



White Paper

THE TRUE COST OF IT SUPPORT

A COMPARISON OF THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES



Overview

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- » Hiring IT Professional
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Without a doubt, business today is married to technology. Even small businesses rely on computer networks for communication (e-mail, text messaging, voice mail, VOIP, etc.), scheduling, accounting, payroll, and operations. Because of this dependency, it is imperative that computer networks are reliable. When the network stops working people stop working, and business comes to a halt—sometimes permanently.

Large organizations are able to ensure reliable network performance by dedicating considerable resources to maintaining a robust network architecture. They employ a team of experts to maintain their network infrastructure. Having a complete information technology department is not a viable option for most small businesses. Instead they tend to rely on one of the following options for support:

The “Accidental Techie”

An employee of the firm with some technical aptitude becomes the primary resource for network support. Often times this person was hired for their skills outside of network administration, but when an aptitude for technology is revealed, they become the default network administrator—the “accidental techie.” This person then splits their job between their primary function and this secondary responsibility.

In our experience consulting with hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses, we have often seen company presidents, CEOs, partners, senior management and/or senior technical staff filling the role of default network administrator. Almost without fail, this person’s time could be better spent doing something other than desktop support or troubleshooting network problems.

The Full-Time IT Manager

Suppose our firm grows to 40 employees, and IT tasks now completely overwhelm the accidental techie so the decision is made to hire a full-time network administrator. There can be significant challenges at this juncture, including:

- It is difficult to find qualified personnel.
- Employee retention is a significant challenge for small businesses.
- It is nearly impossible to have the right resource for every job.
- Total costs are high.

Outsourcing

Compared to the two options listed above, outsourced IT services can be a great value for small and medium sized businesses. With an outsourced IT department, a small business can acquire comprehensive coverage similar to what may be found at a larger organization.

With an IT outsourcing firm of 25 or more professionals, there will be enough breadth in skills to meet the needs of small and medium businesses with true experts – people who can offer solutions in a fraction of the time

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“Information Technology and business are becoming so inextricably interwoven. I don’t think anybody can talk meaningfully about one without talking about the other.”

Bill Gates, Microsoft

it would take an “accidental techie” or entry level IT staff person. Additional services might include 24/7 monitoring of the network and applications, support desk services, strategic planning, scheduled network administration, 24/7 emergency response, procurement assistance, asset management, desktop-support, trouble-ticket tracking and more.

Every company is different, but also quite similar in the requirements for core IT services and support. It is important to take a thorough look at all of the costs associated with an option for meeting those needs so that you can ensure you are spending your money as effectively as possible.

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