



A D E P T 4

IT AS A SERVICE

Now We're Talking:
Discovering the business
value of IT managed
services

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Discovering the business value of IT managed services

What are IT managed services for? ‘Keeping the lights on’ is a common refrain, characterising such services as focused primarily on maintaining day-to-day operations. This function is undoubtedly vital – lose access to key business applications or systems and your operations could rapidly grind to a halt, with all the revenue and reputational impacts that entails – but in an era where multiple enterprise technologies are battling for boardroom attention, it is not enough to build a truly compelling business case for IT managed services.

Like any other IT investment, managed services should be assessed in a comprehensive and holistic way, analysing how they can tangibly improve and enhance business processes. In other words, their business value needs to be discovered – and then unlocked.



Understanding IT managed services: depth and breadth

The first step to discovering and unlocking the true business value of IT managed services is appreciating what those services truly look like in the 21st century. Not so long ago, a typical managed services arrangement was little more than a third-party support function; a technician or two available on the end of a phone line if staff members found themselves unable to switch on their computer or log into a key system.

Now, as enterprise IT infrastructures have dramatically grown in scale and complexity, so too have the managed services solutions which support them. IT managed services today can include:

- Proactive monitoring of the IT infrastructure, 24/7 or for specific periods of time, watching for signs of technical failure or malicious activity and responding accordingly.
- Advice and guidance on hardware and software procurement, including liaison with vendors and management of the installation and deployment process.
- End-to-end management of patches and upgrades, to ensure that all elements of the IT infrastructure are fully up-to-date at all times.
- Optimisation of network performance, eliminating bottlenecks and maximising the capacity of the IT infrastructure.
- IT security support, proactively protecting against incidents and rapidly responding when they do occur, to isolate the incident, remediate the damage and put in place disaster recovery processes as necessary.

All alongside that original core function of providing a rapid response function when something goes wrong. Overall, then, IT managed services today incorporate extreme depth and breadth – and this scope and flexibility provides the foundation for discovering their true business value.



Understanding business value

Next, we need to consider what we actually mean by ‘business value’.

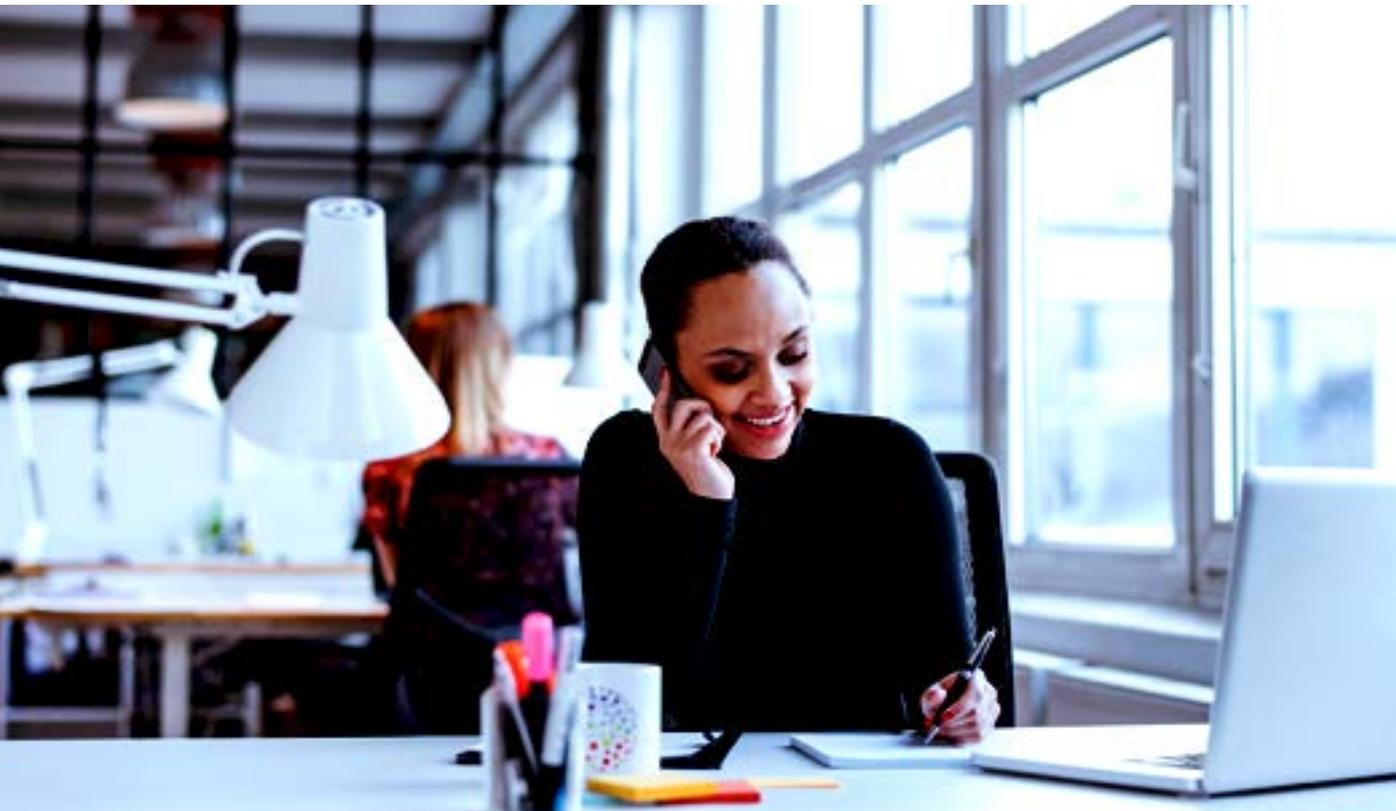
The original, more limited function of IT managed services – augmenting an in-house IT function by providing technical support and advice – is by no means not valuable to businesses. However, its value is largely immediate. This form of managed services provides reactive response to short-term problems: getting users back online; restoring access to key applications; rebooting faulty systems.

