



**SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES**

# 10 BENEFITS TO Adopting Managed IT Services

When you think about IT, you probably don't think "information technology." More likely, you're thinking, "Oh no, I'm going to need IT to fix this."

This reactive impression of IT services was once the only way to consider them, as that was the only way they were offered. Now, IT services don't wait until an issue impacts your business to fix it. In this ebook, we will compare the traditional, break/fix approach to IT services to the modern approach, more specifically, in the context that matters to a small or medium-sized business.

Consider this document an introductory overview of the managed service model as it is applied to information technology services. If you own or manage a business with insufficient IT support, this ebook can show you what there is to be gained through the services of an MSP.

Presented By: Point North Networks, Inc. | Revised: April 2019

## **Statement of Confidentiality**

What follows is simply the result of industry analysis and a review of solutions available. This document is simply intended for use as a referential resource to assist with an evaluation of a businesses preparedness to embrace a new service solution.

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## About Point North Networks, Inc.

Point North Networks, Inc. serves as a resource for businesses who need support for their information technology, as well as a consultant who can assist them in managing it. As a result, we can help you improve each and every aspect of your business operations with advanced IT solutions. For a selection of our core services, see the rest of this page, or visit our website at [www.pointnorth.net](http://www.pointnorth.net).



### MANAGED IT SERVICES

To help reduce amount of time and resources lost due to technology related issues and downtime, our managed IT services take a proactive approach to technology maintenance. By remotely monitoring your network and data constantly, potential issues can be detected and remedied before they result in an interruption of daily operations.



### SECURITY SOLUTIONS

Regardless of size and industry, businesses can no longer overlook the importance of network security. Our will assist your company in finding the right IT security solution. Content filtering, antivirus, antimalware, firewall, and threat prevention are just a few critical services we offer to keep your network and data safe.



### BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business continuity planning is about more than just backing up your company's data. It's about your company's ability to recover from a catastrophic event. Point North Networks, Inc. offers reliable data backup solutions and the expertise to assist you with your business continuity and disaster recovery



### EMAIL HOSTING + PROTECTION

Whether you'd prefer to have us host your email, or you want to keep it in-house, we offer solutions to help keep your business safe and its email managed. With spam protection and email filtering on your side, you can be confident that your email is working for your business.




### TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

For businesses that rely on technology, a critical element of an IT strategy is finding the right tech support. From implementation and configuration to after hours end-user technology emergencies, we are there to assist you with your technology needs whenever you or your employees need them.



### CONNECT WITH US!

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## Traditional IT Methods

Once, when a business experienced a technology issue, their only option would be to call in a repairman, for lack of a better term. The repairman would come in, fix the problem as best they could, and hand over their bill. The employee could return to work, and business would continue as expected until the next technology issues came around. At this point, the cycle repeats.

Alternatively, a business could have a tech savvy internal resource to pass their technology issue. In this case, this resource would attempt to resolve the problems that arose.

## Why This Doesn't Work

There are many problems with using the “break-fix” method to IT maintenance, as described above, in the current business environment. First, consider what an issue like the one described above really means, in terms of productivity.

Naturally, the employee will not be able to work until their technology is fixed. What's worse, they may become a distraction to any nearby coworkers, whether they mean to or not. In the meantime, the computer repairman has to travel to your office, adding to the time it will take to resolve the issue. When they do get there, you have yet another potential distraction drawing your other employees' attentions away from their work, in addition to the employee whose technology is being repaired.

Traditional IT technical support methods are mocked and scrutinized constantly, yet some businesses continue to invest in their IT only when it breaks.

Finally, once the issue is resolved and the repairman has been paid for time and materials spent, your employee can return to work. Hopefully, they will be able to avoid missing deadlines and opportunities, and won't have to dip into overtime to do so.

IT issues and downtime are expensive, and these expenses can build up rapidly over time. Not only are you dealing with a loss in productivity (it isn't as though you can neglect to pay the employee for the time their technology was unavailable), you are also losing potential revenue that employee could be generating at the same time.

*Your losses for each incident can be calculated as follows:*

### **Productivity Loss:**

$P = (\text{Number of Affected Users}) \times (\% \text{ of Productivity Loss}) \times (\text{Average Salary per Hour}) \times (\text{Downtime Duration})$

### **Revenue Loss:**

$R = (\text{Number of Affected Users}) \times (\% \text{ of Revenue Loss}) \times (\text{Average Profit per Employee per Hour}) \times (\text{Downtime Duration})$

### **Overall Loss:**

$P + R = \text{Way too much money.}$

## Bringing IT Services to Modern Times with Managed Services

The managed service approach to IT has some definite benefits to it, which largely come from the ideals and best practices that shape it.

