traditional support and managed IT, and help you make a smooth switch if you're ready.



Traditional IT Support

Most companies are familiar with traditional, break-fix IT service. Your computer won't turn on, that important file seems to have vanished. So you call someone and make an appointment to get it fixed.

Here are some of the pros and cons of this type of support:

Pros

- Only have to pay for what's needed at that moment
- If you're not happy with your current provider, you can just call another one
- No monthly or ongoing fees
- If you don't need any IT help in a given month, you won't pay anything for support

Cons

- Spending time to find someone who can fix your particular IT issue
- Unexpected costs and downtime when something happens and you need support
- No guarantee that your support provider will be able to fix the issue immediately, or even within the next few days
- Never knowing if or when a technology problem will happen and cause downtime
- Emergency support is very expensive
- Things that aren't obvious to users, such as malware or data breaches, may go undetected



Managed IT Support

With this arrangement, your managed service provider (MSP) becomes your outsourced IT department, and operates as though they were on your payroll (because technically, they are!) They handle any issue or need that arises, and use 24/7 monitoring to catch and prevent most problems before you notice them. Many MSPs also offer full technology services such as security, backup and disaster recovery, cloud suites, phone and mobility services, projects, consulting, and more.

Pros

- Instead of just one IT support person who may or may not have the knowledge to fix an issue, you have an entire team of specialists who can handle any need
- No unexpected bills - everything is covered under one rate
- Less issues means no downtime or IT emergencies
- Monitoring and preventative maintenance means that nothing flies under the radar
- Your IT team can design a technology stack that helps you reach your unique goals
- MSPs free up your personnel to ensure they're able to focus on business growth and goals

Cons

- Paying a monthly fee
- Most MSPs require at least a year-long contract that can be difficult to break
- MSPs may only work with certain technology (for example if your office uses both Apple and Microsoft products, they may not be able to support both or require you to use only certain software/devices)
- Updating software and computers may require lots of training for users who are only familiar with the older technology
- If you have in-house IT help, they may butt heads with the MSP (although a good MSP will make life easier for an in-house IT person!)



WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

The pros and cons are different for every business. You may not have the budget or technology requirements right now to justify getting a managed IT provider. Maybe you don't rely on technology very much at your company.

Personally, we think if your business:

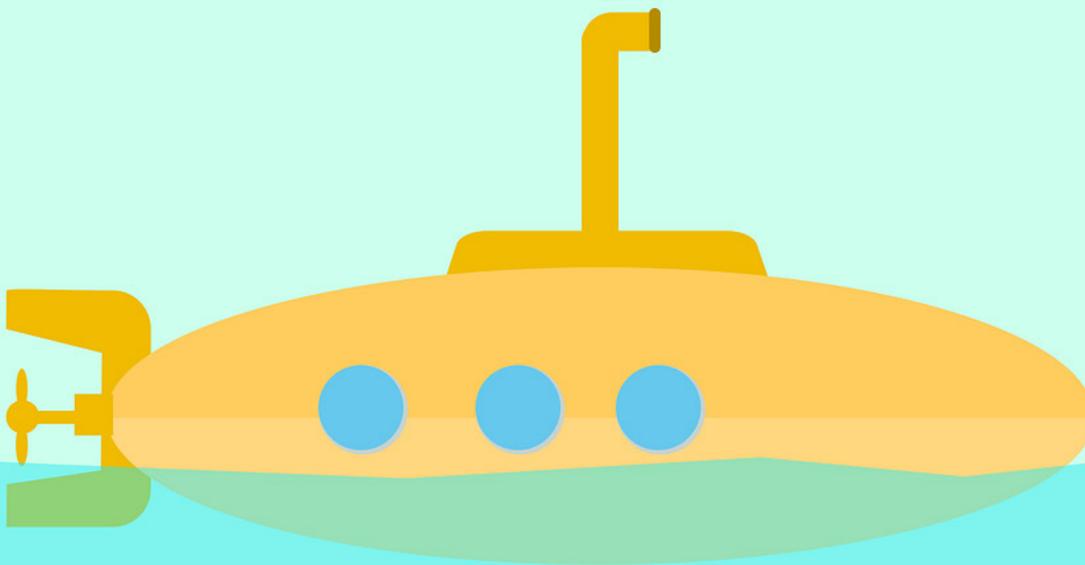
- Has 10 or more people
- Depends on technology to operate (computers, phones, cloud services, online connectivity, servers, etc)
- Has sensitive customer or business data that needs to be well protected
- Is growth-oriented or currently in growth mode

Then it's probably a good idea to look into managed services.

For a flat, monthly rate, MSPs combine proactive network monitoring with regular hardware maintenance to keep your infrastructure at optimal health.

As a result, your business will experience less downtime, less repairs, and less expenses which makes growth and overall success far easier to achieve.





