Newsletter

How to Find the Right Managed Service Provider for Your Business

As a business grows and thrives so does 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 a 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.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: Creating a Highly Productive Remote Environment
September 1, 2020

Webinar: Your IT as a Business Journey
September 22, 2020

Digital: Cybersecurity Panel Discussion
October 22, 2020

For more information on our upcoming events, please visit www.tcsusa.com

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 significant 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

Choose a Reputable MSP with Total Computer Solutions

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. At Total Computer Solutions, we're realizing our company's vision to become the most trusted Information Technology partner in central North Carolina. We have the team, resources and expertise to be your organization's ideal Managed Service Provider, so don't hesitate to contact us.

The Guide to Managed IT Services Pricing

It is a problem that every business eventually wants to have, but a problem nonetheless. Once an organization grows to a certain point, those in charge of the company will need to make a critical decision. Do you hire an IT person internally, or do you outsource? Many businesses do not have the resources to interview, hire, and manage full-time IT staff. In this case, many of them decide to hire a Managed Service Provider.

MSPs can improve your IT operations because they have expertise in helping dozens or maybe hundreds of organizations similar to yours. Unlike a single employee, an MSP's technical team is never all sick or all on vacation at the same time. Typically, they have more depth and breadth of experience than an individual. In a sense, an MSP is an

The negative of using an MSP is they are not an employee. You cannot insist that they stop working on one thing and start on something else or work this weekend to resolve an issue. Typically, they do these types of things as part of the usual course of being an MSP, but you are asking not telling.

Managed Service Provider is a broad term, and so you want to ask a lot of questions to make sure you understand what is involved. Because MSP is used broadly, there are a variety of pricing models, each with their own merits and disadvantages. Here is a description of the most common pricing models:

Monitoring-Only Pricing Model

This option is often the most inexpensive and commonly used if you have in-house IT expertise, which is sensible, considering this is the most minimalist approach to managing services. MSPs will monitor some aspects of your IT infrastructure from a remote location. When they discover any issues, they will make them known to you, but providing resolution may cost additional money, or be handed off to your team to resolve. The level of monitoring can vary from watching over in-house equipment to a more advanced support system with incident resolution.

Tiered Pricing Model

This model lets clients decide how many services they want on a more exact level. Different tiers of products are created and associated with defined levels of service. You can buy services in small bundles, and this could be a better fit when you already have some of the pieces in place. The variety of choices is extensive, but can also lead to confusion if you can't decide how much assistance you need. For the MSP, this tiered pricing model could stall customer acquisition or compel would-be clients to settle for the cheapest option.

A La Carte Pricing Model

This pricing model takes the features of the tiered system and makes them even more extreme. It is all about freedom. These packages are the most customizable, so clients can pay for the specific services that they want to have. The problem with a la carte pricing is that it is challenging to sustain profitability for the MSP in the long run. The plethora of choices is so high that clients often become frustrated or confused by the options and inadvertently design packages that don't fully meet their needs. From the MSP's perspective, every client is custom, and this makes their business model challenging and their clients more challenging to support.

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Per-Device Pricing Model

Per-Device pricing is a lot simpler than the previously described models. Here, clients pay a flat fee for each device that is supported by the MSP. Devices are billed on a monthly schedule based on the type that's managed. This method seems straightforward in how it is priced, and it is easier to create quotes than others. Devices can be added or subtracted as needed, so clients are never paying for more services than they have. The downside for this model is trying to make sure all your devices are covered all of the time. With additions and deletions of devices happening on a regular basis, this can be difficult to keep current for both the client and the MSP. When a user calls for support and their device is not on the supported list, this can cause frustrations for the user.

Per-User Pricing Model

The per-user pricing model is the number of users that require managed IT services on the network, measured against the number of devices on the network. This can be a better deal for clients that have employees using multiple devices. Today most users have at least a computer and a phone, and many have a tablet as well. This means that the per-user price can often appear high, but if you add all of the user's devices into the pricing, you understand the reason.

Per-user pricing does adjust to account for multiple devices, and client fee is based on the number of users. The per-user pricing model is the easiest for both the MSP and the client to maintain. The business does not need to communicate every device change that takes place, and the MSP isn't concerned about the device, just the user. Per-user pricing is a smart model for clients who need to be constantly connected to multiple devices.

Value-Based (Flat-Fee) Pricing Model

But the pricing model that we recommend is the value-based model. This strategy lets MSPs become the client's outsourced IT department for one set price per month. Instead of paying for individual services, a flat fee is paid for a total experience involving multiple jobs. More and more MSPs are using this setup for a good reason.

Modern IT professionals are judged on the lack of downtime their client's experience, and how quickly they respond to problems. Flat Fee IT empowers you to manage your growth while accessing the full range of TCS's expertise. Productivity will go up due to more uptime, and awareness of potential issues are discovered when they are small before they create downtime.

Value-based models require a lot of expertise to be done well. At TCS, we have 30 years of experience in IT and almost ten years of experience in providing Managed Services along with hundreds of happy clients that can give you confidence that we are a smart choice.

Our Flat Fee IT offering allows us to continually monitor business-critical functions such as servers, firewalls, remote offices, essential desktops, and Line-of-Business Applications. Our objectives are the same as yours: maximum uptime, 24/7, 365 days a year.

On Demand Webinar: Cyber Insurance to Protect Your Business

We had a great time at our live webinar last month, "**Cyber Insurance to Protect Your Business**," presented by *Murphy Holderness, Cyber Insurance Specialist, Marsh & McLennan*. This webinar is now available on demand so that you can review important topics covered in the session. To get your copy of the webinar, please send an to email info@tcsusa.com.

Webinar: Your IT as a Business Journey

Date: Tuesday, September 22nd
Time: 10:00 AM ET
Presenter: *Matt McNees, Business Consultant, Total Computer Solutions*
Registration: Visit www.tcsusa.com/events/ or call 336.804.8449

Join us for our upcoming webinar "**Your IT as a Business Journey**". Attend this webinar to learn what a client-centered and productive IT business journey looks like and gain practical examples and meaningful ideas on how you can save time, money, and stress for your organization.

Key Takeaways

- IT effectively connects with company growth
- IT Products and Service are only a prerequisite part of having an MSP
- Solution are complex and always stem from a traceable source
- Not all MSPs have business consulting

TCS totalcomputersolutions

5601 New Garden Village Dr.
Greensboro, NC 27410

webinar

Webinar: Creating a Highly Productive Remote Environment

Join us for our upcoming webinar!

Date: Tuesday, September 1st
Time: 10:30 AM ET
Presenter: *Andy Purcell, Business Consultant, Total Computer Solutions*
Registration: Visit www.tcsusa.com/events/ or call 336.804.8449

Join us for our upcoming webinar "**Creating a Highly Productive Remote Environment**," presented by Andy Purcell, Business Consultant, TCS.

Key Takeaways
• Lessons learned while working from home
• Discover popular tools for your virutal office
• Leverage the power of working remotely

Attend this webinar to gain insight on the best ways to boost productivity and efficiency when working from home.