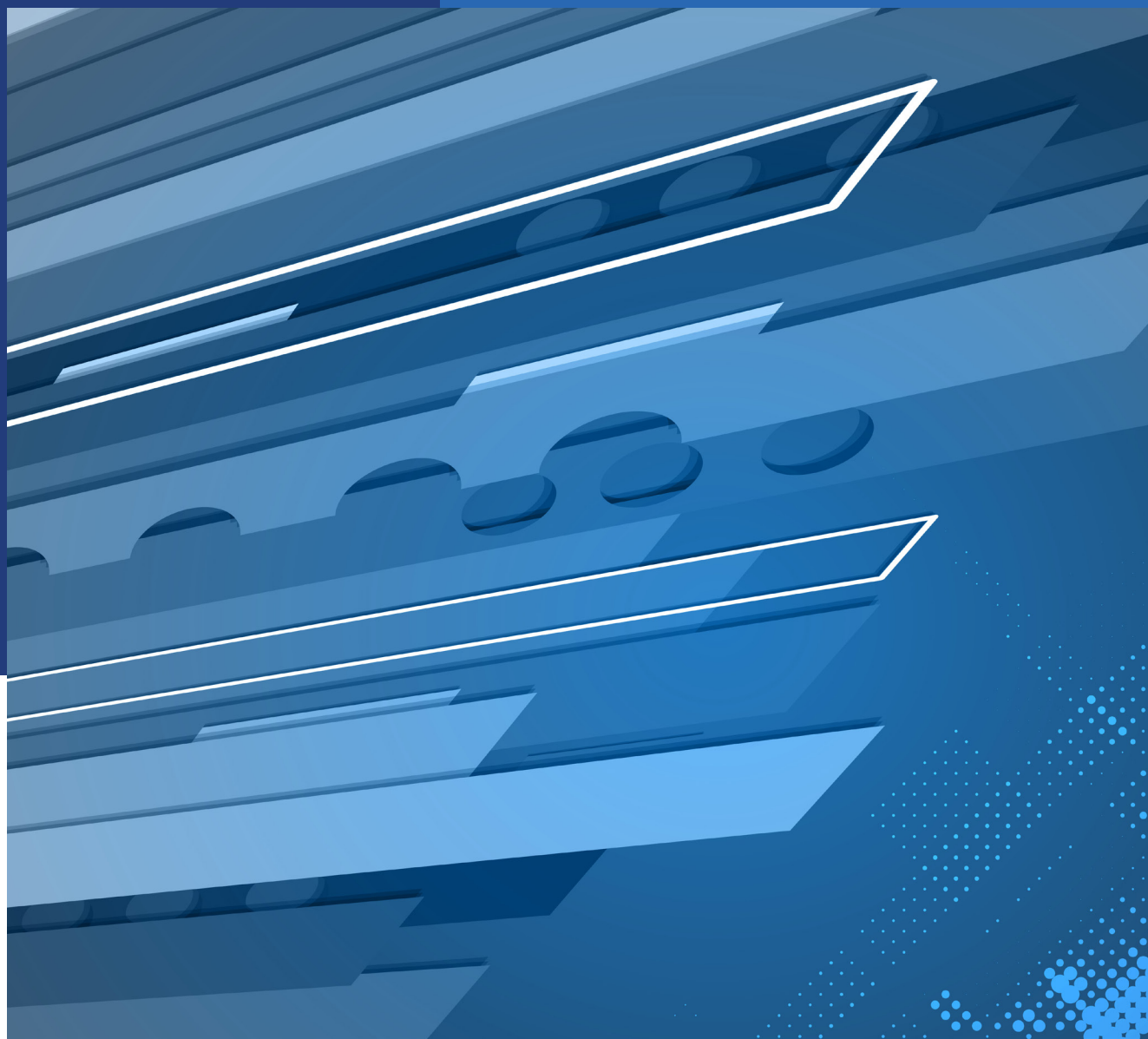


A quick guide to

MANAGED IT SERVICES



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Introduction

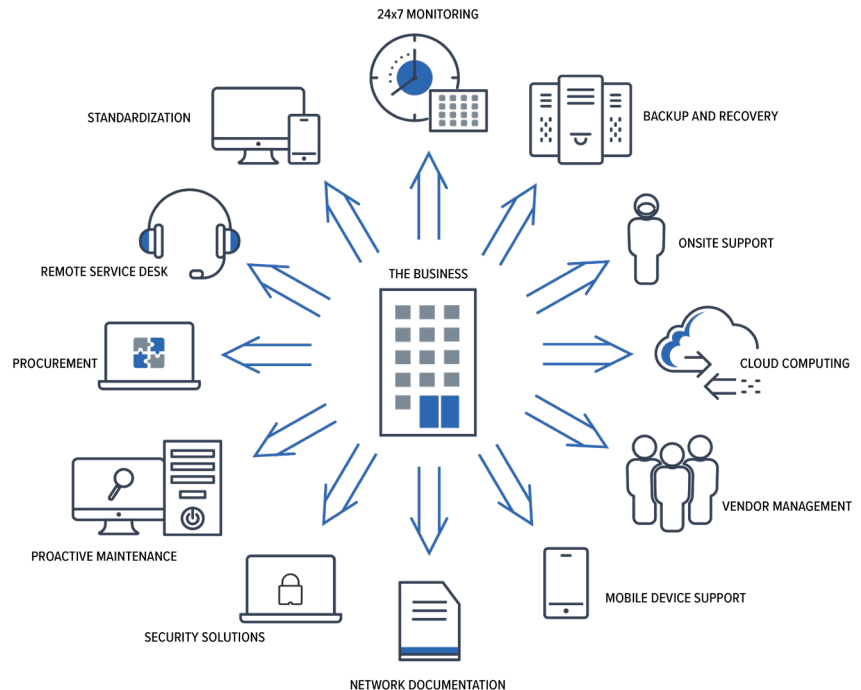
If the rise of the digital age has taught us anything, it's that businesses don't all need to run the same way. Moving forward with technology may require expertise that businesses don't have enough of... or at all.

It's here that managed IT services step into the picture. Like many other areas of business management, it's now possible to have all of your IT run by a third-party entirely offsite — without comprising performance, reliability, or cost.

What are managed IT services?

By definition, managed IT services are outsourced technology processes and functions intended to improve business operations, reduce business risk and provide a predictable expense model for business technology. Typically, customers outsource some or all of their IT requirements to a third party called a Managed Service Provider (MSP). The MSP is then responsible for the delivery of those IT requirements and meeting the agreed service levels for the term of the contract.

Adopting managed services is an efficient way for businesses to stay up-to-date on technology, have access to skills and address issues related to cost, quality of service and risk. Many customers do not have the skills or time to focus



to IT but know that well-managed IT can make a difference to their business.

Managed IT services will differ from provider to provider, but broadly speaking businesses can expect:

- Support for technical problems via phone, the web and in-person
- Remote monitoring of your servers, workstations and other equipment
- Patch management and updates for systems and security
- Installation of equipment and productivity applications
- Migration of systems and applications to the cloud
- Data backup and recovery solutions
- Regular client reviews and employee training

Managed IT Services and Solutions

Technology can also help small- and medium-sized businesses with customer acquisition, employee productivity, cost management and operational efficiency. Businesses opting for managed IT services are often particularly interested in taking advantage of the following types of services and solutions to achieve that operational efficiency.

Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM)

Remote monitoring and management is the process of supervising and directing client IT systems (such as network devices, desktops, servers and mobile devices) by means of locally installed agents (software) that can be accessed by the managed service provider.

The agent sends information to the network operations center 24/7 so the provider can observe the behavior of the device for performance or diagnostics. This software also alerts the provider on potential performance or security concerns to proactively resolve issues for the client.

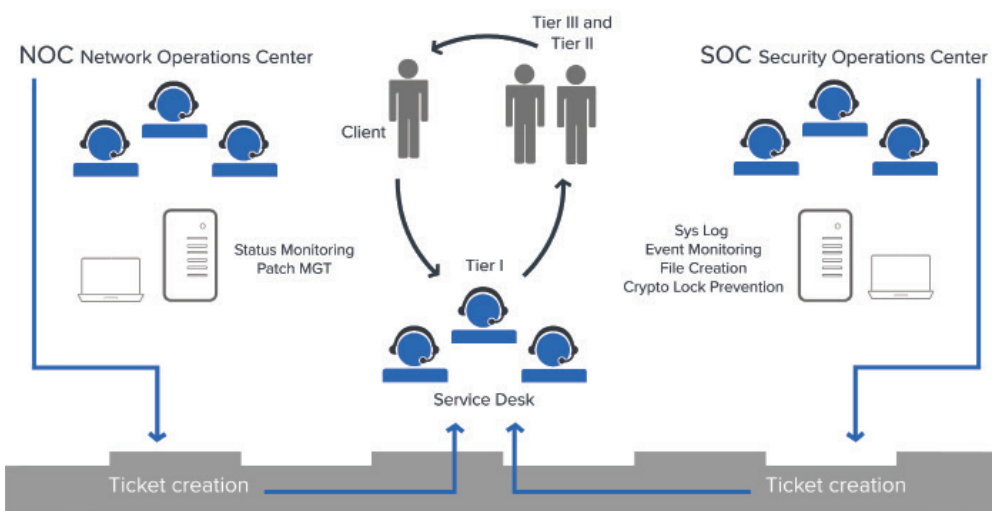
The cumulative results provide data for comprehensive reporting so the client can see and understand what is/was happening with their users and devices.