IF YOU'VE DECIDED TO TAKE THE PLUNGE INTO MANAGED SERVICES...

There's a lot to consider! Researching and talking to countless providers, deciphering contracts, sitting in meetings. After a while it can make anyone want to throw in the towel and stick with the status quo.

Choosing a provider is a big decision, and being roped into a contract with someone who turns out to be a poor fit is definitely a risk.

Here are some tips to hopefully help make this process a little easier!



A quality managed service provider will ask the right questions and design a solution just for you.

How can someone improve your business if they don't know anything about it? There is no one-size-fits-all in the world of technology, and even businesses with the same number of employees in the same industry will have completely different IT needs.

A good managed service provider or consultant knows this, and will ask probing questions to help them determine the correct approach for your unique goals.

Do you want to scale production?
Improve customer service?
Reduce downtime?

You may not think many of these goals can be affected by a company's technology. However an IT support provider knows that technology has ripple effects throughout an organization, both good and bad, and will design a plan to support and enhance whatever your vision may be.

Don't trust the guy who knows exactly what you need without asking a single question; make sure your provider or consultant is truly interested in learning your goals and crafting the solution that's right for your business.



Any MSP should have extensive skills and experience beyond break-fix.

Having skills that go further than simply knowing how to install a hard drive and troubleshoot operating system errors is crucial. To proactively maintain an entire network of servers, computers, peripherals, software, services, and devices requires many years of experience and high-level knowledge.

Far more than just traditional break-fix where repair skill is generally sufficient, MSPs need to have a deep understanding of business processes and industry best practices.

When interviewing a potential managed IT service provider or consultant, go beyond questions about certifications or staff size. Ask about scalability, availability of staff with specific skill sets, proactive versus reactive support methods, and how best practices are followed.

You want to hire the organization that knows how to implement technology to improve every aspect of your business and has the expertise to make it happen, not the one that will simply fix issues as they occur without ever looking at the bigger picture.



The managed IT provider should offer 24/7/365 monitoring and support (both on-site and remote).

A good managed service provider knows that computer issues don't take holidays. They should be monitoring your systems and resolving any problems regardless of the time of day or special occasion.

Many less reputable IT service providers will only be available during certain times/days, offer remote support, and charge you extra for on-site visits.

While remote monitoring and service is great for many problems, there are occasions where an IT provider needs to come on-site for a fix or audit. These situations should always be accounted for in your plan.

Ensure that you know what you're paying for and that it covers all current and potential needs.



The MSP should demonstrate consistency.

Maintaining consistent results and delivery is key. Your potential managed service provider should be able and willing to share examples of their policies and processes and demonstrate how they translate to different business environments.

If they can't explain what they do, how they do it, and why it is effective, then you'll want to question their validity. This also applies to current partnerships.

Good MSPs are happy to share details of their managed clients and how they have helped their company. If their success and client satisfaction metrics are inconsistent (or non-existent), you may want to rethink hiring them.



Good MSPs should take a forward-thinking, technology based approach.

You would think that a company offering technology management would automatically take a modern, technology based approach, right? However many IT management firms are still stuck in the past, offering only reactive issue resolution and legacy processes.

As managed services have become more commonplace and in demand, lots of IT companies have jumped on the bandwagon claiming they offer MSP support. These will generally be glorified break-fix contracts without proactive monitoring and support or overall business improvement plans. You will only see them when something is already wrong and they won't do much, if anything, to prevent issues or look at the bigger picture.

Many also don't pay attention to IT industry trends and advancements which could restrict their clients to lagging behind competition.

Ensure that any potential MSP company you interview offers:

- Proactive monitoring to detect and prevent problems before they spiral out of control and cause downtime, data loss, or other disruptions
- Sophisticated capabilities such as modern detection and alert mechanisms, prioritization of tasks, scaling potential, automation, and a comprehensive web-based user portal
- Regular audits of their knowledge base, procedures, and offerings to ensure you're always getting the latest and greatest support available





Do they support multi-vendor and -device environments?

The IT infrastructure of today looks much different than even five years ago. The typical office will have multiple desktops, laptops, servers, mobile devices, and software all from many different vendors.

A managed service provider should have no problem designing a support plan that encompasses every aspect of your technology. They will also be the ones responsible for contacting these distributors as needed.

An MSP who has good relationships with multiple leading vendors is ideal. They will be kept abreast of new vendor offerings before the general public and can design upgrade paths that harness emerging technology.

However, it is important to find out if your IT provider is vendor neutral. If they are contracted or partial to using only certain vendors' products, some offerings may not necessarily be right for your business.

A good MSP should always focus on selecting the technology that provides the best results for you.

Want some extra help?

We're happy to chat or go through a consultation with you to see if Techvera is right for your business!

[**Contact Us**](#)