



A GUIDE TO MANAGED SERVICES



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DELIVERING EFFICIENCY WITH MANAGED IT

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00. INTRODUCTION



Anyone that uses a computer knows just how frustrating it is when that computer doesn't function as intended. For a business, it negatively affects profitability. If you don't have the support structure in place to mitigate your technology problems, you could be spending a whole lot of money on nothing. In this e-book, we talk about how being proactive keeps your technology, and your business, working fluidly.

01. WHAT ARE MANAGED IT SERVICES?

Managed IT services work to mitigate computer problems using remote monitoring, management, and proactive maintenance. This strategy helps a business in several ways. Firstly, by using state-of-the-art remote management and monitoring tools to monitor a business's network and hardware, our certified technicians can ascertain how this technology is running. What's more, if a piece of hardware isn't working as intended, our techs can typically troubleshoot and resolve any performance issues before they become business roadblocks.

Top-tier Managed Service Providers (MSPs) utilize advanced automation and AI to create self-healing infrastructure that detects threats, outdated software, or other roadblocks to resolve issues before they become roadblocks. While automated procedures help streamline and enhance users' experience, not every issue can be resolved without proactive human intervention.

Take for instance a failing hard drive that shows signs of dying months before it finally dies – the symptoms are often hidden in the event log files. Our systems can detect a failing hard drive long before an employee realizes their laptop won't boot, in this case, an engineer would review the log files and alert the proper channels to order a new hard drive and migrate the user's data before it fails.

How does this save your business money? Simple, the key term is "proactive IT management." By preventing issues before they occur, MSPs prevent costly downtime, lost productivity, and potential reputational damage from data breaches, boosting employee morale in the process. Since your hardware will last longer and perform better than hardware that isn't managed in the same proactive way, you won't constantly have to replace technology. You won't have to pay your staff to sit around twiddling their thumbs every time a piece of technology fails, either.

02.

COST OF BREAK/FIX AGAINST MANAGED SERVICES

The Break/Fix model refers to the practice of only calling in professional IT services when there is a problem, or when an upgrade is needed. While this may seem reasonable to some, the fact of the matter is that the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages. The Break/Fix model charges users for consultation, repairs made, and hourly labor. It is impossible to budget for unforeseen issues, and it is difficult to know if you are paying a fair price. There are also no preventative measures being taken to avoid future problems, so with Break/Fix, you are leaving yourself open to surprise costs.

With the Break/Fix model, there are no preventive measures included.

The idea is that when experts are called in on a case-to-case basis, there is no expectation that they will do anything to prevent you from having to call them in again. Why would they, when that would go against their entire business model?

Managed IT services presents your organization with a way to keep its technology up and running effectively, spurring gains in productivity, efficiency, and overall organizational effectiveness.

03.

PROACTIVITY IS CENTRAL TO MANAGED SERVICES

The core tenet of managed IT services is to act before little issues turn into larger operational problems. This proactive approach is why the service holds so much value. Did you know that MSPs only make a profit when you don't have problems?

Our proactive approach ensures strategic alignment is there from the onset. Businesses with less than 200 employees rarely require in-house IT Staff. Even the most demanding companies can leverage an office manager or a tech-savvy assistant to provide “plug and play” level functionality to key execs.

Managed services provide businesses with experienced IT professionals who proactively monitor and manage your entire IT environment, including workstations, servers, firewalls, switches, and help desk support services at a fraction of the price that you would pay one in-house IT technician.

04.

PROACTIVITY IS CENTRAL TO MANAGED SERVICES

Another proactive service that Next Perimeter provides is comprehensive patch management.

It is more important than ever for a business to be using updated software. Software vulnerabilities are one of the main causes of data breaches. A data breach could put your data, including sensitive and personal data of your customers and your staff, at risk. With the negative situations that surround data breaches, patching your software becomes imperative to the long-term success of your business.

We've created a resource that gives you everything you need to know about creating an effective patch management policy and why patch management is important to avoid business vulnerabilities.

For the business that relies on its IT, malfunctioning systems can be costly, both in terms of maintenance and the loss of productivity from downtime. When your business chooses to outsource its IT support, it gains access to several services designed to keep downtime to a minimum and keep your technology working for you.

Next, we'll discuss the value of a help desk to business owners and employees, as well as other forms of IT support.

05. REMOTE SUPPORT CAPABILITIES AND HELP DESK SOLUTIONS

Did you know that 22 minutes of the average workday is spent dealing with IT-related issues? (BBC)

If your average hourly rate across employees is \$20.00 per hour, you'll spend \$1,914 per year, per employee in downtime from IT-related issues, and that doesn't include the time required to get back on task. At just 15 employees, this equates to more than \$28,000 in monetary loss from IT-related issues.