- Regular maintenance will prolong the usability and performance of a computer system.
- Maintained Patches and software updates protect a network from many threats and issues.
- Transportation costs can be eliminated from support charges through the use of remote access technologies.
- Downtime can be avoided by proactively identifying and resolving IT issues before they cause problems.
- With thorough network documentation, any support visits can be optimized.
- Problematic devices can be identified through reporting, tracking and historical.

Eliminate Downtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximal productivity.</li><li>• Allows the client to focus on their business and growth.</li></ul>
Commit to Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishes a consulting role in the relationship with the client.</li><li>• Improve, not just repair.</li></ul>
Proactive vs Reactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fewer issues.</li><li>• Issues are detected and resolved before they cause downtime.</li></ul>

When a managed IT service approach is adopted, there is no longer a winner or loser in any transaction between a company and the managed service provider (MSP). Instead, the two become partners, which motivates the MSP to deliver higher quality services.

If a company identifies itself as a MSP, they should subscribe to ten fundamental philosophies that directly benefit you.

*Continue reading to learn the ten fundamental philosophies*

## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #1

## Managed IT Services are Like Outsourcing an Internal Team

Consider, for a moment, how critical your technology is to your operations. You don't want just anybody working to maintain it, you want to have someone who is dedicated to it functioning properly for you so that you can be as successful as possible. You want someone who will become familiar with your technology and its needs, who will be able to recommend what is best.

One way to accomplish this would be to hire an internal team of your own, but that approach is usually prohibitively expensive... not to mention that finding the people to create a unified team that also fits with your company's culture can take a considerable amount of time. Think of Point North Networks, Inc. as the best alternative, a resource that is committed to your success that doesn't require the high onboarding and retention costs that the typical in-house team would.

The service that a managed IT resource can provide covers a variety of common business needs, especially for a business that lacks the internal resources to handle them. If your team is tied up with maintenance and supporting the rest of your staff, an MSP like Point North Networks, Inc. can work on implementing improvements, upgrades, and other growth to your existing infrastructure--or vice versa.

More than that, your MSP can handle the other technological matters that otherwise distract you and your internal staff. With your goals in mind, Point North Networks, Inc. will work with your vendors as we devise a growth plan for your technology, the ultimate goal being the growth of your business and revenue streams.

At the end of the day, a managed service provider can deliver all the benefits of an additional in-house team for significantly less than it would take to hire the same resources to your team. Your outsourced resources will be more than capable of providing the support and maintenance you need to continue operations, allowing you to focus on your other business goals.

## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #2

## Detecting Issues Early Saves End-Users Trouble

It is rare that any computer issue strikes without warning. Much more commonly, there are signs that not all is well. You could be saved a lot of stress later by paying a little more attention now, but only if you know what you're looking for. Otherwise, issues that could have been mitigated easily can fester and expand, becoming a much greater (and more difficult to resolve) problem. A managed IT provider knows to look for these signs and take action early. As a result, your employees could be more productive, confident that they won't suddenly find their technology unresponsive.

There are a variety of issues that can be anticipated and avoided before they cause adverse effects to your business' productivity and profitability. The list of problems that proactive monitoring can detect is lengthy, but some highlights include:

- Hard Drive Failure
- Hard Drive Fragmentation
- Disk Space Warnings
- Ransomware, Malware, Spyware, and Rootkits
- Antivirus Update Issues
- Outdated Windows Updates and Service Packs
- Failed Windows Updates
- Windows Licensing Issues
- Duplicate Network Addresses
- Unexpected System Hardware Changes
- CPU and Memory Issues
- Event and Error Monitoring

## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #3

## With Remote Support, You'll Get the Assistance You Need Whenever You Need IT.

Despite how useless an issue can make a workstation seem, fixing that workstation may not require a technician to make the trip on-site. Without the time the technician spends traveling, not only is your issue resolved much more quickly, the expense of the service can be cut down considerably. After all, if there's no need for a technician to make a trip, there shouldn't be a trip to bill you for. These are the benefits of remote technical support.

Imagine how much easier it would be to identify and resolve issues if your IT provider could access your workstation without the need for them to ever visit your location. This is the benefit that remote support services offer: speed. Time is money, as they say, which means that every moment that passes by without a resolution to an issue, you're effectively allowing revenue and profits to pass you by as well.

Of course, not every issue can be resolved remotely. If one of your solutions was to physically break, a technician would have to come onsite to help. However, most of the issues that your staff is likely to encounter will be the sort that one of our IT professionals could resolve through remote access.

