

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE - OUTSOURCING

The gain without the pain

As a critical part of every business, IT systems both support and facilitate most business activities. The growth in reliance on these systems means that many organisations are busy 'firefighting' issues on a daily basis, leaving little time for strategic development of their IT systems and infrastructure.

Outsourcing the management and support of your IT systems can be both incredibly attractive and painfully frustrating. The attraction is that it gives someone else the responsibility for an essential, yet highly technical, business function. The headache of maintaining an efficient IT infrastructure becomes someone else's problem.

The frustrations come when your chosen IT support provider doesn't deliver to the standard you expect. Because they're not based in your office, communication can be erratic. Response times may be slower than you'd like. And each month, when you get the bill, you might wonder what it is that you're paying for.

It doesn't need to be that way. You can have all the benefits of outsourced IT management without the disappointments.

How outsourcing IT support can improve your business

Perhaps surprisingly, one of the most significant benefits of putting your IT support in the hands of specialists is digital security.

Cybercrime is a major worry for organisations of all sizes and a growing threat to smaller firms, seen as an easy target because they lack the resources to implement robust security measures. A quality IT support provider will make security a priority, conducting an audit of your IT infrastructure to identify weak points and solutions.

A survey last year found that a single security breach in small firms could cost them up to £60,000. The cost of improved security is much less and comes without all the inconveniences associated with being a victim of crime.

Another commercial benefit of using a specialist IT support provider is preventative maintenance through remote monitoring and support. It's increasingly unusual for something to break down and stop you from working, because remote monitoring allows problems to be spotted and fixed before they interfere with day-to-day business.

The result is improved productivity and competitiveness, because you can focus on running your business without being held up by issues with your IT infrastructure.

Additional benefits of outsourced IT support management

Access to experienced, qualified professionals: As IT becomes more complex, so do the skill sets required to support it. A quality support provider will have a strong mix of skilled, qualified staff that between them should cover all eventualities. They will continually invest in training their technical staff and maintaining high levels of IT expertise, meaning you don't have to.

Stay up to date with the latest technology: A quality IT support provider will give proactive advice on how new technology can benefit your business, and will help you plan a route, in line with your business plan, to the most effective solution.

Reduce risk: Your IT system, or at least some parts of it, is mission critical to your business. In short, if it breaks, your business can't operate. Your IT support provider should know which systems need to keep running 24/7 and they should put disaster recovery plans in place, should something go seriously wrong.

More time to focus on your core business: Outsourcing the support of your IT systems removes the headache of the day-to-day administration, freeing up your time and resources to focus on tasks that directly relate to your company's core business.

Predictability of costs: Many costs that were previously variable can be fixed, on a monthly basis, through entering in to a managed IT support contract easing the strain on cash flow.

Avoiding the potential pitfalls of outsourced IT support management

Whether you already outsource your IT management and support, or you're considering it, here are some key questions to ask of providers:

What happens when one of your team goes on holiday?

One of our clients switched to us because their previous provider could not help with a critical issue – the key member of staff was taking a break for a few days.

How do you deliver proactive IT support? Remote monitoring is no longer an optional extra for support providers, it is essential to the provision of effective management and support ensuring most problems are identified and resolved before you become aware of them.

How well do you understand the needs of firms like ours?

Every market sector has its own specific regulations relating to IT and management of data. Your IT support provider should have a good understanding of these, thereby reducing both your risk and your costs.

How can we tell we're getting value for money? Your IT support provider should send you regular reports on the status of your systems and any routine and preventative actions they have taken, along with being proactive about supplying advice.

How we help companies with outsourced IT support and management

We have been delivering proactive IT support to companies across the South of England for the last 20 years.

Our approach is consultative. We work with you to understand your business and to implement solutions that have a positive and immediate effect on core business activities. Our focus on service provision is paramount. We manage your network proactively, not reactively. Our monitoring and 'health check' activities identify and correct potential problems before they happen ensuring you don't suffer any loss of productivity.

We recognise that there are many factors that affect the successful operation of your IT systems. Not all these factors are technical and therefore we have invested in developing a support infrastructure and solutions that deal with the 'softer' issues in order to underpin a successful technical deployment.

If you would like to know more about how we can help your organisation get better value from outsourced IT management and support, please phone us on 0808 168 9135 or send an email to enquiries@itsupport365.co.uk.

We continually invest in our people and technology to provide customers with the highest level of service and consistently go the extra mile to guarantee our customers' peace of mind.