



| MANAGED SERVICES | BENEFITS & EVALUATION

BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

Imagine the bounds your company can overcome if you're not limited by constant IT struggles resulting in numerous downtimes.

TLC Solutions

NINE GREAT BENEFITS OF MANAGED SERVICES

You have most likely heard of and come across companies using managed services for their IT requirements. Though they may sing praises for how it's helped them with their IT strategies and goals, you have your doubts.

- Wouldn't it cost more for my company?
- Is the managed services provider going to take away from my role as the manager of my company's IT?
- Is it really going to help my company achieve its goals, directly or even indirectly?
- And ultimately, is it really a good investment for my company?

Let's remove those doubts and give you some of the many benefits of having a managed service provider as your partner in all things IT.

Say goodbye to expensive repairs and recovery costs

There's a misconception that because you're getting outside services, it's going to cost you plenty. That's actually the opposite. Most managed service provider's primary goal is to prevent expensive network disaster from ever happening. They set up a network monitoring and maintenance process to ensure you don't have to spend on repairs and recovery costs.

Faster performance, fewer glitches, practically zero downtime

A three-in-one benefit. Remember your IT goal of not having to go around fixing everyone's computer and network issue? This practically satisfies that goal. You can focus more on your IT strategies that you know would be good for your company's goals. Practically zero downtime improves company productivity, and in turn may help with improving revenue. This is possible with preventive maintenance and network monitoring systems that MSPs use to detect problems early on before they escalate into more expensive repairs and downtime.

Your own in-house IT department, without the overhead costs

Even if budget constraints prevents you from obtaining your own team of support experts, having partnered up with a managed services provider will give you access to their team of knowledgeable support staff. And they can be reached immediately should a problem or question arises.

Faster response to problems

Remote monitoring and maintenance software allows MSPs to remotely access and repair most network problems from their offices. This eliminates travel time and costs, which could be used for better investments.

Faster shipment on hardware orders

Managed services providers partner with industry brand experts to ensure they can give their clients the best of services for implementation and installation of software and hardware. This means that what would normally take you a week to get your shipment on a hardware (desktop, laptop, phones, etc), your MSP partner can get it to you in less time than that, like three business days. When you think of the time you've saved, this is a really great benefit that you can utilize your MSP for.

No surprise attacks of costs

Budget on IT needs seem to be the last thing everyone thinks of. And it can get very frustrating when a hardware suddenly breaks down, and you're faced with costs that are outside your monthly operational budget. Thus, another great benefit comes in the form of a flat, affordable rate that MSPs usually charge and you get all the technical support your company needs. There's no hidden charges, caveats, or disclaimers. This means you can budget for your company's network support just like rent or insurance.

Data is protected and backed up

We all know that the data on the hard disk plays a more important role than the hardware itself that houses it. You most likely rely on computer systems for some of your daily operations, so backing up the critical, irreplaceable electronic information is a must. MSPs removes that worry as most provide this as part of the package already. So, in the event of data loss for whatever reason, you're covered as it's been backed up.

"Gremlins at the gate," spam, pop-ups are history

Here's a fact – cyber criminals never sleep! Despite that, you still can. Network monitoring and the on-going maintenance feature lets you rest as they'd do the job of keeping these gremlins at bay. The same goes for spam, pop-ups and spyware that are always trying to one-up your network and introduce viruses and jeopardize security – they'd cease to appear.

Relax. Want a massage?

No, managed services providers don't offer massages (it'd be cool if they do), but you can certainly relax a little bit as you're one less of a stress with a managed services provider by your side. With a team of experts looking after your network security and reliability, you can just focus on creating strategies geared for increased efficiency and productivity for your company.

And now you may ask, how can they provide all these great benefits?

It's simple really. They take the time to know your network infrastructure system. Before managed services providers take you on as a nurtured client, they assess your entire network so they know of its general health status. This gives them the knowledge of what to anticipate, what issues may arise and how to prevent them, or battle them if it came to that. And they do their due diligence and provide you with recommendations and best practices to avoid getting into sticky and costly situations with your IT system. That's how.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A MANAGED SERVICES PROVIDER



So now that you've decided to explore partnering with a managed services provider, what are some factors should you consider for a successful partnership?

