

5 Ways CIOs Are Using **MANAGED SERVICES** to Transform **RESOURCE UTILIZATION**





INTRODUCTION

Organizations of all sizes are asking IT to bring value to their businesses. They want IT to be more efficient, help applications perform better, find ways to harness their growing data, and boost the bottom line.

However, IT resources are already being stretched with busy schedules for maintaining existing systems. A recent survey from CEB shows that staffing levels at these organizations will only grow at 1% in 2015.¹ So how does an IT department with limited resources function more efficiently?

One solution is to offload themselves of repetitive, maintenance functions. These functions are often handled better by organizations that focus on them 24/7. These organizations see the same or similar issues on a regular basis and are trained to address those issues proactively and effectively. Internal IT departments may only encounter a specific problem once and require more time to troubleshoot and fix.

If your IT department is going to be a more productive, strategic part of your organization, which functions should you look to a partner for help with?

1. CEB, 2015 IT Budgets Increase Largest Since 2008 According To CEB, Nov. 17, 2014, <http://news.executiveboard.com/2014-11-17-2015-IT-Budgets-Increase-Largest-Since-2008-According-To-CEB>

CHAPTER 1:

EXPLODING DATA GROWTH

International Data Corporation (IDC) estimates that the amount of data being created and stored is doubling every 18 months.² The amount of data that many businesses have to store, analyze, and manage is staggering. Much of this data is stored in legacy systems or in multiple locations, making the data difficult to work with.

There is a tidal wave of new technology that has promise to help address these data challenges. The market today has the traditional major disk-based and flash-based technologies, hybrid solutions, and storage virtualization through software.

However, architecting the right solution alone can be extremely difficult. Many organizations start by evaluating multiple manufacturers based on their current data storage environment and several assumptions about their business's future. The challenge is that if a company's exposure is limited to a small number of storage environments, which options would be the best for their business needs?

An experienced partner can be particularly helpful in this area. Because a strong partner has already worked with multiple manufacturers and business situations, they can help you take the mystery out of storage while also harnessing advanced technologies such as automated data tiering, continuous data protection, and storage virtualization.

2. Matt Paige, "How to survive the data explosion", *Infoworld*, August 22, 2014, <http://www.infoworld.com/article/2608297/infrastructure-storage/how-to-survive-the-data-explosion.html>

CHAPTER 2:

OUTGROWING STORAGE SPACE

For years, organizations have been running out of storage space. For many, the answer has always been to buy more disks. Add more disks and you can store more data. Unfortunately, the trade-off of this solution is that performance suffers. Those large disks take up a lot of room in the data center and generate a lot of heat that is expensive to cool.

Now is a good time to re-evaluate how data is stored. It is possible to utilize an existing investment in storage, while also increasing performance and reducing the total amount of space needed. This solution can enable an organization to move certain data segments to other storage areas like the cloud.

Working with a managed service partner who understands your business requirements and has experience with multiple types of storage technology can help maximize your investment. With a clear plan in place, your existing infrastructure life cycle can be extended. Include data reduction techniques such as inline data deduplication and compression, and those investments can be extended further.

Adopting a managed approach to data storage can also dramatically improve data backup and disaster recovery processes. With a managed service provider managing the storage environment daily, IT teams can focus their efforts on more strategic initiatives instead.

CHAPTER 3:

MANAGING

DATA BACKUP

Many companies manage their backup and recovery efforts in house. However, a recent study by EMC found that 71% of IT professionals are not fully confident in their ability to recover information following an incident.³ That same report estimates that \$1.7 trillion is lost per year from data loss and downtime. With the costs of data loss so high, it is time to rethink data backup and disaster recovery.

Managing backups was difficult in the past. Scheduled backup windows had to be met. Most backups went to tape and had to be transported offsite. Recovering from those tapes had been difficult and cumbersome and many times lead to errors.

