



Managed Network Services: Outsourcing Networking

The Managed Network Services Industry in the U.S alone is expected to grow by about 22.4%, according to *Gartner Research*. Gartner also predicts that Managed Network Services managed to reduce business costs associated with setting-up, running and maintaining computer networks by about 15-25%.

With costs rapidly soaring northwards, it's imperative that companies will look to cut costs as prudently and as much as possible. Network resources happen to be one of the most demanding conduits for expenses and this is perhaps one of the first places where companies would look to save costs. Companies are looking to achieve scale, speed, reliability but supreme agility over their networks but would love to keep their costs down. The complexity of networking demands that the apparent needs for “out-tasking” or “out-sourcing” are met adequately and competently.

Network Challenges: Over-Worked Networks and Worried Companies

Networks consume tremendous amounts of staffing, competence and resources. Add an unending plethora of options and the need to customize which brings in even more demands on the IT administration staff of any company. Ever evolving technologies, increasing demands for constant vigil and monitoring for security, varying skill sets for technical staff place considerable strain on company resources.

Growing businesses also have to contend with burgeoning demand for space, data security and secure communications, protected transactions while keeping their overheads low. SMB's are often required to react quickly and efficiently to market demands, change with regards to the requirements of customers and provide excellent 24/7 all-time customer service which places a huge strain on organizations.

Demystifying Managed Services

Managed network services entails letting third-party service providers (who are generally network experts) handle the network assets, infrastructure, design and maintenance, security, e.t.c. The usual networking functions that are typically outsourced are Managed VPN services, Internet and web-hosting, managed security and much more. Think of it simply as “outsourcing” most of the functions with regards to networking to competent vendors like *Cisco Managed Services*, for example, to save on time, have a quicker and better network management capability and decrease the strain on company resources, apart from other obvious reasons.

Managed Network Services: Plain Business Benefits

Service based businesses don't have it easy. Customers, industry analysts, creditors and investors and all other stakeholders of a company demand better performance all the time. An organization's company network hence takes the brunt of this demand and is expected to deliver beyond expectations: "Out-tasking" a company's networking management plays a crucial role in allowing it to streamline its functions and meet the above mentioned stringent and ever growing demands.

The advantages of managed network services are glaring indeed, the most important ones being: enhanced speed and agility in responding to market demands; no requirement of constant deployment of IT staff and other resources for upkeep and maintenance of network systems; obviate the need to constantly upgrade hardware or software on a recurring basis; provide better security and allow for mission-critical transactions and sessions; provide for a world-class network infrastructure without breaking the bank.

Technical Benefits of Managed Network Services

Meta Group, a research organization, has found that an hour of system downtimes can bleed the company's exchequer by a whopping \$330,000 minimum and can mount up to US \$ 2.8 Million. Managed Network Services can help mitigate this loss by providing a predictable technology support and a robust platform managed elsewhere.

Further, here are some other technical benefits that come forth immediately: about 99.99% uptime is maintained; costs are dramatically reduced; less hardware and software to worry about; quality and technical considerations are "out-tasked" and QoS (Quality of Standards) are achieved as a result of SLA (Service Level Agreements); improves operational efficiency.

Managed Services have been proven to provide better quality of data management and transfer; enhanced voice quality and simplified call routing -- in the case of a computer supported voice network and lastly, Managed Network services also provide for great scalability; customizability; the flexibility to go with demand and allow for cost-effective convergence options.

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