A Common-Sense Approach to Outsourcing Your IT Help Desk

Outsourcing doesn't have to mean "off shore". Outsourcing to a domestic Managed It Service Provider, even in your own home town, has a lot of advantages.

If you are new to outsourcing, making your first venture your IT help desk may be the easiest way to start. No one would ever question the importance of maintaining your employees' abilities to properly and effectively do their jobs, but as your company has grown, you have undoubtedly seen challenges based upon ever increasing numbers of internal tickets, or in its complexity as technology itself expands. The problem is that, unless you are a major fairly large-scale company, it is hard for your small in-house IT team to keep up with peaks and valleys of demand, as well as the increased complexity mentioned above.

Let's start by looking at some current trends in outsourcing.

Trend #1: On-shore vs. offshore, sometimes referred to as "nearshore" vs. "farshore". We have all heard anecdotal reports of the growth of offshore outsourcing in India and other remote locations, but the reality is that Indian outsourcing is on the decline as many businesses have discovered that onshore outsourcing works better for them. This includes factors such as time zone similarity, language similarity, and sometimes an understanding of local issues and expectations.

Onshore outsourcing can improve communications leading to higher levels of operating efficiency and, in some case, an increase in the speed of time-to-market for new services and products.

Trend #2: Outsourcing vs. In-House. Small to mid-sized businesses face serious challenges when trying to accomplish everything in-house, particularly when it comes to services that don't match their own core business functions. This includes data-processing and data storage, including the switch from in-house to cloud-based storage that allows the access of data globally by your employees on the move.

This is also true of companies that make the attempt to run their own IT help desks, especially when confronted with extreme labor shortages in the IT field. As an example, here in the Atlanta Metro area, IT unemployment is currently hovering near zero, leading us to the next trend.

Trend #3: IT Skill Shortage. The reality is that any business can build its own internal IT support team, if you are willing to spend enough and employ sufficient backup personnel so you are covered when you need to deal with IT staff resignations. 24 x 7 x 365 coverage can also be problematic. Your company may function as a basic 9 to 5 business, with everything shutting down after hours, but this is becoming more and more unlikely in today's competitive business environment. But even if your business does close for the night and for weekends, who is and how are they updating business applications, cyber security software, equipment of all types? Any of this work performed during "normal business hours" is interruptive and

can be costly. Your outsourced Managed IT Support provider should have that 24 x 7 x 365 team that can not only handle these situations when they cause the least disturbance, they will also be there for an employee who happens to want/need to access company files in the middle of the night while at home, traveling, visiting clients many time zones away, or even on vacation.

This is compounded by the problem that once you train someone in a new or expanded technology, that person becomes ever more valuable on the job market and you face an even greater risk of therefore losing that person. Outsource providers do, of course, face the same problem, though to a lesser degree, but this is significantly mitigated by the size of the team. If, for example, you have an in-house IT team of two and one of them resigns, you have lost 50% of your capacity. The managed IT support provider with a team of 20 that loses one, only loses 5% of its capacity. The outsource managed IT service provider is also in a much better position to properly train incoming staff members and provide ongoing training.

Your Managed IT Support company, while being an outsource provider for your company, may itself, outsource overnight and weekend support services offshore where a remote network operations center (NOC) can do all the behind the scenes managing, monitoring and maintaining of your IT network to ensure the highest levels of availability, security and mobility for your firm. Because these people are working during their daytime hours, they are more alert and work for lesser pay than those who work overnight, which translates to savings for your company.

Trend #4: Demand for Outsourcing Increasing. As stated above, as newer technologies are being developed, and required skill sets increase, companies are finding that it is becoming more and more challenging to keep their in-house teams up-to-speed on how to manage these technologies. This is resulting in a rapid growth in onshore outsourcing.

The Approach That Works For You

This can be a bit intimidating but done right, the benefit can be enormous. By choosing the right IT support vendor, you will have the advantage of working with an entire team of well-trained and highly experienced engineers who can guarantee the continuity of your IT services, which today is an important part of your overall business continuity, while allowing your people to focus on your core business without the distraction of dealing with seemingly never-ending IT problems.

Your provider's executive team can also act as IT advisors guiding you to make the right decisions about IT hardware and software. Because they work with many businesses, which, although very different from your own, deal with very similar problems and decisions, their experience is ever-growing and becoming ever-more valuable to their clients. Outsourcing your IT help desk should end up being safe, simple and secure, and when it is, you will know that you have made the right choice.

So, let's look at some reasons why businesses should be outsourcing:

Access to the skills and specialties you need, at an affordable cost: Can your business do everything internally? Sure…but at what cos? Small to mid-sized businesses cannot do everything themselves without experiencing some negative consequences. Training, retraining, uptraining, call it what you want, it's expensive and restricted by the number of people who are trained. As stated above, when someone departs, the expense (and expertise downtime) starts all over again. But when you employ the services of the right outsourced managed IT support vendor, you can rely on the fact that the right people with the right expertise will be available when you need them.

