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# MANAGED IT SERVICES 101

How to Choose and Get the Most from  
Your Provider

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# INTRODUCTION



In 2025, outsourcing IT through Managed Services is no longer just a cost-cutting move — it's a strategic enabler of growth, security, and innovation. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), healthcare providers, startups, and even government contractors are increasingly leaning on Managed Service Providers (MSPs) to streamline operations, stay secure, and focus on their core business.

But not all MSPs are created equal — and not all businesses know how to get the most out of these partnerships.

This guide is your comprehensive introduction to Managed IT Services: how they work, how to choose the right provider, and how to ensure you extract maximum value from the relationship.

# WHAT ARE MANAGED IT SERVICES?

## Definition

Managed IT Services involve outsourcing the responsibility for maintaining, monitoring, and securing your IT infrastructure to an external provider — often under a monthly or annual contract.

## Common Services Include:

- 24/7 helpdesk support
- Network monitoring and management
- Patch management and updates
- Data backups and disaster recovery
- Endpoint security and antivirus
- Cloud infrastructure support (e.g., Microsoft 365, Azure, AWS)
- IT policy enforcement and compliance assistance
- IT procurement and vendor management

**Pro Insight: A true MSP becomes your technology partner, not just a support line.**



# WHY SMES ARE EMBRACING *MSP IN 2025*

## Key Benefits:

- ✓ Cost Predictability – Flat monthly fees mean fewer budget surprises
- ✓ Proactive Support – Issues are resolved before they escalate
- ✓ Scalability – Quickly add or remove services as your business grows
- ✓ Access to Experts – Get enterprise-grade support without enterprise costs
- ✓ Cybersecurity Readiness – MSPs offer built-in tools and protocols
- ✓ Focus on Core Business – Free your team from routine IT distractions

## Common Challenges MSPs Solve:

- Aging infrastructure
- IT staff turnover
- Compliance burdens
- Slow issue resolution
- Siloed systems with poor integration



# TYPES OF MANAGED SERVICES MODELS

**UNDERSTANDING THESE MODELS WILL HELP YOU  
CHOOSE THE RIGHT FIT:**

Model	Description	Ideal For
<b>Break-Fix (Reactive)</b>	Pay-as-you-go support	Very small businesses with minimal IT
<b>Basic Monitoring &amp; Maintenance</b>	MSP monitors uptime, updates, antivirus	Startups or low-risk environments
<b>Fully Managed IT</b>	MSP handles all IT operations	Growing SMEs, multi-site businesses
<b>Co-Managed IT</b>	MSP supplements in-house IT	Mid-sized businesses with internal IT teams
<b>Specialist Support</b>	MSP focuses on niche (e.g. cybersecurity, cloud)	Regulated industries, healthcare, finance

**TIP: FULLY MANAGED SERVICES ARE THE MOST  
SCALABLE AND STRATEGIC LONG-TERM SOLUTION.**



# HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT *PARTNER*

## 1. Clarify Your Needs First

- Do you need helpdesk support, or end-to-end IT management?
- Are there compliance standards (e.g., ISO, HIPAA, NDIS) to meet?
- How fast do you need response or resolution times?

## 2. Evaluate Their Offerings

- Do they offer 24/7 monitoring?
- Are security services bundled?
- Can they support your existing cloud stack?
- Do they provide regular reporting?

## 3. Check for Certifications & Expertise

- Look for MSPs with certified staff: Microsoft, Cisco, AWS, CISM, CompTIA
- Ask if they follow ITIL or NIST frameworks
- Confirm experience in your industry

## 4. Understand Their SLA (Service Level Agreement)

- Response time vs. resolution time
- Uptime guarantees
- Penalties for non-compliance

## 5. Ask for References & Case Studies

- Have they worked with companies of your size?
- What's their average client retention?

## 6. Review Their Onboarding Process

- A strong MSP will have a structured onboarding plan with clear timelines and responsibilities.



# KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING MSP *DISCOVERY*

- ✓ How will you help us align IT with business goals?
- ✓ What does your escalation process look like?
- ✓ How do you secure client environments?
- ✓ How do you handle software patching and updates?
- ✓ Can you scale with us as we grow?
- ✓ What happens if we want to exit the contract?

## RED FLAGS TO *AVOID*

- ⊗ Vague or missing SLAs
- ⊗ Overreliance on break-fix billing
- ⊗ No cybersecurity posture or only selling "antivirus"
- ⊗ Poor documentation or transparency
- ⊗ No disaster recovery testing
- ⊗ Lack of response during non-business hours



# GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR MSP *RELATIONSHIP*

## 1. Establish Clear Expectations

Use an SLA that includes:

- Ticket response and resolution targets
- Security incident response
- Reporting frequency
- Scheduled maintenance windows

## 2. Schedule Regular Business Reviews (QBRs)

Discuss:

- Performance against KPIs
- Upcoming IT projects
- Recommendations for cost savings or improvements
- Training opportunities for staff

## 3. Create Transparent Communication Channels

Use ticketing portals, dedicated account managers, and monthly reporting dashboards.

## 4. Be a Partner, Not Just a Customer

Share your business roadmap — the more your MSP understands your goals, the better their support.



# BUDGETING FOR MANAGED IT SERVICES

## AVERAGE MONTHLY COSTS (AUD, 2025 ESTIMATES)

Service Level	Cost/User/Month	Inclusions
Basic	\$80 – \$120	Helpdesk, patching, antivirus
Advanced	\$150 – \$250	24/7 monitoring, cloud, backups, cybersecurity
Custom Co-Managed	Varies	Mix of internal/external support, projects

### Consider ROI:

- Downtime reduction
- Cyberattack prevention
- Staff time saved
- Cost of hiring equivalent internal talent

### Your First 90 Days With a New MSP

 Day 0–15: Kickoff Meeting, Access Handover, Documentation Review

 Day 16–30: Full IT Assessment, Risk Report, Patch Updates

 Day 31–60: SLA Testing, Security Baseline Configuration, Backup Validation

 Day 61–90: Reporting, Staff Onboarding, First QBR Planning

**Pro Tip: Review outcomes monthly and escalate early if expectations aren't being met.**

*A great MSP is more than a helpdesk — they are your technology success partner. When chosen wisely and managed strategically, they help your business become more secure, more agile, and more efficient — without the stress of managing IT internally.*

*At Technovate IT Solutions, we bring a people-first approach to managed services — combining enterprise-grade tools, local expertise, and a passion for seeing your business thrive.*



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