IT Provider Pros & Cons: What's the right support for you?

When it comes to your tech operations, today's organizations can choose from an internal IT department, a Managed Service Provider (MSP), or a Professional Technology Organization (PTO).

The right IT partner will sync technology plans to overall strategy, drive growth and keep systems running smoothly. To take advantage of these opportunities you need to know which level of IT support is right for you.

1 Internal IT

Any organization with in-house technology employees has "internal IT." Large entities can afford to fully staff a department, but smaller organizations may only have a support desk or a team member with specialized, industry-specific experience.

Unless you can hire a CTO or CIO, you will need to rely on an external partner for strategic support. At all levels, internal IT staffers are usually spread thin and spend more of their time fighting fires than working on projects that support long-term goals.

Pros & Cons

- **Pro:** On-site support when you need it (unless sick/vacation)

- **Con:** Limited career path can cause high turnover in competitive markets

- **Con:** Limited time and focus on IT causes organizations to become reactive/fall behind

- **Con:** Lack of standards creates high-maintenance systems

- **Con:** Lack of oversight creates accountability problems within organizations

2 Managed Service Providers (MSP)

There are different ways to define MSPs, based on which services they offer. In general, MSPs come into an organization to resolve issues, set up new technology and offer guidance. Depending on your contract, you may have access to tools and software the MSP uses, which can be a blessing and a curse. They'll be able to pass savings on to you, but you'll be upsold new technology every time an update is released. Some MSPs will also charge for each support desk call you make or have fees for on-site visits.

Pros & Cons

- **Pro:** IT support when you need it without devoting in-house resources

- **Con:** Unpredictable pricing

- **Con:** Leadership team burdened with technology decisions

3   Professional Technology Organization (PTO)

A PTO functions as an external technology partner. Strategy, support, tools, security, compliance and any other IT services are covered through a comprehensive package. This includes hardware and software, which the PTO purchases and manages on your behalf as part of the monthly agreement. The PTO includes replacements, repairs and upgrades.

You'll have fewer decisions to make and your technology will be investing in you. When a system is improved, the PTO will quickly and seamlessly implement the new hardware or software and train your staff how to use it. At organizations without a PTO, a member of the leadership team will first need to research and invest in the innovative product before it can be put into use.

It's possible to partner with a PTO while retaining your in-house IT staff, too. This is how we work with several clients. Their internal teams now spend less time managing technology and more time assisting coworkers to better utilize the technology their organization relies on, like CRM software and accounting applications.

Pros & Cons

- **Pro:** Flat rate for support, hardware and software
- **Pro:** Industry experts applying the most up-to-date technology best practices to your operations.
- **Pro:** Additional features are added regularly without additional cost to you
- **Con:** Stakeholders must be willing to delegate authority to have a productive working relationship

Making a Decision: How to Find the Right IT Support

Most people are compelled to make a change after experiencing issues, like downtime or a cyber attack, that leaves them scrambling for a new way of doing things. But we designed PTOs to be proactive to give organizations a competitive advantage and avoid these issues.

It's also why we have standard processes that bring a higher level of service to our clients. When we discover timesaving software or a better approach to managing systems for one client, we implement it across all customers, quickly improving everyone's workflow before there are any issues.

Instead of waiting until an event occurs, take the time to honestly assess your technology situation and ask if you need to make a change. Evaluate how much time you spend each month thinking about or monitoring technology and what you could be doing with that time.

Expert IT Guidance

Have questions about your options? Contact Net-Tech today online or call (425) 452-8324 and we can schedule a time to talk about your IT needs.

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