Language Skills: We are not speaking about the use of different languages; we are speaking about the ability of a "techie" to communicate with your technologically challenged employees, and most companies have a fair amount of them, so they can quickly determine the issue at hand and deal with it.

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Your managed IT support provider should have a long-term record of working with small to mid-sized companies and consistently increasing the level of efficiency.

Business Efficiencies: Depending on the size of your business, you may still want to always keep an IT person working in-house. This person can effectively communicate between your employees and your outsourced provider. Your in-house person can determine those situations that need to be outsourced, and those that he/she can quickly handle on his/her own. When you do make the decision to outsource, your in-house person will effectively become the team leader and will work with the provider to guide the rest of the company through the process.

Objectives in Choosing an Outsourced Managed IT Support Vendor:

Taking a broad view, you want a help desk to deal with IT issues that your employees face so they can work as efficiently as possible, and get back to work when their IT problems are stopping them. Many minor problems can cost your company money, especially if these situations are impacting sales or customer support. Here are some specifics to consider:

1: Your managed IT support provider should have a long-term record of working with small to mid-sized companies and consistently increasing the level of efficiency. They should be able to implement solutions for a wide variety of problematic situations. It takes years for vendors like this to set up their own systems and acquire the full range of skill sets they will need to properly service your account, so take advantage of this expertise.

2: Your managed IT support vendor must be able to work with your team to accomplish the help desk migration. The process needs to be transparent to the point where you and your team are fully aware of everything that is going to happen and your vendor must be able to respond to both the needs of your employees and the requests of your in-house IT person or your executive in charge during this transition.

3: All this will happen painlessly if you establish clear responsibilities for all parties concerned and clear processes for primary and secondary transition support. If responsibilities are to be divided between your in-house team and outsource provider, clear channels of who is responsible for what must be established.

End Goals for an Effective Outsource Relationship

1: Reliable Support. While this may seem overly simplistic, we believe that it is important to state because your employees depend on reliable support. A help desk team that fails to do so is costing you money every minute that one of your employees is waiting for a solution to a problem, not to mention increasing levels of employee frustration. While your employee may not access the same help desk person every time he/she calls in, it is important that each employee has access to a single point of contact that can be reached if problems aren't resolved quickly. It is also important that 24/7 access be available in case people are working outside of "normal business hours."

2: Cross-Device Support. Your employees may be working on desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones. They must be able to access the help desk support they need regardless of the type of device on which they are working.

3: Professional Engineers with Professional Attitudes. All too often, techies can talk down or be condescending to those who are less technically adept than they are. This creates an attitude of resistance within your company – a resistance to calling for help when needed. Make sure your vendors' people relish the idea of helping people solve problems. Check with existing clients and, for those who publish satisfaction scores, make sure your potential vendor's scores are in the 90+% range.

You should be offered a strong Service Level Agreement that spells out the quality and availability of the service you are buying.

4: Language. If you are in Atlanta and your employees are most comfortable speaking in English, the people they speak with daily should also be speaking easy-to-understand English.

5: SLA. You should be offered a strong Service Level Agreement that spells out the quality and availability of the service you are buying. Now is the time to ask questions and understand not only the services for which you are contracting, but other services that are available and that you may need in the future.

A Quick Summary: Why You Should Outsource Your IT Help Desk, and Why DynaSis Should be Is the Right Choice for Your It Support

> An outsourced IT help desk provides your people with a single point of contact, backed up by a secondary point – your Technical Account Manager.

> DynaSis is located in metro Atlanta. We've been here since 1992 and have been serving small to mid-sized businesses the whole time. We understand the business community in Atlanta and we understand the needs of businesses of your size.

> Most businesses that switch to managed IT support are surprised to learn that their costs usually stay the same (often going down) for a much higher level of service.

> At DynaSis, we have a full team of highly trained expert engineers. It is near impossible for a small to mid-sized business to attain this level of support internally without breaking the bank.

> Once you have outsourced your IT support help desk, you can begin to look into other areas of support that might make technological as well as financial sense to outsource.

We invite you to give us a call today at 770-629-9615 so we can begin a discussion. No obligation, no pressure, just basic facts on the advantages of DynaSis and Managed Outsourced IT Help Desk Support.

DynaSis is Atlanta's leading provider of outsourcing solutions. Our managed IT services and tech support services are designed to take the strain out of looking after an IT infrastructure. Our managed services are specifically suited to the needs of the small to mid-size businesses. These services include management of servers, storage, backups, networks, databases, security, and data centers. We work with more than 200 business customers across a broad range of industries.

At DynaSis, we strive to be more than an IT partner; we become a business partner to each and every one of our clients. Our goal is to take the IT management load from our business partners' shoulders, giving your business the ability to use technology optimally to build a competitive advantage. Technology, managed well, will lead to increased efficiency and productivity, with almost zero downtime, and, most importantly, cost savings.

Call us now at 770-629-9615 to see why **DynaSis** is the right choice for your IT Support!