Not only is remote access an efficient and secure way to simplify receiving essential IT services, it also comes bundled in with the rest of a managed services package. As a result, you can be sure that problems your business may encounter will be resolved with maximum efficiency.

## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #4

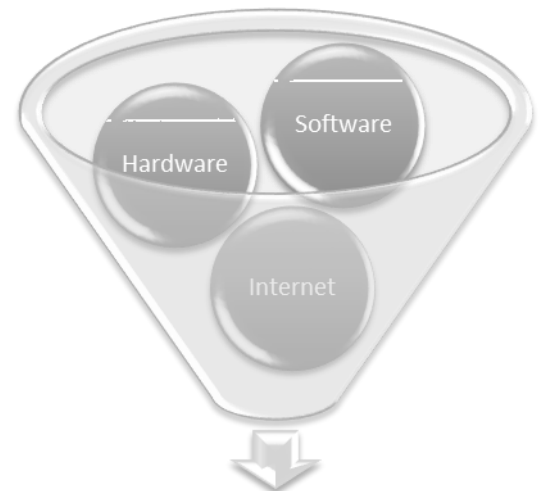
## A Business Should Always Get Maximum Value from Its Vendors

When dealing with vendors, it is important to remember that each vendor is just another business like yours. Unfortunately for you, this means that it isn't always easy to get support for free, as you'd certainly prefer. Instead, you may find that calls are passed around their call centers, eating up time that you or your employees could be spending on other endeavors--and if the issue isn't fully resolved during that call, the entire process has to repeat. This frustrating experience can be avoided with the assistance of a managed service provider.

The biggest problem that a small-to-medium-sized business encounters when dealing with their vendors is that they don't deal with their vendors often enough. As a result, they never have the opportunity to form a relationship with these vendors. Point North Networks, Inc. communicates with these vendors pretty regularly, which means that we have had the opportunity to build up professional relationships. This benefits you and your organization in two ways:

First, you and your employees don't have to worry about interrupting your own business procedures in order to do business with your vendors. Instead, managed service providers, like Point North Networks, Inc., reach out and negotiate with these vendors on your behalf, ensuring that you get the best value available in your solutions.

Secondly, due to the ongoing relationships with vendors, managed service providers can often take advantage of special purchasing options that a one-time client couldn't. By recruiting a managed service provider to act as your representative, you can access exclusive benefits when dealing with vendors, like improved support and bulk software licenses.



**One Call. One Contact.**



## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #5

## Break/Fix Practices Kick You While You're Down

It's no secret that IT issues have a tendency to become very expensive, very quickly. They often render your employees unable to do their jobs--which leaves your business effectively hemorrhaging money for the duration of the incident, as you still need to pay your employees for their time. However, many break/fix providers that come in to fix these issues will also contribute to the financial repercussions of the event with sudden, lump-sum invoices.

This is a practice that managed IT services are designed to eliminate on a few levels.

At its core, the managed services model is intended to shift where a client's investments are focused. Instead of paying your IT provider to solve a problem only after it has produced a detrimental impact to your business, managed services are designed to detect and prevent the same problem proactively, ultimately preserving your productivity and profitability.

In fact, if you were to encounter a downtime incident, a managed service provider would be just as motivated as you are to see the problem resolved. The way the relationship between you and your MSP works, if your solutions aren't able to deliver, your MSP isn't making any money from you, either. As a result, your managed service provider is sure to do their best to prevent downtime as much as possible, whereas a break/fix service depends on your technology failing and therefore has the motivation to bandage the problem instead of fixing it.

Furthermore, an MSP will work to resolve any downtime you experience as swiftly as possible, for similar reasons. On the other hand, the longer a break/fix provider takes to fix a problem, the larger their invoice.



FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #6

## Flat-Rate IT Management Offers Multiple Cost Benefits

Part of running a successful business is creating a successful budget. This task becomes impossible once surprise costs and fees enter the equation, which is exactly what the break/fix method causes. Costs suddenly skyrocket without warning, as productivity is hobbled and your business continues to leak money as expensive repairs take place. It's very difficult to successfully take these incidents into account. A budget is much easier to maintain when your IT support subscribes to a consistent flat-rate payment model.

It is effectively impossible to create a budget that isn't broken by circumstance without accounting for the possibility of these circumstances, but it is just as difficult to incorrectly estimate your need and move funds away from other areas of your business that need them. A managed services approach eliminates the guesswork by charging a consistent rate to keep your business network safe from issues. As a result, your budget won't be subjected to the alternating ups and downs that circumstance provides.

