



Signs that Your Business Can Benefit from the Right MSP

As a business grows and thrives so do its data and IT demands, and sooner or later successful enterprises will find themselves at a critical decision-making crossroad. From a business perspective, it is a good problem to have, a healthy sign that the organization is showing robust growth, but it is a growing pain which cannot be ignored without consequences.

When the IT department is understaffed and overworked, while downtime and remediation are taking a toll in lost customers and damaging the organization's reputation, immediate action must be taken to keep the business in business. Data never sleeps or takes the weekend off, but many organizations simply don't have the resources to hire more full-time IT staff to meet increasing IT demands, and that's where the MSP option comes into play.

Once the decision has been made to go with an MSP, choosing the right MSP best suited to your individual business needs is the next step. The Managed Service Provider (MSP) provides information technology solutions and an excellent MSP can enhance your IT operations with:

- Security and data back-up Disaster recovery planning
- Network/server monitoring
- IT consulting in an increasingly complex IT world
- Cloud computing and migration
- Industry Experience
- Certified IT Support

Security First

Unfortunately for some providers, Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) is not always synonymous with Managed Service Provider (MSP). In an age where new strands of ransomware and cyber-attacks have become so prevalent, industry experts now warn that data breaches are not a question of "if but when". Data security competence must be a top priority when evaluating a potential MSP.

The ideal MSP will have expertise in firewall management, encryption, security training, and vulnerability detection and the ability to provide security options such as Virtual Private Networks and remote workstation protection. The MSP should provide data and disaster recovery to get applications back online with minimum downtime in the event of cyber-attack or natural disaster. Security programs should be tailored to suit the individual company requirements in terms of tolerable downtime and budget.

Continued on inside

Upcoming Events

Webinar: State of IT in 2020

January 9, 2020

Webinar: How to Protect Against Cyber Attacks

January 23, 2020

Lunch & Learn: Disaster Solutions

February 27, 2020

For more information on our upcoming events, please visit <https://www.tcsusa.com/calendar/>.

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The Excellent MSP Offers a Wide Range of IT Expertise

Expertise is directly proportional to the available human knowledge resources the MSP brings to the table. Is the MSP a few individuals or a comprehensive team? The ideal MSP will be able to evaluate the enterprise's IT landscape and help them make the best-informed business choices to enhance all operations with the most suitable computing infrastructure. Any MSP with a "one-size-fits-all" approach is an MSP to be avoided.

Cloud migration might be a viable option for some companies but another with a massive investment in on-premise hardware and legacy applications might not be such a great candidate. The ideal MSP is a long-term partner with expertise in network architecture, hardware, and software, able to meet present IT demands as well as mapping out the IT future for the company. The excellent MSP measures their success by your success and should exhibit competence in:

- Hosted Infrastructure
- Network design and installation
- Malware/virus removal
- Internet Compliance monitoring
- Server Co-location

If your MSP measures their success by how quickly they can fix a problem after it occurs it may be time for an MSP upgrade. Business data is the lifeblood of every enterprise and outsourcing that responsibility to a third party is a decision that must be founded on trust.

Your Holiday Checklist for Closing the Office

During the holidays, many offices shut down in a way that they do not throughout the rest of the year. For these rare few days, you may be completely inaccessible to customers and unable to help employees who are trying to sneak in a little extra work through the holidays. Use this checklist to make sure that you've shut down the office correctly and that you're able to get everything back up and running smoothly again when the holidays are over.

1. Tell People You're Shutting Down

Both your customers and your employees need to know how long your business will be shut down for the holidays. Provide notice well in advance. Depending on the types of services you offer, you may need to start notifying customers as early as a month out. It would be best if you were to provide these important notifications at least two weeks before the holiday shutdown.

Employees should also be reminded regularly that the company will not be open during those important days.

2. Keep Notifying

In spite of your best efforts to notify people ahead of time, not everyone will get the notification that you're going to be shut down. Make sure that you:

- Post signs about the shutdown and when you will be back
- Change your voicemail message and have a plan for what to do if your voicemail is full: will it notify you? Is there an alternate number to call?
- Put together an "out of office" email that lets people who attempt to contact you know when you will be back
- Make sure you have a call tree for emergencies, and that everyone knows who he or she will be responsible for calling in the event of an emergency

Make sure that customers who attempt to contact you know when you expect to be in the office again. Most customers will understand the desire to devote time and energy to the family during the holidays, but they want to know when you'll be back to provide them with your usual excellent customer service.