To deliver more extensive business value, IT managed services need to offer tangible impact over time, as well as in the short-term. And thanks to the depth and breadth of functions such services now entail – they can.



Ultimately, a healthy bottom line is the core priority of every business, so supporting, enabling and even enhancing the organisation’s ability to maximise its revenue has to be the core measure of all managed IT services business value. Nevertheless, this can be achieved in a number of different ways, particularly when we are thinking both long and short-term. Effective IT managed services can reduce your operational costs, reduce the likelihood of a damaging cybersecurity incident, empower your staff to collaborate more effectively and even improve morale. To make sense of these diverse benefits, it is helpful to categorise them into two broad groups:





1. Reduce costs

It is easy to understand how reducing costs translates into more money in the bank and therefore a healthier bottom line. What might not be quite so obvious is the myriad ways in which IT managed services can reduce business costs.

An outsourced IT managed services partner might simply be cheaper than hiring and maintaining the equivalent skillset in-house. But they might also reduce the likelihood of a significant technical or security incident, which translates directly into lost sales or a hefty repair bill. They might extend the useful lifespan of your hardware and software, leading to lower technology procurement bills. And, provided they maintain the relevant vendor relationships and certifications, they might secure you better prices from technology suppliers than you could achieve on your own.



2. Increase productivity

‘Productivity’ in this instance can apply to technology or people. On the technology side, IT managed services can make your hardware and software work harder for you, by optimising its configuration, identifying and mitigating small issues before they escalate, and reducing the likelihood of security incidents or technical faults.

On the people side, IT managed services ensure that your staff always have access to the key applications and data they need to carry out their jobs – no matter where in the business they are located. They also free up time and attention for your in-house IT resource – however large or small it is – to take a more strategic and creative outlook, and focus on innovations and developments that can enhance your business, rather than ‘keeping the lights on’.



Let's take a more detailed look at some of the diverse ways in which today's IT managed services deliver multi-faceted, long-term and lasting business value.

Broadened expertise

High-quality IT managed services providers grant you access to a range of skills, qualifications and experience that you might be unable to support in-house. From vendor-specific certifications and qualifications, to individuals with direct experience in managing complex migration and upgrade projects, managed services partners typically place great emphasis on adding value by ensuring that they can offer a more extensive and rounded resource than a typical business can internally. This not only offers you sophisticated third-party backup, but also introduces cross-training and coaching possibilities for your in-house team.

Reduced recruitment costs

In turn, drawing on such a rich external talent pool means there is less pressure to hire particular individuals in-house, and less pressure to undertake particular training and development programmes with your internal team. This is not to say that an external IT managed services partner will replace your in-house personnel – rather that it enables you to be more selective and strategic with those personnel. Typically, the managed services provider can focus on background operations, whilst your in-house team can become more closely aligned with the business leadership team.

Up-to-date technology

Any decent IT managed services provider should update your technology – both hardware and software – as required. Whether implementing vendor patches and new software version, or providing migration and integration support whilst upgrading obsolete hardware, an IT managed services partner should ensure that you are always running the optimum version of your technology. This improves your security posture, as well as the performance of your infrastructure more broadly.