Instead, the consistency that an MSP can deliver may also lead to the money you save through their flat-rate services being directed into other important business needs, from technology upgrades to hiring and onboarding a new employee. It should also be said that the maintenance services that an MSP provides reduces the amount of issues that your systems encounter, potentially extending the life of the system, and costs can be lowered further through automation.



## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #7

## Your Business' Goals and Your IT Goals Become One and the Same

Sure, it's all well and good to have computers that work and a network that delivers information between them, but it isn't enough. You have growth plans for your business and an idea of what you want your business to accomplish. Your IT infrastructure needs to be optimized to enable technological advancement and growth, while allowing these business-centric goals to be reached as well.

A good managed service provider understands this, and will work with you to ensure that your business goals and your IT goals are headed in the same direction.

By acting as a consultant for your business technology goals, your MSP can assist you in developing a comprehensive plan to shape your IT strategy in both the short and long-term. In this way, they serve very much as a Chief Information Officer for your company. Your MSP will assist you in introducing new solutions and best practices to your trained-up team, allowing your business to improve while giving a boost to your bottom line.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that you're on-track to accomplish these goals, Point North Networks, Inc. will be there to review your progress as often as every quarter. During these meetings, you will be able to evaluate if your solutions are an appropriate means to reach the level that you see in your business' future.



## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #8

## Managed IT and Reduced IT Expenses Go Hand-in-Hand

If you keep something well-maintained, it tends to last longer. This can be said of your vehicles, of your home, and of your IT. Taking care of your IT solutions is the primary mission of the MSP, as it allows you increased productivity, efficiency, and most applicably, decreased costs. The better cared-for your infrastructure is, the more likely your solutions are to go without experiencing malfunctions and downtime.

As a result, you could see significant improvements to your IT's functionality through an MSP's services, mainly because of the proactive approach that the MSP will take. By identifying potential issues and resolving them, an MSP maintains your technology, an often much cheaper option than repairing it when it is broken. By outsourcing these responsibilities to an MSP, you can focus on your business, knowing that your IT is safe in the care of trained professionals.

If you do need IT assistance, either via remote support or an on-site visit, your agreement will almost certainly have you covered.

This means that what would be an additional expense with a break/fix repair service is already included and accounted for in a managed service agreement.



## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #9

## Harnessing the Power of the Enterprise Within the Small Business

There seems to be a prevailing opinion that large businesses and enterprises have their resources, and small and medium-sized businesses have theirs. It certainly does appear that multinational businesses hold all the cards. At Point North Networks, Inc., we're committed to making the game a little more fair by dealing the same solutions that enterprises and large corporations leverage, to small and medium-sized businesses.

Whether you stress about the possibility of data loss and cyberattack, or your current communications suite seems to be lacking, we can help you by providing you solutions and services that were once reserved for the major players, at a price that enables your business access to these tools.

**Point North Networks, Inc. can provide you with a wide variety of solutions, including:**

- Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, Communications
- Backup and Disaster Recovery, as a part of a comprehensive Business Continuity strategy
- Security Solutions, including Firewall and Web Content Filtering
- Server Virtualization
- Virtual Private Networking, or VPN
- Virtual Private Networking, or VPN
- Telecommunications
- Mobile Solutions
- Security Policy Management and Administration
- Email Hosting with Spam Protection
- Software solutions, including Productivity Suites and Customer Relationship Management packages

## FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

# PHILOSOPHY #10

## The Business Comes First

There is no getting around it: your business relies on many time-consuming tasks that serve as major time-sinks. However, these tasks are also critical to see completed for the good of the business as a whole.

Let's say your backup solution needs testing, your antivirus needs updating, and all of your computers need to be patched. On top of all that, you need to make sure that payroll will be ready, that your employees aren't slacking off on company time, and that you aren't overworking yourself or stressing about circumstances that are out of your control. Plus, you need to make sure that you're able to keep the business going, that you are compliant to any regulations, that the bills are paid, and that your clients are kept in the loop and happy--not to mention handling anything that may be going on at home.

Business owners know that the buck stops with them. However, in order for everything to be attended to properly, there needs to be some delegation. Human Resources can take care of payroll, Sales can take care of client satisfaction, and Point North Networks, Inc. can see to your IT needs.

Through managed services, your staff will be able to sit at their workstations and do their jobs--whatever they may be--without worrying about maintaining the solutions they use. In fact, many crucial tasks can be automated, leaving you that much less to worry about as you see to your other business responsibilities.



# Focus on your Business Not your Technology

*Interested in a **FREE** Managed IT Consultation?*

Let's find out how the benefits of managed IT will drive your business forward.

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or

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