3. Shut Down the Office

Walk through your office and take a look at your electronics and other potential energy drains. Since you will not be in the office, there is no reason to pay for electricity that you are not using. Make sure that you handle your shutdown properly.

- Turn off your personal computer and other computers throughout the office. Note that servers do not need to be shut down for the holidays and should be left up and running. Fax machines, refrigeration systems, and security systems should also be left running normally.
- Check your thermostat. You can drop the thermostat several degrees while you're gone for the holidays, resulting in significant energy savings.
- Turn off and unplug fans and heaters.
- Unplug any chargers and other cords that are usually left plugged in.
- Close curtains and blinds to help maintain internal temperature and keep potential thieves from taking a peek inside.
- Check your emergency procedures. What happens if there is a fire at the office while everyone is away? What if someone is in the office over the holidays--to pick up paperwork to review at home, for example--

and they notice a problem? Make sure these policies are posted so that any key holder can access them.

4. Physically Secure the Office

Physical security is just as important as managing your technology when you are gone for the holidays. Take these key steps to ensure that your office is indeed locked up tight.

- Make sure no keys are left sitting out where they are easy to see or access.
- Check with security to make sure that they have keys to get in the building.
- Check security systems and cameras to be sure that they are fully functional. Make sure that the security system is sending a notification to someone who is actually in town for the holidays, not a manager who is going to be across the country!
- Lock up desks and filing cabinets, especially those that contain sensitive information. Place all keys in a safe location.
- Check doors and windows to be sure that they are locked.
- Review your incident response plan. Do you have a plan for how to respond when everyone is out of the office? This can include everything from a hacker going after your data to a physical emergency at the office.

With the holidays fast approaching, you want to be sure that everything is put together properly throughout your office so that when you return, you can get everything back up and running smoothly. By following this simple checklist, you can ensure that your office is ready for the holidays--and as prepared as possible for any unprecedented challenges while you're out of the office.



Have you finished your to-do list for the year?

TCS can help you with your last minute projects.

Meet Our Team: Amy Brannock



Please join us in welcoming our new Receptionist, Amy Brannock to the TCS Team! She is a Greensboro native and graduated from the UNC-G with a degree in English. Amy is married with two dogs and a cat. In her free time she likes to bake, draw, paint, read, and craft.

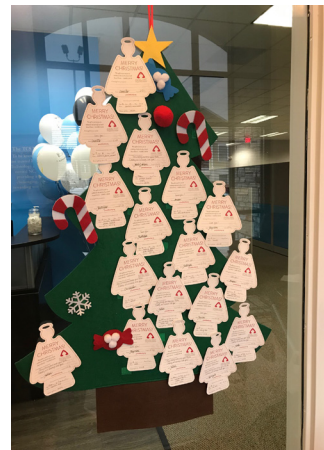
Meet Our Team: Halley Barfield



We are excited to announce our newest Technical Intern, Halley Barfield. Halley attends ECPI University in Greensboro majoring in Mechatronics. On her free time she enjoys traveling and trying new things. Welcome to the team!

TCS Ministry Supports Angel Tree this Christmas

The TCS Ministry Committee has partnered with the Salvation Army of Greensboro to provide gifts for kids in our local community who may not receive Christmas gifts this year. The kids on our Angel Tree range from a few months old to ten years of age. We are collecting gifts through Monday, December 2nd. If you would like to make a donation or provide a gift, please email Megan at myokeley@tcsusa.com. We will be hosting a packing party on Wednesday, December 11th. If you would like more information call 336.804.8449.



Digital Newsletter

If you would like to receive our newsletter digitally, please visit tinyurl.com/ycqv2r6.



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In this Issue:

- Signs that Your Business Can Benefit from the Right MSP
- Upcoming Events!
- Your Holiday Checklist for Closing the Office
- Meet Our Team
- Angel Tree
- Upcoming Webinar



How to Protect Against Cyber Attacks



Join us for our upcoming webinar!

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2020

Time: 11:00 am ET

Cost: Free

Presenter: Barry Utesch, President, Total Computer Solutions

Registration: Visit tcsusa.com/calendar/ or call us at 336.804.8449

Learning Objectives

- Who is at risk?
- How do cyber criminals get information?
- What can minimize the risk of data breaches?