



The Benefits of Managed Services for Mid-sized Enterprises

An Enablis whitepaper

Mid-sized enterprises are increasingly being pressured to move IT departments from being a functional cost centre to a value centre. This whitepaper discusses how engaging a managed service provider (MSP) can play a critical role in achieving this business change.

An introduction to Managed Service Providers

Evidence shows that strategic technology implementations derive not only positive return on investment for many companies, but also business and cultural benefits such as employee engagement, productivity and efficiency. However, many mid-sized organisations have neither the resource nor the time to strategically plan and implement such projects. Organisations in this position should consider partnering with a MSP who can help them manage and get the most out of their technology estate.

A logical starting point for many mid-sized enterprises is to offload the management of their data and communications network. Typically, mid-sized enterprises have lean IT teams, who spend a proportionally large amount of time focused on highly reactive work such as trouble-shooting issues related to connectivity and communications hardware. Thus, many organisations are outsourcing the management of their network services to MSPs, freeing up their own resources to focus on more strategic projects that deliver competitive business advantage.

"Moving to a managed service with Enablis means I can trust them to keep my IT communications up to date and secure while my team focus on driving efficiency across our sites, out in the field and on the factory floor."

Glenn Casarotto, IT Manager, Actron Air



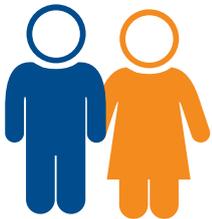
Key Business Challenges

There are four key areas where a MSP can help ease the burden.



1. Pressure on IT to drive greater value

There is increasing expectation from board and C-level executives to evolve IT departments from being a functional cost centre to a value centre. IT managers are tasked to demonstrate a strategy for applications and technology to drive business advantage, and to implement such plans within time and budget constraints.



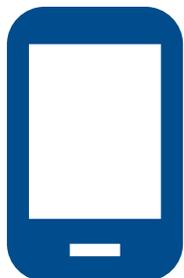
2. Lean IT teams and stretched resources

With lean IT teams focused on trouble-shooting day-to-day operational issues, IT departments in mid-sized enterprises struggle to find the time to design and implement projects that drive business value. In addition, IT managers themselves often don't have the time to sift through the overwhelming volume of information and options to find the right solution that supports the business' unique requirements.



3. Increasing popularity of cloud services

IT budgets are continuously being tightened as capital expenditure is reduced. This is prompting organisations to move applications to the cloud. What and how much to move to the cloud is a decision that is unique to each organisation. A thorough review of the existing IT estate, coupled with an understanding of business strategy and growth, is required to implement a solution that is the best fit for the organisation.



4. Proliferation of BYOD and social media heightens security issues

The explosion of social media and proliferation of BYOD has seen security threats increase exponentially. Even large enterprises such as Sony Playstation and RSA - who presumably have much larger security teams and budgets - have had their networks breached. Businesses risk productivity and financial losses when their network is compromised, hence the challenge becomes not only how to manage, but how to prevent, these potential threats.

The Good News

The good news is that a well-qualified MSP can easily address all of these business challenges. Partnering with a MSP is a strategic first step on the technology journey to evolve a functional cost centre into a value centre. It's imperative during the selection process that organisations seek out a business partner that can understand and share your business values and objectives.

Your provider should work closely with you to deliver a strategic roadmap and modular services that address these key challenges, including:

- Relieving your team of day-to-day IT tasks so they can focus on business priorities.
- Reviewing your technology estate and recommending solutions that will help your organisation realise its strategic goals.
- Recommending cloud solutions that are bespoke to your business and managing the move and applications in the cloud.
- Assessing, recommending and managing security solutions that protect your business.
- Driving efficiency and business value for your organisation.

"Enablis wanted to build the relationship, they wanted to understand who was there and what our issues were. That impressed me from the outset."

Nick Prior, IT Manager, St Vincent de Paul's



"Helping us achieve such a significant competitive advantage and level of service proved that Enablis did understand our business. It was an understanding that provided immediate benefits."