NOC, SOC and Service Desk

A Network Operations Center, or NOC, is a centralized location where IT technicians directly support the efforts of remote monitoring and management (RMM) software.


Technical teams keep a watchful eye over the endpoints that they monitor and manage – independently resolving issues as they arise and taking preventative steps to ensure many otherwise unforeseen issues do not occur.

NOC engineers and technicians are responsible for monitoring infrastructure health, security and capacity on a clients' environments. They make decisions and adjustments to ensure optimal network performance and organizational productivity.



When action or intervention is required, NOC technicians will create “tickets” that identify and categorize the issue based on severity, alert type and other criteria.

These tickets are then routed to the Service Desk for appropriate action and resolution.



A Security Operations Center, or SOC, focuses to a client's infrastructure security. SOC's monitor for vulnerabilities, attacks and emerging threats on a client network, and are prepared to detect anomalies and mitigate cyberattacks as they arise.

Most SOC's employ security information and event management processes that aggregate information from a variety of security-focused systems' data streams.

- Network discovery and vulnerability assessment systems
- Governance, risk and compliance systems
- Penetration testing tools, intrusion detection and prevention systems
- Log management systems
- Network behavior analysis

This information and much more is collected and parsed by SOC technicians who are security experts and trained to address any security challenges that may arise.

The Service Desk is a communications center staffed with a technical support team whose purpose is to ensure that end users receive appropriate technical assistance in a timely manner.

Service desks handle both incidents and service requests. An incident is an event that results in a disruption in service availability or quality. A service request helps with routine tasks, such as changing a user password or getting a new user set up.

The service desk support team answers calls quickly and attempts to resolve problems on the first call. If it is a complicated issue the call is escalated from the frontline team to the Tier 2 engineers, or may get escalated to the Tier 3 engineering experts if it is a particularly difficult issue or requires local/on-site support.

Secure Remote Access

Secure remote access is not just an option of managed IT service, but also helps customers facilitate some or all employees working from home. A provider may bundle together services to create a solution that addresses a business' specific remote access needs. Some services may include:

- Access externally to office files, folders, applications, data and services
- Antivirus, ransomware and next generation cybersecurity protection
- 24/7 remote monitoring, proactive management and problem resolution
- 8am to 5pm unlimited service desk and remote end user support services

Partnering with a managed service provider to deliver secure connectivity to the files, folders and services from the home device to the office desktop or laptop allows workers to be productive and businesses to remain open.

IT Security

Organizations today face a constant threat to revenue and reputation from organized cyber crime, rogue nations, and freelance cyber attackers who all have their eyes on your organization's technology and data, which is being compounded by an evolving set of insider risks.

Managed IT services help mitigate the technology risks that businesses face. Some of the security services a managed IT partner may provide are...

- Prevention and detection to avoid defined and new malicious access or threats to the end points, devices and the network, and can prevent known AND unknown threats in real time.
- Response to make devices self-defend by stopping processes, quarantining those processes, and notifying the SOC to start file rollback, healing and data restoration activities.
- Transform and automate to avoid email phishing investigation, orchestration, and response by seamlessly integrating with your email server removing all phishing emails from user.
- Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) for cloud-based email filtering service protects businesses from malware, ransomware, harmful links, and more.
- Multi-factor authentication (MFA), or two-step verification, to require users to present a second form of authentication, such as a verification code, to confirm identity before accessing resources.



Managed IT services for technology security reduce risk, preventing problems, malware, ransomware and lower costs associated with breaches and data loss for businesses.

Backup and Recovery

Backup and recovery is the process of copying and archiving computer data so it is accessible in case of data deletion or corruption due to technical mishap, natural disaster, power failure, theft, fraud, security breach, cyberattack or ransomware.

In the event of a lost or stolen data, backup and recovery can quickly and easily get businesses up and running, exactly as they had been before and may include...

- Image-based cloud solution
- Local image-based backup and recovery device for rapid recovery
- Rollback from ransomware attacks
- Recovery of all business data or just individual files and folders
- Quick restoration of lost, stolen or damaged PC's

Businesses may eliminate data loss and return data, employees and the business to normal operations with a backup and recovery solution that keeps the data backup up-to-date and ensures the backup has the most up to date information to restore. Working with a managed IT services provider also allows businesses to build a backup and recovery plan to work from in the event of a disaster.

