

# TechTips Newsletter



Insider Tips To Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier And More Profitably



## How Managed IT Services Help Small Businesses

A company I know found a unique way to improve customer service and outflank its competitors. Leadership told its IT staff to set aside routine activities for two weeks and compete in an internal hackathon instead. The goal: identify a business problem and find a solution.

By the end of the two weeks, they were blown away by the ideas that surfaced. In particular, one team implemented a tracking app that showed customers the real-time location of delivery trucks, so customers could estimate when a new shipment would arrive and plan their day accordingly.

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Richard Lynn, VP Sales & Marketing, Tech Hero

Our Mission: To build a community of successful minded entrepreneurs that inspires excellence, encourages collaboration and expands the capacity of all members to achieve great things.



The app significantly boosted customer satisfaction and reduced calls to the company's help desk by 75 percent. Just as important, the exercise showed how big the payoff can be when skilled IT workers devote more time to helping their company succeed rather than fighting infrastructure fires or performing routine activities like software patching.

## Freeing Up Time and Saving Money

What's the secret to enabling IT to work more strategically? The answer is managed IT services, a cost-effective way to extend SMB IT talent and free-up skilled resources to accomplish business goals.

Managed services can deliver a wide variety of capabilities, ranging from computing, storage and networking resources to mobility management, cybersecurity, email and unified communications, including telephony services. The common thread is that, along with the capabilities themselves, the best service providers also offer ongoing management and maintenance of the underlying infrastructure, service guarantees and end-user support.

According to the MSPAlliance, North American companies spend \$154 billion on managed services, with SMBs being among the top customers. This dispels the notion that managed services are too expensive or too complicated for SMBs to consider.

Through years of firsthand experience, I've seen that the opposite is true for startups and established small businesses alike. These companies typically see four key benefits: improved operational performance, reduced operational risk, cost avoidance and accelerated innovation.

## The Keys to Success

There's a lot to like about managed IT services, but how can SMB leaders be sure a particular service provider is right for their company? To find the best match, consider these five important criteria:

- 1. Choose a technology partner who focuses primarily on the business.** Each company is unique, and so are its business challenges and opportunities. Potential providers must understand each SMB's goals rather than offer a cookie-cutter service plan for all clients.
- 2. Look for a partner that values long-term relationships.** A trusted adviser will help create an ongoing technology roadmap tuned to keeping a client focused on staying successful and competitive as market conditions change.
- 3. Assess the provider's breadth of offerings.** A comprehensive service portfolio means SMBs can fulfill their needs from a single provider rather than having to manage multiple and potentially conflicting vendors.
- 4. Address existing technology pain points.** Discuss in detail particularly important problems, such as areas where outages have occurred in the past or security vulnerabilities. Then get potential partners to deliver a detailed solution tailored to these specific issues.
- 5. Insist on close communications.** Determine how often the provider will present formal reviews and data to show the effectiveness of the engagement. This should happen each quarter at a minimum; informal meetings with account managers should take place more frequently.

## Making the Most of IT Talent

IT professionals have a passion for technology, which often goes to waste

The logo features the word "vmware" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol, positioned above the word "PARTNER" in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. Both are set against a dark background.The text "PROFESSIONAL SOLUTION PROVIDER" is written in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a light-colored rectangular box.

## Free Consultation to review your VMware Licensing!

Contact your Tech Hero sales representative to schedule a FREE review of your VMware licensing.

Find out ways to save money, ways to receive free upgrades, and a better understanding on the VMware license models.



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(option 2)**

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when they must spend time patching servers and performing other routine duties. It doesn't have to be this way.

That's why I get so excited when I show SMB leaders how managed services extend their IT operations and free their people to do what they do best – make the business more successful.

## Client Spotlight



As the name Priority Credit Union suggests, we make satisfying our members a priority. Our tagline, "For Those Who Deliver," gives a nod of recognition to our postal members and heritage but also, as a credit union that is open to the whole community, to our entire family of hard-working people who in their own way "deliver" every day by supporting their families and their community.