When you work with a managed IT services provider, your business's IT runs better, and when there is an issue, you won't be forced into sustained downtime. Any staff member who experiences technology problems can call our help desk and speak with an engineer. We take pride in our exceptional customer experience. Our average call wait time is less than 10 seconds, and your team can speak with a live person in less than a handful of rings.

We never outsource overseas, so you can be sure that nothing will be miscommunicated.

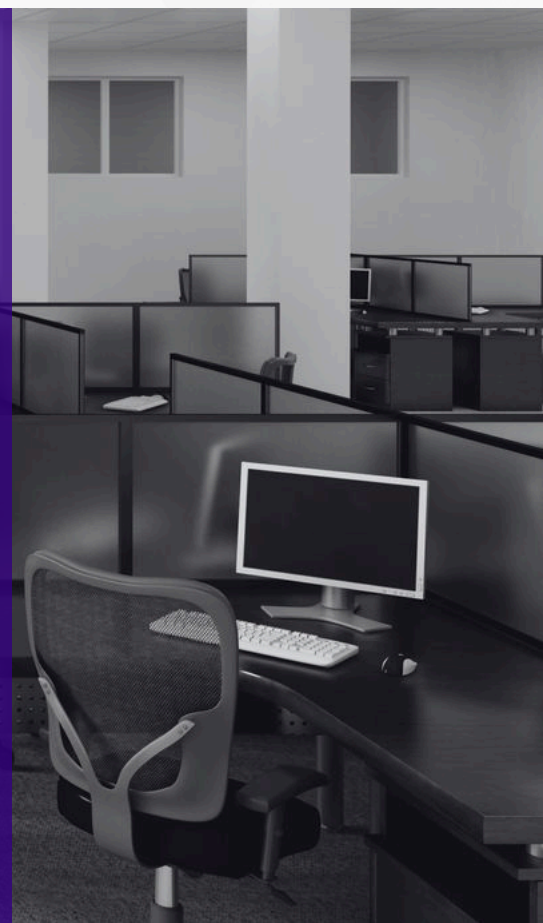
Our team integrates with your existing systems, enabling our engineers to resolve more than 90% of tickets in less than 30 minutes, and often less. This average is based on a combination of complex and minor tickets.

Let's do some quick math...

**22 minutes per day
X 261 days
(the avg. number of workdays per year in the US) equates to 5,742 minutes or 95.7 hours of lost productivity each year from tech issues.**

06. ON-SITE SUPPORT SERVICES

If the technology is malfunctioning constantly, and our remote technicians can't do anything from our network operations center (NOC), then we will dispatch a certified IT professional to your place of business to fix the problem onsite. Often, we will suggest having an extra workstation if another workstation suddenly fails, whether it be a desktop or a laptop, to keep downtime to a minimum. Fortunately, with managed services on your side, this situation is extremely rare, as our technicians will be able to see when any managed computer is showing signs of failure.



07. KEEPING YOUR BUSINESS GROWING STRONG

In business, time is a scarce resource, and you don't have time to deal with long-term technology issues. With the additional uptime, your company can accomplish more, as well as focus on core business objectives and complex revenue streams. An MSP's goal is to turn your IT department from a cost center to a profit center.

The best thing you can do for your business is to use technology effectively. Technology doesn't rest and neither do businesses looking to create new revenue opportunities,

lower costs, improve customer experiences, and increase competitiveness. Every innovation and business process created today requires well-executed IT infrastructure design, implementation, and support.

Next, we will look at the role of consulting and taking advantage of a Managed Service Provider's professional services can give your business the strategic direction to thrive in today's digital age.

08. HOW DOES CONSULTING WORK?

To get value from any consulting service, you must believe that the person or company you are consulting with knows the material better than you do and has an incentive to provide you with the information you seek.

At **Next Perimeter**, our consultants work with technology every day, and since a managed IT service provider can only be as successful as its clients, the incentive to help our partners excel is clear.

Consultations can provide several different benefits for your business. It can improve the technology your company works with, and it can help decision-makers audit a business's past and current technology strategy, helping to plan for the future. Let's look at three consultation methods we offer.

09. VIRTUAL CIO

When most business decision-makers need IT consulting, they are looking to ascertain what their costs for modern technology will be. They come to us and want help planning their technology expenses. Typically, this conversation happens when they've had the technology their company is using for some time, or if they've started to see growth and want to scale their technology at an acceptable cost.

Acting as a Virtual CIO puts us front-and-center on your business' technology strategy. The service features technicians who will assess your current IT, find hardware and services that will fit your needs and budget, and work with your decision-makers to put together the most comprehensive IT strategy to help your company grow - without burdening them with out-of-scope technology projects.

