WEIGHING THE PROS AND CONS
The 5 considerations of outsourcing IT when ERP is involved

Many executives using complex ERP software to run their businesses understand the challenges of supporting and maintaining a fully optimized, secure and compliant IT environment. From hosting hardware, to networking complexities, to rising administrative costs, to supporting upgrades and migrations, ERP landscapes require a significant IT investment and masterful resource and project planning.

Once mastered, keeping pace with ever-changing security standards, industry compliance requirements, hardware and software changes, and an overall shortage of skilled IT resources has given pause to many IT leaders about how sustainable the traditional IT-centric model is in today's "AaaS" (Anything as a Service) world. The appeal of moving your company's crown jewels into someone else's care comes with a lot of potential risk and downside. However, when done right, these types of outsourcing models free a company's resource from the tactical day-to-day support efforts, allowing the company to concentrate on strategic planning and the execution of growth initiatives.

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This is the balance organizations are looking to achieve, but it's important to choose a partner that understands what it takes to be on the "pointy end of the stick" as it relates to delivering operational performance, uptime and compliance to whatever your business demands.

Outsourced Hosting and Managed Services Support

The fears...

Low-cost services to simply keep your systems "up and running" often come with poor customer service and long help desk waits. Many have heard IT horror stories of domestic support being expensive and laced with hidden costs that continue to mount.

Offshore solutions frequently include issues with language barriers, time zones and long wait times from a generic help desk.

Commodity-based hosting support has experienced similar challenges as contracts can be rigid with limitations placed on hardware restrictions and hours of availability, not to mention the lack of overall customer support and technical knowledge.

To solve these support issues, some companies have opted to go with internal IT teams with on-premise hosting solutions in hopes of lowering costs and having direct onsite support. However, internal teams can come with their own challenges. Internal support can limit availability of ongoing support needed to optimally run your environment and is subject to coverage issues such as sick leave, vacation or turnover. Internal teams are also limited in knowledge base, as the technologies are continuously changing and require ongoing training, often times leaving both the company and employee feeling overwhelmed.

Vendor vs. Partner

The real value of outsourcing your mission critical systems is to find the right partner that fits your business needs. The decision to outsource your hosting and IT managed services should only be made once you clearly understanding the benefits of establishing a true long-term partnership—one that will expand with your company's growth and scale as needed.

Choosing a strategic IT outsourcing partner is a different approach then making the decision solely based on finding a commodity-based vendor. It's a roadmap to success for your organization to grow the business with a peace of mind knowing that your systems are being expertly managed. There's no worse feeling than uncertainty.

PwC estimates "67% of nearly 1,500 business and IT executives surveyed said they were concerned that the speed of technological change is a threat to their growth potential." Finding the right outsourcing partner to maintain and manage your entire core business systems with the required skills and expertise may come with a higher price tag, but it can prove more rewarding in the long term. Enlisting the services of a single strategic IT partner to provide support beyond just "keep the lights on,"—but one with enterprise level expertise which is flexible, secure, affordable and able to grow with your business—should be a key line item in your overall IT outsourcing strategy.

Making the move to an outsourced IT partner is not only an economic decision, but one that brings the added benefits of being less worrisome to your overall IT operations.

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5 critical points to consider when faced with the outsourcing dilemma:

1. TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Knowing the complexity of your systems is half the battle. The other half is the commitment to deliver expert support. The technical and certified skill set needed to provide continuous support and customer service should be a top consideration when deciding to outsource.

Employing an IT partner you know is expertly trained and has years of experience with hundreds, if not more, customer upgrades gives you reassurance that your systems will be up and running through an expertly managed approach. According to CIO Insight, "On average, system-down occurrences cost a company $5,600 per minute." Not having the certified experts managing your systems can have real business implications.

In addition to an outsourced partner, many companies still employ internal teams to focus on meeting business goals and ensuring that their technology is aligned to the business's requirements. Leveraging an outsourced vendor allows your company to focus on growing your business while having certified experts handle your technical system and hosting ongoing support.

2. FLEXIBILITY AND SCALABILITY

Having a vendor that is agile enough to fit your unique business needs is critical when looking to an outsourced partner. No one customer is the same, nor should your outsourced vendor be a one size fits all solution. Be sure to find partner that offers tailored solutions.

As your company grows, so too will your IT need to support the expanding infrastructure. By utilizing an IT outsourced solution you will have built in scalability. Outsourcing partnerships allow for you to pay for the resources you need to today and add when needed without the hassle or cost of having to hire and train more resources.

3. COST

Many times the thought of outsourcing comes with the notion of a higher price tag, but that does not have to be the case. Companies have found that a managed services provider results in a 25 percent cost savings on just salaries and benefits that are needed to maintain just one full-time employee.

You should also not think of outsourcing your IT management as a one-to-one ratio. When you partner with a vendor, you get a team of support to provide full hosting and managed services support.

As on premise solutions continue to grow, so do the associated costs that can become increasingly cumbersome and expensive. Managing your own hardware, heating, cooling, networking and security will continue to get more costly and complex. Companies are opting to get "out of the IT" business and have experts managed their systems while they do what they do best—run their company.

4. ADVANCED SECURITY

Did you know that 75% of hackers are in systems for 8-9 months before attacking? Having advanced security procedures and "smart hands" monitoring your systems regularly should be a best practice. This can be assured with an outsourced partner. When insourcing your solutions you may be able to see your physical servers and those managing them, but this does not guarantee the advanced security needed to truly protect your most critical systems.

No matter what industry your company is in, the threat of a security breach is very real. Recognizing this and having the right solutions in place to mitigate risk is crucial. Outsourced partners have a laser focus on optimally managed security practices. Let the expert IT partner take on the worry of security, while you concentrate on your business.

5. PEACE OF MIND

Many executives just want to sleep at night knowing they have the right resources in place. The worry-free approach to IT can be achieved through the right partnership. Companies receive uptime guarantees, availability to their systems, regular performance reports, direct access to a team of experts and 24x7x365 support. Should a problem arise, it has been found that outsourcing solutions have been able reduce the time to resolution by 80% simply by having a team approach with a wide range of specialties knowledge in place.

Having the right hosting and managed services partner can change the way your company does business. To learn more about Symmetry's approach and overall service offerings visit: http://symmetrycorp.com

About Symmetry:

Symmetry Corporation is a leading enterprise hosting and managed services provider. An SAP certified partner since 2005, Symmetry is certified in SAP Hosting, Cloud and SAP HANA® Operations. As a true extension of your team, Symmetry places a laser focus on our customer's experience and is one of the only managed IT providers with flexible solutions built to meet each customer's unique business needs. Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wis., Symmetry supports global customers through its 24/7 operations support model and its extensive worldwide data center network. With a proven methodology for delivering technical managed services and complete hosting solutions, Symmetry delivers flexible, high-quality solutions that help reduce the total cost of ownership and enable high-performing and secure environments of customers' most mission critical systems. Learn more at **http://symmetrycorp.com.**

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