Would you like your company highlighted here in our "Client Spotlight"? Then give us a call today at:  
**1-800-900-8324 x8840.**



## **\$10 Million Banco De Chile Heist Caused by Misdirection Attack**

It's not uncommon for cyberattacks to occur in waves. One such phase could be, for instance, an infection or other assault on a network. This, in turn, could be utilized as a misdirection for the incident response teams for the actual intended target to come under fire in a second attack phase. It is this type of attack method that the Banco de Chile faced starting in the month of May, culminating in a major heist of \$10 million.

As was reported in the Chilean media outlet La Tercera Pulso, the misdirection first occurred via a late-May attack against roughly 9,000 workstations and 500 servers. The attack itself was carried out by, according to the Banco de Chile's general manager Eduardo Ebensperger, a zero-day virus called SWAPQ. While the IT security teams were dealing with the destructive nature of SWAPQ, Ebensperger states that there were multiple fraudulent transactions completed on the bank's SWIFT network. The transactions were able to steal \$10 million and send the heist cash to an account based in Hong Kong.

Some analysts are considering the possibility that the Lazarus Group was behind this heist, but honestly, it's just conjecture. The shockwaves being felt throughout the government and banking industry in Chile are strong. Eduardo Ebersperger stated that this is the largest cyberattack against a bank in the country of Chile, and this shouldn't be surprising, as the country's cybersecurity standards haven't been updated since 1993.

According to a report by welivesecurity, the nation's government is now going into hyperdrive to bring cybersecurity standards up to code. As their report states:

*"Earlier this week, the Operational Continuity Working Group led by the Ministry of Finance met to discuss the details of the cyberattack in order to agree on future preventative measures. The outcome of these meetings called for the modernization of protocols and tools that would help to prevent these kinds of incidents, with two new lines of defensive measures announced... identifying aspects to be improved in order to be aligned with international standards... a thorough review of the regulatory framework regarding cybersecurity in order to implement the necessary changes so the country has the highest possible cybersecurity standards."*

To go so many years without an updated cybersecurity policy was bound to cause disaster for the Chilean government and its institutions. Unfortunately, it was too late to learn the lesson, but perhaps going forward such mistakes will be avoided.





## **Benefits of Cloud Computing for YOUR Business**

Cloud computing is responsible for changing IT practices. Apart from freeing organizations from running applications on a local server or a computer in the office, it has also encouraged more effective workload management. No wonder the cloud computing market will be worth \$162 billion by 2020. Businesses can leverage several advantages of the technology and reap the cloud computing benefits listed below:

### **1. Decrease Operational Expenses**

Businesses switching to the cloud can do away with capital intensive purchases and also don't have to invest resources in maintaining equipment.

As a result, their costs decrease drastically. There are no unnecessary utility expenses, no hardware costs, and no facilities charges when growing your business. Also, you don't require a big IT team to take care of your cloud datacenter operations as the cloud provider staff will do this on your behalf.



You can also eliminate downtime, because cloud computing comes with 24/7 support. Plus, your security receives a boost thanks to fewer IT staff, reduced maintenance, minimal strain on company systems, and the lack of on-site servers. The flexibility of the cloud platform contributes greatly to cost savings.

## **2. Better Support for New Apps**

Before cloud computing took the business world by storm, new applications took a while to run smoothly. But now cloud-based applications are executed successfully within a short period of time.

In fact, the majority of cloud-based apps are usable right after signup. As a result, businesses receive numerous benefits. For example, businesses that migrate to the cloud can use machine learning and artificial intelligence applications a few hours after signing up.

## **3. Greater Competence**

Moving to a cloud-based platform enables businesses to access the highest quality enterprise systems. This provides an edge over the competition and allows startups and small businesses to go toe-to-toe with larger firms, thereby disrupting the market.

And these cloud computing benefits are not limited to giant enterprises. Thanks to the easy integration of cloud-based business solutions, small businesses also have the opportunity to choose and integrate with various cloud-based providers. Thus, it is now possible for small businesses to manage their back office demands more efficiently at a reduced price.

#### **4. Improved Accessibility**

Cloud computing enables businesses to access important information from the cloud instead of a specific device or service. So, one of the best cloud computing benefits is that you can access the data anytime, anywhere, from any device.

It does not matter whether you are a personal user who wants to check your email, or a remote worker seeking to share information with other staff – you can do all this with the increased accessibility offered by cloud computing.