10. VENDOR MANAGEMENT

One area in which many SMBs waste time and money is in dealing with their vendors. Managing technology vendors doesn't have to be a painful experience. We get it – virtually every solution involves multiple technologies, with a plethora of tech compounded by the numerous vendors available – each with their own value proposition, 'unique best-in-breed' great features, and sales and negotiation tactics. It's enough to make most people imagine turning that laptop into a Frisbee.

With a comprehensive IT services agreement, your company will receive vendor management. This service will insulate your people from these vendors, providing you one contact for all your company's IT

procurement and support. It's true that managed IT services do a lot to make technology accessible to small and medium-sized organizations that wouldn't typically look to technology to fix parts of their business.

One of the innovations that modern business has made is prioritizing a smarter approach. Apart from data storage and database management, modern businesses are using the data from their marketing, sales, fulfillment/distribution, and support departments to see exactly how their business is functioning and make sound business decisions as a result. But how does an MSP IT service provider help a business with its data management?



11.

BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT

One thing that technology provides most businesses is a significant increase in efficiency. When trying to save time inside your business processes, your decision-makers may not have the perspective or experience to roll out a robust hybrid-cloud implementation. That's okay – major upgrades like these require deep expertise to prevent rework or potential vulnerabilities. A managed IT provider, on the other hand, prioritizes good business, and the optimization of business resources.

By having a partner on your side that will help you find the right tools and the most efficient processes, your business will produce more with less wasteful cost than it would without end-to-end oversight of your business's technology. That will inevitably result in better production and revenue growth.



12. DATA MANAGEMENT

Data management is the actual management of the data flow in and out of your business. Your business can have all the high-end hardware in the world, but if you aren't doing enough to manage your data, you run the risk of security failures, inefficiency, and cost overruns. Below are some ways the managed IT service provider can help you manage your organization's data.

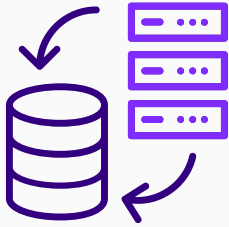


CLOUD SERVICES

With more IT systems getting externalized across small businesses and enterprises, cloud computing is increasingly becoming a vehicle for next-generation digital business, as well as for agile, scalable, and elastic solutions. Cloud computing has all types of options for about any process you can think of. Do you need storage? Processing? Artificial Intelligence? You can get any computing you can imagine in the cloud. The cloud platform is unlike any other in that – if you manage it properly – you only pay for the computing that your organization needs.

It also comes with accessibility options. If you need access to data anywhere, any time, the cloud is the best place to look.

When considering your organization's data management, security must be a major point of emphasis. While having complete control over the hardware that is hosted on-site is nice, the cost of the hardware and maintenance can be prohibitive. Today, there are cloud-based security options that function to secure cloud-based information systems in ways commensurate with industry best practices.



BACKUP AND DISASTER RECOVERY

Another big part of protecting your business's data is having the right amount of redundancy, and the ability to restore that redundant data to the information systems you depend on. Cloud platforms typically come with built-in redundancy, but if you choose to control your own business's hardware, you will need a system in place that allows for comprehensive data backup and recovery.

As a part of a managed IT service contract, providers tend to believe that while on-site data backup works better for situations where data needs to be restored faster, cloud-based redundancy protects the data in the case that the brick-and-mortar location is affected by a disaster. A network-attached BDR device that pushes versions of data to the cloud is the optimal way to backup any organization's data.



DATA WAREHOUSING

As mentioned above, businesses are using data in exciting ways. From software integration to business intelligence and analysis platforms, structuring data in a way that works best for the software that needs it has become a priority. Data warehousing is the process of combining data from various aspects of your business into a singular, structured platform to help businesses' decision-making abilities.

In business, most individuals have advisors, mentors, and confidants that they rely upon to make the optimal decision. This is the same with Managed Service Providers and especially rings true as we discuss the hardware procurement process and critical technology like networking devices, servers, or workstations.

13. HARDWARE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Information technology has a critical role in any business. The key part of an outstanding IT system is the technology itself. By working with a Managed Service Provider, businesses can leverage well-established tech vendor relationships, economies of scale, and work with knowledgeable techs to select the right equipment for the business use case. So, is your IT provider delivering the best value possible?

There are many different pieces of technology that go into a business. Next, we will look at three important pieces of technology, and how two different businesses might approach them.

14. NETWORKING AND SERVERS

Ben's business has been expanding, but his infrastructure has not. His capabilities need to increase to accommodate the increased staff. He realizes this and begins to research the way a total novice would — by going through online forums and tutorials. Most of what Fred is reading does not register, as the terminology is a foreign language to him. Fred's IT awareness resembles those of the stone-age. However, with the help of some DIY networking videos, Fred manages to put together what he believes is a sufficient business network.