Consider Outsourcing

All companies have a need for IT services, but not to the point of hiring full-time IT staff. The cost of a staffed IT professional will cost more than \$42,000 a year, or \$21 an hour, according to [payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com). This does not include the cost of benefits such as health insurance, 401K, dental, paid sick days or vacation.

By contrast, a national outsourced IT provider allows you to hire a whole team of experienced IT professionals for a fraction of the price!

And outsourcing IT management offers businesses the following benefits:

- Predictable Spend
- Data loss prevention
- Proactive Management
- Mobility and Collaboration
- Security
- Business Focus
- Productivity



Managed IT vs. The Break Fix Model

The alternative to partnering with a services provider is commonly known as “break-fix.” This model is essentially the pay-as-you-go alternative to having a support agreement with an MSP.

As the name suggests, a break-fix approach to services is where a provider will address your business’ technology problems only as they occur instead of proactively monitoring to avoid problems. There is no ongoing support and there are no additional services. The provider solves a single issue and charges either by the project or by the hour.

BREAK-FIX	MANAGED IT
Unpredictable costs	Fixed pricing plan
Long service times	End-user service desk access
Lack of investment in network	Local engineers support tech
	Access to national resources
	Proactive network maintenance
	Constant monitoring of systems

Moving from a break-fix model to adopting managed services is an efficient way to stay up-to-date on technology, have access to skills and address issues related to cost, quality of service, and risk.

How to Tell if You Need Managed IT

Maybe your employees handle their own information technology issues. Perhaps you employ one or more IT technicians. Or maybe your business technology is handled by a family member or friend. At a certain point, though, a small or midsize business outgrows these approaches.

If your business has reached that stage, you need a third-party team of experts to manage your IT infrastructure, handle upgrades, install new pieces of hardware and correct any issues

that arise. But how do you know when you’ve reached that point?

When you notice any of these signs.

You’re Not Prepared for the Apocalypse

Are you ready for an emergency in which you lose access to your data for some period of time due to hacking, an outage or another predicament? Or, do you know what would happen if all of your data were permanently erased? Would your business still be able to function?

For a typical small or midsize business, research shows that every hour of downtime means a loss in revenue ranging from \$8,000 to \$74,000.

Be aware, too, that some state and federal regulations can require businesses to devise such emergency plans.

A managed IT services company can put together a disaster plan for you, one that will include a comprehensive data backup program. That way, if you're ever unable to reach your databases, you'll still be able to utilize your data and offer customers uninterrupted service.

Your IT Employees are Frazzled

Look for signs of burnout among your IT workers.

- Do they seem more irritable, tense or deflated than they used to?
- Are they routinely making errors, ignoring computer glitches or broken equipment?
- Are they simply getting less done that they used to?
- Are they taking more days off or calling in sick more frequently?

If you employ IT professionals, they may become overwhelmed by the sheer number of IT projects. In fact, according to a survey from the IT company Spiceworks, these professionals work long hours, averaging 52-hours per week, but often many more than that. Sometimes even being called upon in the middle of the night disrupting rest.

Plus, information technology is constantly changing forcing IT pros to continually stay on

top of the latest developments by studying on their own or attending workshops and conferences. The commitment to maintaining the knowledge and certifications needed can be time consuming and costly adding to the stress these workers are already under.

A managed IT service provider can greatly alleviate your staff members' workloads. The right provider can continuously monitor your network, provide all necessary patches, and routinely care for your technology infrastructure freeing up your IT staff to focus on the business and work on special projects.

Your IT Budget is Swelling

Information technology solutions are an expense. As a small or medium business, you might have a hard time affording the salary and benefits package of an IT professional, especially if you've just launched your business.

Fortunately, managed IT services represent a highly affordable alternative. You simply provide reasonable, regular payments (typically monthly) and the technology partner provides ongoing IT services. If a technology-related emergency arises, it won't lead to a spike in your IT expenses. Instead, your IT provider will be ready to clear away the issue efficiently and effectively.

With inadequate technical assistance, any workday could be brought to a standstill by a virus, system malfunction, improperly installed program, outdated equipment or other setbacks. But with managed IT services, your technology will be updated, monitored, maintained and secure... so that you can focus on growing your business.

Managed IT Can Support Your Business

If you like the sound of taking the hard work out of managing your IT infrastructure and saving money on staff costs at the same time, we can help. An assessment of your technology infrastructure will tell you what's working and what may need improvement.

Visual Edge IT™ has extensive expertise in IT management, backup and recovery, cloud computing and security. We will keep your technology running while you focus on your business, whether you're in-office or remote... or a bit of both.

[Contact us](#) today to schedule your no obligation technology assessment.





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