

The Hidden Cost of Downtime

Consider this scenario: you're at the brink of a very important online marketing campaign. As a result of a freak accident, possibly from gamma radiation, your computer loses all internet connectivity (sadly, it doesn't turn into the Hulk, which would have been awesome). So here you are, with your brand-tastic animation videos and audience-grabbing teaser pages trapped inside a dead machine.

Tech support thankfully was able to help you but you're a little too late. You missed Cyber Monday, the biggest sales day for your company. Not only did you have to pay for tech support, you also missed a crucial day in holiday sales.

Even if it wasn't a special day, missing one day online is like losing a week with all the things that can happen. It might range from getting a response out to a social media snafu or just answering an urgent client email.

That's what normal tech support does, which causes endless firefighting since they only respond when something goes wrong. Wouldn't it be much better if you paid people to fix a problem permanently instead?

That's what managed services do. Think about those scenes in the movies where a security team constantly monitors everything and quickly takes preventive measures even if it's just a fly that lands on a security camera. That's exactly what you get, a squad of experts who fix stuff before they turn into something bigger and nastier. It's also cheaper, oddly enough, and you even avoid losing productive time due to outages.

So what are some of the things that managed service providers (or MSP) do to help you? For starters, the service team itself is very proactive in applying updates and bug fixes to your critical software. They do this to help you can avoid getting malware or the inevitable system error down the road. And they can do this for everything, from your customer relationship software to your WordPress blog which means less worrying and more working.

On top of that, a great managed service provider will have data to back their talk. By using analytics, they can tell you exactly why they need to fix or upgrade something. It also acts as a predictor for finding potential pitfalls later on and stopping them before they happen, kind of like Minority Report but less creepy.

And if you're not comfy giving complete control of your data to the MSP, they understand that completely. After all, they only need the data that keeps your systems running, nothing more. You can keep your secret recipe hidden while they ensure that your database servers and point-of-sale devices run smoothly.

If you're looking at using one such service, you can tap into Nortel, Lucent, Dell or Checkpoint. Before contacting them though, you need to map out what the most important thing is to you when it comes to your IT infrastructure.

- If you're a small retail business, the most important thing for you is keeping everything related to point-of-sale running, like barcode scanners and cash registers, are always up and running. You can also throw in your marketing media in the mix, such as your WordPress blog and email servers.
- For consulting businesses, you need to make sure that your data storage is always in tip top shape and that you always have a working connection to be able to contact your clients.
- For large manufacturing businesses, you need a specialist to handle your internal infranet as well as backup databases for your inventory systems.

For a lot of businesses, using an MSP is a no brainer. After all, why think about IT and all of its confusing jargon when what you need to focus on is running your business? You'll even save more in the long run since you have no physical hardware to take care of, no network to attend to and no IT department to manage. If you think that a managed service provider is what you need, contact us and we might be able to help.

Sources:

<http://searchenterprisewan.techtarget.com/definition/managed-service-provider>

<http://www.smallbusinesscomputing.com/testdrive/article.php/3840706/What-are-Managed-Services-and-Why-Should-You-Care.htm>