Proactive IT Support
Preventing Problems – Not Reactively Fixing Broken Systems

A guide to help you select a new Managed Service Provider, or IT support company, for your business

It's About Proactively Preventing Problems – Not Reactively Fixing Broken Systems

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We've written this new guide in human speak – not techno babble. And it answers the number one question our clients have asked us over the last few years:

"Why don't we see you and your staff as much as we used to?"

That's a great question. And one that we're proud to answer. Because it's not that we're spending less time with our support clients. Actually, we're spending more time than we've ever spent on each client and their computer systems.

But that time is being invested in proactive work, rather than reactive work.

Essentially, we're anticipating more problems and preventing them from happening, meaning we have to spend less time fixing broken systems.

This is a critical behaviour of a professional Managed Service Provider. And one we have worked very hard to develop over the last few years.

We have invested heavily in specialist Remote Monitoring and Management software. This tells our technical team every day when problems are likely to happen. And allows us to roll out fixes and make changes to computers and systems around the clock.

Put another way… the less our clients hear from us, the better this is. Because it means fewer interruptions and less downtime. Which means greater productivity for you and your staff.

When You're Looking For A New Managed Services Provider, Don't Be Guided Just By Fast Response Times To Problems

Real experts work quietly in the background; monitoring, maintaining and updating. If they're doing their job well, you shouldn't really have to see them at all.

Every second that your computer system is underperforming will cost you time and money. A survey conducted by Beaming found that in 2016 alone, downtime cost UK businesses in excess of £7 billion.

Over two thirds of British companies experienced disruptions that prevented them from accessing vital services.

The survey also revealed that 13% of businesses began haemorrhaging money from the very moment that downtime struck. That figure went up to 28% after an hour, and 46% after four hours.

When you look at figures like this, it's clear that your systems are much more than machines that help send messages to someone across the other side of the office. They're the beating hearts of businesses throughout the world, and the bottom line is that when they're not working properly those businesses die.

13%
haemorrhaged money
when downtime struck

28%
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after an hour
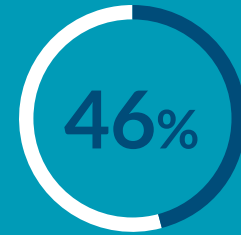
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In 2018, It's All About Being Proactive. Because A Reactive Approach Misses The Bigger Picture

Prevention, as we all know, is always better than cure. And this is especially true when it comes to IT. Traditionally, businesses would buy their own computers and just call someone in if they went wrong. This approach is known as reactive IT support, and it often used to be enough. Not anymore.

Today, computer technology has advanced so much that it enables us to perform complex business tasks at the touch of a button and communicate freely with people from all over the world. We can email from the comfort of our homes, conference call from the beach, sign multi-million pound contracts on the train.

All this increased productivity is great when things are running smoothly, but when they're not it's often enough to send your entire business crashing to a halt. Modern organisations simply can't afford to rely on a reactive approach to their IT.

IT support can be compared to car maintenance. You can choose to ignore the warning lights on the dash and not bother with servicing until the car inevitably breaks down. Or, more sensibly, you can take a proactive approach, making sure your vehicle is properly maintained and given the TLC it deserves.

The biggest problem with reactive IT support is that it only deals with specific issues; the smaller pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. Without visibility into the entire IT infrastructure of your business, it's only a matter of time before something else goes wrong. What's more, the IT people you send in will have to spend a lot of time troubleshooting and digging around before they can identify the root of the problem. If you're paying by the hour, that's a lot of wasted money.

Proactive IT support, on the other hand, is all about prevention. In the same way that regular oil checks and services help keep your car on the road, proactive IT teams stop problems before they happen. They perform regular checks and constantly monitor systems for glitches and security breaches.

You'll also find they tend to take a holistic approach to IT infrastructures. Looking at the bigger picture, from environment to network to individual work stations means far fewer stumbling blocks.

The Added Benefits Of Proactive IT Support

We've already established the benefits of prevention over cure, but working proactively can help your business in lots of other ways too.

01 Better Decision Making

Good Managed Service Partners will constantly maintain an overview of your system. They'll use automated tools for this, backed up by experts interpreting the information.

This enables you to make informed decisions and identify any areas or weakness in your current infrastructure. Having it all presented clearly in front of you puts you in control, and makes it easier to see when you do need to scale up.

02 Budgeting

A proactive approach to IT gives you the ability to plan and budget your IT expenditure in a more strategic way. When you're just bumbling along hoping things keep working, inevitably you will have to shell out a lot of cash sooner or later. The proactive support that comes with managed IT services typically includes monitoring, updates and continuous health checks, all wrapped up in one simple monthly payment.

03 Strategy

Doing a full inventory of your IT assets along with a thorough risk assessment is a long, drawn out process, which is why so many companies fail to look at their computer systems on a strategic level. The trouble is, IT is a strategic issue that can make or break your business. Outsourcing to someone who takes a proactive approach is often the answer. They'll take care of everything from hardware to software updates and ensure it's all aligned with your business goals.

04 Security

With cyber crime the biggest threat to businesses and the GDPR upping the ante, data security has never been a hotter topic. If you're not doing everything in your power to look after business critical information, that lackadaisical approach will bite you before too long.

Proactive IT support will protect your network from cyber attacks and keep your data safe, secure and in the right hands.

05 Morale & Productivity

Although it's meant to help us, IT can be a real time stealer. Think of all the time you've spent waiting for a page to load, retrieving a lost file or dealing with a paper jam. Then multiply it by all the people in your team. See how it quickly adds up?

When computers don't work properly, people respond in different ways. Some see it as an opportunity to down tools and do nothing for the rest of the day. Others become frustrated and demotivated because they can't do their jobs. Either way, it's not great for business.

A proactive approach significantly slashes the risk of downtime and helps create an environment in which people can be productive. Productivity and happiness go hand in hand, so by giving your staff the right tools for the job you're well on the way to a more harmonious, happier workplace.

06 Disaster Recovery

Accidents happen. Major events such as fires, floods and cyber-attacks are a threat to all businesses and even severe weather events like hurricanes don't just happen abroad. While the "Great UK Earthquake" of February 2018 didn't exactly ravage the country, acts of God do still occur, and computers are often among the hardest hit. If all your critical data is stored on a server which gets destroyed in a fire or flood, could your business survive?

Proactive IT support providers will put disaster recovery plans in place and ensure all your data is backed up. That means that even if the worst does happen, the information you need to survive will be completely safe and accessible.

A Proactive IT Support Company Is A Sensible Choice

Ultimately, any business decision you make will usually be based around three things:

- COSTS
- EFFICIENCY
- PRODUCTIVITY

Adopting a proactive approach to your IT system covers those three very important areas, potentially saving you thousands of pounds. Catastrophic IT problems that cause downtime and low morale will become a thing of the past, and you won't have to pay huge call out fees for someone to try to get to the root of a complex issue.

Instead of waiting for things to fall apart and then charging you a fortune to make them right, a good IT professional will prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

Thank you for reading this guide.
We'd love the opportunity to meet and discuss your IT systems, and how a more proactive approach to your IT support will save your business time and money.