#### **5. Increased Flexibility**

Employees enjoy greater flexibility through cloud computing. Because just about everything is now Internet-based, employees can access files both inside and outside the workplace, meaning they can work in the office or remotely. This allows companies to provide flexible working conditions to employees and minimize the necessary office space. This may also include allowing staff to work from home and using hot-desking systems at the workplace, which will trim costs even more.

Laptops, smartphones, and other web-enabled gadgets allow the staff to collaborate with others in real-time by using online conferencing and sharing synchronized files. In fact, several businesses now have a BYOD policy supported by the local access authentication protocol for security.

#### **6. Experience Easier Management**

Cloud computing offers simple IT management and management support to



businesses. Also, once a company moves to the cloud, the IT infrastructure gets automatically updated without any additional expenditures. Therefore, the service provider only needs basic maintenance to keep everything in order. This type of service level agreement also guarantees timely delivery as well as upkeep of IT infrastructure.

## **7. Be More Environmentally Aware**

When you move to the cloud platform, you no longer require a datacenter. This allows you to decrease your carbon footprint considerably. No longer will you have to power the servers or keep them cool. Plus, you can reclaim office space previously needed to house your datacenter.

There are several other environmental benefits connected to cloud computing other than offloading your carbon footprint to the provider, such as enabling you to use energy more efficiently, thus reducing the overall impact on the environment.

## **8. Remote Working Capabilities**

For employers and employees, cloud computing is the golden opportunity

to start working from anywhere. Aside from working remotely from their homes or other sites (Starbucks, PF Chang's, whatever), the staff can also share information with employers without exchanging millions of emails that become difficult to manage over time.

## **9. Instantly scalable cloud computing resources**

Having your own datacenter involves increasing your computing resources significantly. You must invest in new servers, install, and configure them.

This is an expensive process. If you require the capacity to fulfill a short-term need, you face two issues – first, you might be investing in something that you won't need most of the time. Second, in case of sudden demand, you might fail to get the server up and running within the stipulated time.

Cloud computing comes to the rescue with excellent scalability. If you require additional resources thanks to a sudden spike in site traffic, you can add to your computing capacity at once. If that peak lasts only a day or two, you have the option of scaling down along with the demand level.

Moreover, a pay-as-you-go charge on cloud computing means you spend money only for the extra resources. So, you can do without permanent upgrades like hiring a new server or a larger package. This way, the cloud offers cost-efficient resourcing and greater agility.

## **10. Extra Availability**

More businesses rely on apps to run essential operations. In this scenario, downtime can lead to catastrophic outcomes. A company may come to a total standstill and getting back online may prove difficult. In the worst-case scenarios, the process can take a long time and cause extreme losses for any business (even a public agency). But cloud computing eliminates the chance of server failure leading which correlates with downtime and lost money.

A cloud environment provides consistent and predictable performance with 100 percent uptime since clients are hosted on virtual machines.

## 2018's Cutting Edge Network Security Solution:



### Cisco Umbrella

#### Cloud Delivered Enterprise Security

As the industry's first Secure Internet Gateway in the cloud, Cisco Umbrella provides the first line of defense against threats on the internet.

As a secure internet gateway, Cisco Umbrella helps you tackle the challenges of mobility, SaaS, and branch transformation by offering a single platform that secures access to and use of the cloud, SaaS applications, branch offices, and endpoints.

It's your first line of defense against threats -- anytime and anywhere your users access the internet, traffic goes through Umbrella first. By delivering security from the cloud, not only do you save money, but it also provides more effective security. Here's how:

##### 1. DNS & IP layer enforcement

Umbrella uses DNS to stop threats over all ports and protocols -- even direct-to-IP connections. Stop malware before it reaches your endpoints or network.

##### 2. Intelligent proxy

Instead of proxying all web traffic, Umbrella routes requests to risky domains for deeper URL and file inspection.

##### 3. Command & control callback blocking

Even if devices become infected in other ways, Umbrella prevents connections to attacker's servers. Stop data exfiltration and execution of ransomware encryption.

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for your free trial!**

**(800) 900-8324 x2**

## Take advantage of these cloud computing benefits.

Businesses can count on numerous cloud computing benefits, from cost-effectiveness to reliability, flexibility, agility, and scalability. All you need to do is choose the right cloud service provider, and you are good to go to lead your business to success.