Unfortunately, he misconfigured a few components. He finds his

network does not work the way he intended, and he still cannot accommodate the increased staff. The entire process has been a waste of resources.

On the other side of the block, John's business is also expanding. John has come to the same conclusion as Fred: the business infrastructure must expand. John skips all the DIY videos and contacts his managed service provider.

The managed service provider assists John with all his networking needs. They redesign his network to support both his current operations, while also allowing for future expansions.

15. WORKSTATIONS

Fred, frustrated by his networking disaster, decides he will go and prepare for his increasing staff. He goes to his local big-box technology store and talks to an employee about his computing needs. Fred leaves with five brand new computers. He sets them up at his business only to find out that they do not contain the computing power needed for his business. It turns out that the employee at Best Byte had only been working at the box store for one day. The no-return policy means Fred either must upgrade his brand-new computers or buy new — again.

John decides to ask his managed service provider what they feel would be the best route to go as far as computing power. He wants to make sure that his workstations will handle all his business needs, and his managed service provider has the expertise needed to not only point him in the correct direction but to assist in procuring the new devices. John doesn't have to plug in a single cord himself. His managed service provider can deliver 5 working computers.

16. SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE

Once Fred has decided to upgrade his new computers, spending even more money, he realizes that the software he utilizes will need to be licensed again. He finds a way to download the programs without the need for a product key, despite knowing it could leave him susceptible to a cyberattack. Unfortunately, it happens sooner rather than later, and Fred is locked down by ransomware.

Comparatively, John once again leans on his managed service provider. Since his business relies on many software programs, he leverages software-as-a-service. Rather than purchasing it outright, John can use a solution that is maintained by the developer for a monthly fee. There is no maintenance needed, as the developer is responsible. It is a hassle-free way to have all the programs needed, without the expensive buy-in price.

While it might seem exaggerated, trying to tackle IT yourself is not an easy task. It is easy to forget or overlook vital details.

17.

INTERESTED IN MANAGED SERVICES?



94% OF ORGANIZATIONS
use cloud services to remain agile,
competitive, and increase security.

Source: RightScale 2019 State of the Cloud Report

At Next Perimeter, we recognize that affordable, efficient information technology is mandatory for the success of your business. That's why we offer a variety of IT products and services to fit your needs as well as your budget.

Our mission is simple — to be America's most customer-focused small and medium business IT company, building a place where customers can leverage our passion for technology to power their business. We allow your team to focus on your core competencies and leave IT to the experts, eliminating single points of failure and ensuring that employees are productive and benefitting from great user experiences. Lastly, working with an MSP allows your business to take advantage of the ideal blend of mature and emerging technologies at a lower cost than possible internally.

The benefits of using the cloud are apparent to us at Next Perimeter, and our trained technicians are experienced and ready to help you identify the best solutions for your business, as well as which type of cloud deployment makes the most economic sense.

WHAT SETS US APART?

It All Starts in the Cloud

Your .com is what ties your business to the web, allowing you to get your email and collaborate online. Whether you're using Google Workspace or Microsoft 365, Next Perimeter has you covered. Your team can leverage our certified experts for matters concerning your email deliverability, DNS records, licensing concierge, and more.

Your Team and Workstations are Fully Covered

When your team logs into your corporate environment today, what types of protections exist? Next Perimeter, by default, deploys endpoint security and hardware monitoring to every workstation that we manage, ensuring productivity is at an all-time high. Your team will enjoy unlimited round-the-clock support for everyday issues ranging from authentication to hiccups with their equipment.

Battle-Tested SOPs

Whether we will handle all of your IT, or collaborate with an internal team, our procedures have been perfected against millions of business scenarios. Our system has been trained to adapt to each customer as their organizations evolve.

Future-Proofed for Compliance

We know you want your cybersecurity to be reliable, predictable, functional, and cost-effective - that's why we've simplified cyber so it's back-of-mind. By signing up for Essentials, you've created a predictable path toward future compliance needs as our agents can fulfill virtually all requirements they might ask for with simple per-user/device pricing.

Let's Work Together



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About Us

As a leader in cloud-first cybersecurity and IT support, Next Perimeter protects businesses from modern threats, whether in the office or remote. Our Zero Trust architecture and SaaS posture management deliver a secure, optimized endpoint experience without the need for servers or office space.

Our SASE network as a service replaces traditional VPNs with an always-on, secure connection, ensuring high-speed, reliable network security across the globe. Specializing in holistic threat detection and response, we safeguard your digital assets with cutting-edge AI-powered solutions.