Transparency

Managed services providers usually sign a Service Level Agreement to guarantee their focus on their client's needs. While MSPs want to give their all and ensure zero downtime, there will always be odd times where loss of network outage is out of their hands. You shouldn't worry too much though as MSPs offer data recovery and backup. But you should still be asking a potential provider on their transparency and their SOP when it comes to unexpected downtimes and outages. A good MSP will already have that in place and won't hesitate to tell you that you will always be informed (no matter the significance of the outage), what's the cause, what solution they have ongoing, and a give you realistic timeframe of when the problem will be fixed.

Relationship Builder

Business is business. But look for a businessman who takes time to get to know potential clients beyond the specifics they need to win them – they are arguably better in nurturing that relationship beyond the signing of contracts. Industry expertise and appropriate certifications make for a good resume but managed services providers who have solid relationships with their clients make for an astounding provider. A company

that cares will be a far better fit to become your technical expertise, as they provide more than expert managed services – they provide partnership that’s beneficial to the growth of your business. And one that actually lasts.

Physical Presence & Reach

The digital age has made it possible for people to communicate anywhere in the world instantly. Thus, allowing for companies to conduct business all over the world and for customer service companies to service clients remotely. While remote monitoring is certainly a good factor to look at when considering for managed services, many still find physical presence nearby to be a comfort. Cutting down trip costs with remote monitoring is definitely a plus but look for a managed services provider who you can meet and build a relationship face-to-face. Physical presence is not confined, however, to having a regional office nearby. It is the willingness to travel and reach out whichever way your company prefers – onsite meeting, telephone or video conferencing, email – and continue to nurture the partnership.

Industry Connections and Partnerships

A well-connected Western Canada managed services provider will be able to provide your company with more options and better pricing for products and solutions. Look for a provider who has established a lot of partnerships with well-known industry brands and vendors. But don’t stop there – great managed service providers will have gone the extra mile and have in their team certified and accredited people who have expertise on the software, platforms, and solutions that they’re partnered with. Be sure to take note of those.

Long History in the Business

A provider that’s well-established in Western Canada will have better knowledge of its culture and best practices. Solid number of years in the business also means that they’ve dealt with different industries and would most likely already have a set of best practice solutions for whichever you’re in. Longevity also means they hold and can present a documented track record of their ability to fully manage your business’ IT needs and how they go above and beyond to keep their clients satisfied.

Flexibility

Signed agreements shouldn’t be where the flexibility ends. Circumstances change and growth (or otherwise) of your business would certainly affect the level of service you

would need. If you've already got an IT manager on board but would still like some level of support or managed services, then ask for how much room for flexibility the provider can give. This way, your company can leverage the capabilities to the level you need and work alongside your team to meet your business goals.

Solid Reputation

It is always good to ask for references and cross check with them for how good the provider you're considering is – how reliable they are, if the service they guarantee match up to their actual performance, how often they have gone well above and beyond for a solution, how personable they are, and how their solutions have helped with strategic growth.

Growth and Innovation

As players and members of the most fast-paced industry there is, managed service providers should always be up to date with the new technological advancements and knowledgeable with latest security measures. The ideal provider is one who's always laying out new innovations, constantly learning, training, and updating their certifications. This way, you can be at ease that your company will always be provided improved solutions, if not the latest, and that security measures are up to date.

Cultural Match

Once everything has been checked and they seem like a good fit expertise-wise, as well as from a cost and service level perspective, one last thing to tick off the list is how culturally matched they are with your company. It may seem like it shouldn't matter as long as they deliver good results. And you're right that it should not, but it will surely make the working relationship better if cultural match has also been fulfilled. After all, they will be your IT partner, the extension of your business, so make sure it will be a good fit to your company in all areas, insignificant as they may seem. Some may say this may even be what it really takes for a successful company-vendor partnership.

ABOUT TLC SOLUTIONS

TLC Solutions is a team of highly motivated, highly qualified IT & Communications Specialists serving businesses throughout Western Canada. We offer [managed services](#), [strategic consulting](#), [cloud hosting](#), network redundancy and [disaster recovery](#). We also provide a full range of communications services including satellite, microwave and fiber optics. We understand that every business is unique and we ensure the services we provide are specifically tailored to your needs. While we specialize in remote access communications networks for resource-based industries, we excel in all environments – from the hinterlands of northern British Columbia to downtown Vancouver.

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