Brian Kable, IT Manager, Sedgwick

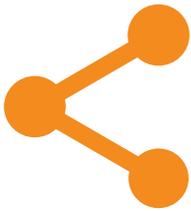
Strategic Areas to Consider

While it makes sense to outsource certain services to a MSP, what to outsource is a strategic decision unique to each business. Some key considerations when reviewing services that can be moved to a managed service provider include:



1. Outsource low-value, resource-hungry IT activities

Identify resource-hungry IT activities within your business that derive little business value. WAN management, for example, has become a commoditised activity that can easily be outsourced to a MSP who are experts in this field. Selecting a partner who can take on the daily task of managing your network infrastructure will free your resources up to focus on projects that drive business advantage.



2. Prioritise your data network

Your data network is the foundation on which your business is built, and its quality and performance is critical to business success. It's important that your network has 1:1 contention (that is, un-contended) and that it is Quality of Service (QoS) enabled to allow voice and video applications to run reliably without extra charges. When outsourcing WAN management, ensure your partner understands your business values and objectives and prioritises the performance of your network.



3. Move voice applications onto your data infrastructure

There are significant savings to be realised by moving traditional voice services to a centralised SIP model. Replacing old PABX infrastructure with managed hosted voice services delivering Unified Communications (UC) will provide significant operational efficiencies for the business. These savings will offset the managed service costs and still return a significant net saving for the business.



4. Ensure you have a suitable security solution in place

While access to BYOD and social media is proving to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity, it also opens businesses up to security threats. Make sure any prospective provider has suitable managed security solutions to allow your business to embrace enterprise mobility – and its intangible benefits – without putting your business at risk.

Additional Managed Services

Working with a trusted partner yields more benefits than simply having your data network looked after. Here are some examples of additional services that deliver operational efficiencies and significant cost savings for distributed organisations:

Deploying SIP voice services

Removing the need for costly voice line rentals, SIP telephony has proven additional savings of approximately 20% for many organisations by removing the complexity caused by flag falls, peak times and geography.

Deploying a hosted UC platform across the business

Streamline operations and reduce cost

UCaaS accesses applications in the cloud, enabling flexibility and scalability at the click of a button. The reduction in hardware, maintenance and management costs will derive great savings for companies – however the real savings are realised by the ability to scale, paying only for licences used.

Enable accessibility

With global accessibility available through any Internet connection, UCaaS supports real-time collaboration for your company, driving productivity and efficiency.

No physical infrastructure and hardware investments

UCaaS future-proofs the growth of your business, allowing you to add users and allocate licences with the click of a button. Maintenance and management of hardware becomes a thing of the past, helping streamline resources and reduce operational cost.

Centralising back-up and storage of business data

Downtime directly impact on business productivity and financial outcome. Having your business data securely backed up with a robust disaster recovery plan in place ensures your business will always continue to operate with minimal impact to productivity and your customers' experience.

What to look for in a managed service partner

Taking on these projects internally can be a daunting task for many mid-sized organisations with limited IT resources. It takes time and resources to evaluate your existing technology estate, design a bespoke solution, and implement the project. Selecting the right partner is critical to ensure the solution you end up with is the right fit for your business.

Look for a MSP who:

- has had success implementing projects for businesses similar to yours.
- offers proven technology roadmaps that are backed by stringent service level guarantees.
- has robust critical success criteria to ensure projects are delivered on-time, on-budget, and continuously meet and exceed expectations.

Partnering with the right MSP can both alleviate business burden and help deliver on your business strategies, establishing your IT department as a value centre for your business.



THE ENABLIS DIFFERENCE

Enablis is a specialist communications managed service provider. We focus on easing the burden of your communications estate by owning the telco relationships and contracts so you only have one touchpoint and one set of SLAs.

Traditionally, a self-managed communications model meant organisations had to align their business requirements to various Telcos with different capabilities. This resulted in multiple contracts and an increased burden for internal IT teams to own and manage the Telco relationships. The emergence of Systems Integrators (SI) saw the outsource of business analysis – with SIs recommending various Telco capabilities that an organisation should engage with. However, the management of the Telco relationship remains with the organisation.

Here at Enablis, we offer a wholistic managed communications service. We're proud to have in-depth relationships with the key telco providers in Australia. We can align your requirements with telco capabilities, negotiate contracts and manage the telco relationship on your behalf. This means you need only work with us – one contact, one contract, one set of SLAs.

Get in touch with us and see how we can help remove the burden of operating your IT environment so all that's left are the benefits.

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