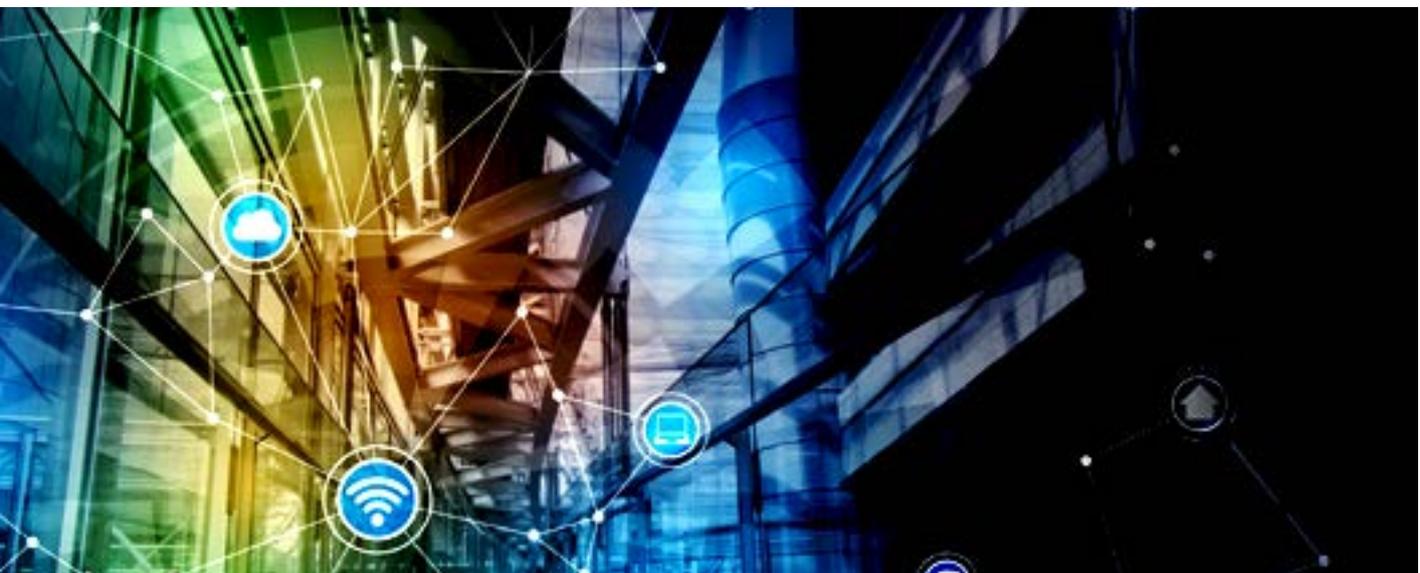


More intelligent budgeting

IT managed services are generally paid for on a monthly basis, which makes brings great transparency and predictability to your IT budgeting. There are fewer, if any, unknown costs to blow your IT budget, and a good partner will also alert you as to potential upcoming costs in relation to upgrades and obsolete technology, enabling you to plan better. This enables smarter investment in other areas of your business.

Reduced infrastructure costs

Many IT managed services contracts will empower you to downside the amount of IT infrastructure you run onsite. Rather than having to sustain your own servers or datacentre, you can use theirs, or they can manage the hosting arrangements for you to deploy a public or hybrid cloud model. Alternatively, they can simply help you to rationalise your current setup, saving space. From there, you might even be able to move to smaller premises – regardless, money will be saved on hardware and energy bills.



Change reactive IT to proactive strategy

Above all, IT managed services enable all aspects of your organisation's IT – its hardware, its software, its data, its processes and its people – to evolve from reactivity to proactivity. Enterprise IT can no longer be thought of simply as a business utility, running quietly in the background with managed services scrambling to fix it when something goes wrong.

About Adept4

Adept4 is a managed services provider. It enables organisations to become operationally and culturally agile through smart, adaptive cloud based technology strategies that respond effectively to everyday challenges.

Adept4 is a northern based power house delivering hybrid IT, Microsoft cloud and managed services that enable organisations to securely transition, flex and integrate between on premise and cloud-based services.

Adept4 is a market–leader in developing solutions that enable mid-market sized organisations to make faster decisions, improve operational efficiency and gain competitive advantage.

[Get in touch](#)





A D E P T 4

IT AS A SERVICE

Head Office

Adept4 Managed IT Ltd
7750 Daresbury Business Park
Daresbury Office Village
Warrington, Cheshire
WA4 4BS

t. 0808 252 4444
e. info@adept4.co.uk

Aberdeen

3 Merkland Road East
Aberdeen
AB24 5PS

t. 0808 252 4444
e. info@adept4.co.uk

Leeds

Adept4 Managed IT Ltd
Victoria Spring Business Park
Liversedge
West Yorkshire
WF15 6BE

t. 0808 252 4444
e. info@adept4.co.uk

www.adept4.co.uk