That is no longer necessary. The cloud, along with managed service providers, have removed the challenges of disaster recovery planning. Automated, continuous backup with real deduplication and compression secures your data. Recovery can happen at the block or file level and can happen in minutes, not hours.

The cloud also enables companies to have a full IT environment ready to come online if a disaster strikes. This can take the form of a public, private, or hybrid cloud solution. Full recovery of mission-critical servers can happen in hours or minutes instead of days or weeks.

3. EMC, "Over \$1.7 Trillion Lost Per Year from Data Loss and Downtime According to Global IT Study", Dec. 2, 2014, <http://www.emc.com/about/news/press/2014/20141202-01.htm>

CHAPTER 4:

PROVIDING

MANAGED SECURITY

According to the 2013 Verizon Communications Data Breach Report, 62% of cyber-attacks targeted small and midsized companies.⁴ It seems that hackers are realizing that the Fortune 1000 has been increasing their security spending and their ability to defend themselves. On the other hand, smaller companies may not have the budgets to keep up.

This really is not surprising, as it is extremely expensive and time-consuming to keep current with security equipment, patches, and training. Also, security is a moving target. Just as better protection comes out, the cyber criminals modify their method of attack.

It is for this reason that using a security managed services provider may make the most sense. Providers that focus on security have teams trained in all aspects of cyber security available 24/7. The organizations have Network Operation Centers (NOCs) that can identify threats happening in other parts of the world before they hit the United States.

These service providers also tend to have the latest in security hardware and software. Because the costs are spread out over multiple clients, mid-sized companies can benefit from the high-end enterprise class equipment. Because these service providers live in security all day, they can also help you put together the best plan of action for your business.

4. Verizon Communications, "2013 Data Breach Investigations Report", 2014, http://www.verizonenterprise.com/resources/reports/rp_data-breach-investigations-report-2013_en_xg.pdf

CHAPTER 5:

LEVERAGING

INVESTMENTS

Extending the life cycle of storage is just one area where a quality managed services partner can help you get the maximum return on your hardware investment. Storage can be virtualized to put multiple manufacturer's solutions into the same storage volume. Older appliances can be moved to archiving or data backup functions.

The rest of your infrastructure is not that different. As the manufacturer warranty expires for servers, service providers could then fold them into a maintenance contract, saving money while lengthening the useful life of that hardware investment. The provider might also take over equipment maintenance to ensure necessary patches are applied.

Just as security can be a completely online service today, managed service providers also have the ability to take over the management of pre-existing security devices such as firewalls. This is especially helpful for organizations with multiple sites. All of the licensing and definition updates can be offloaded to a good provider, freeing up your time for more strategic initiatives.

Many companies that started with security or storage requirements have turned to a managed service provider with skilled network administrators and engineers to manage their network. Usually, there is a 24/7 NOC that monitors the environment and proactively fixes issues or sends alerts.

CONCLUSION

As organizations of all sizes are being asked to do more with less, managed services can be the answer. Your company gets a trusted partner with greater resources than you might have in-house. And this usually comes at a discount to what it would take you to build in-house thanks to the power of scale.

This will also free your IT team from the routine management of your infrastructure so they can focus on building strategic business value for the company.

If your organization is considering utilizing a managed services partner, please contact Solutions II for a free consultation.

ABOUT SOLUTIONS II

Solutions II is nationally recognized for world-class innovation in virtualization, business continuance and data life cycle management. Solutions II assists clients every day with leveraging technologies and services that drive the cost out of IT. Solutions II's commitment to bringing best-of-breed solutions to clients includes a professional services practice dedicated to increasing customer service levels and decreasing the time and support required for implementations to keep their clients performing ahead of the curve.

Solutions II's Recent Accolades:

- Outstanding Security Partner, IBM
- IBM Beacon Award Winner, "Outstanding Systems Storage Solution"
- IBM Tivoli Business Partner Award for Data Protection Excellence Finalist
- CRN Tech Elite 250

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