



## Advantages of Outsourcing Your IT to a Trusted and Reliable Partner

Companies who have engaged a Managed IT Services Provider (MSP) have enjoyed not only an excellent return on their investment, but they have also benefited in many other important strategic and operational ways.

### Accountability

Responsibility is probably one of the most important elements you should seek in anyone who serves your business. Somebody who you can hold accountable for getting done what needs to get done. "I take full responsibility," is, of course, a very easy thing to say, but what does it mean? How does it help your business? If something goes terribly wrong and someone stands up to say they will take full responsibility, how does that resolve what went wrong? Well, most IT environments (small or large) are multi-vendor and seldom does a client acquire everything from just one vendor or manufacturer. Instead, clients try to integrate products from many vendors, usually using "best-of-breed" from every category. Best servers, best storage, best desktops, best software, etc...The best (HP, Cisco, Microsoft, Apple) are always ready to stand behind their product, so they each offer a warranty to assure satisfaction during the early use of their product, and that is truly great. But then... something always goes wrong.

You have very likely experienced this. You call for warranty support from the vendor whose product you believe has failed. They inform you that the problem was caused by "something" connected to their product. You contact the manufacturer of that product. Once again a finger gets pointed at another component. Soon you are not sure how you are going to get your problem solved.

This is often a scenario that motivates a small to mid-sized business to seek a professional Managed IT Services Provider. Most MSPs advertise that they will take full responsibility for the problem and get it solved for you. You don't need to call multiple vendors. In the all-too-popular metaphor, you now have "**one throat to choke**" no matter what is causing your problem. Just call your MSP and let them figure it out. However, if they don't....this is where it all breaks down. You are now paying your MSP to take full responsibility. You hold them accountable for every minute that the problem remains unsolved beyond the Service Agreement you have both entered into. But what does that accountability mean?

### One Hand to Shake and Sound Advice

It means that a truly professional IT services provider knows that the solution begins long before the problem emerges. When you first sit down with a prospective provider, listen carefully to the questions they ask. If their first questions have to do with who manufactured your servers, your storage, your firewalls, and the rest of your infrastructure, politely excuse yourself. They don't intend to serve your business, just your equipment.

Instead, listen for questions about how IT is currently serving your organization. What information are you managing? How does it travel between you, your customers, and your suppliers in terms of the flow of your business. Where have you experienced inefficiencies? Be encouraged when they ask to speak to various key personnel and operational managers about how IT supports their operations.

Ultimately, you are not seeking someone to provide management of just your IT equipment. You are seeking someone to help you drive operational efficiency, reduce costs, increase revenue and thereby help you increase the profitability of your company. Done right, the technology becomes transparent to you and what you see are the results you have been seeking. Real, tangible results you can deposit in the bank.

The right Managed IT Services Provider knows that your information management cannot depend solely upon the technology you have already invested in. They also know that the investments you have made must be utilized to their fullest value without compromising ongoing continuity of business operations in the event of a failure. They have backup contingency plans in place to support you should anything fail. They do not make excuses. They anticipate problems and/or solve them quickly.

Bringing it back to the “one throat to choke” metaphor, they never use their hands to point blame at anyone else. They use their hand to shake yours when you thank them for improving your business by taking full responsibility.

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