

**TECH
SUPPORT**

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDERS (MSP)

A FREE GUIDE



Intro: What is an MSP?

A Managed Service Provider (MSP) is a company that takes care of your veterinary practice's IT needs on an ongoing basis. Instead of waiting for something to break, you hire an MSP to handle everything from daily IT tasks to long-term strategy.

Unlike on-demand IT support where you only reach out when needed, an MSP becomes an extension of your team's IT department (even if you're corporate-owned), or even serves as your full IT department, working proactively to keep your systems running smoothly and securely.

Managed service providers are...



A strategic partner.

First and foremost, an MSP is an extension of your team—a strategic partner focused on the needs of your practice and its overarching mission. They work with your people to find and implement the best IT solutions to meet or exceed your business goals.

A knowledgeable partner.

An MSP is a knowledgeable and trusted partner who stays on top of the latest industry trends and technologies. They can offer valuable insights into network controls and security setups that you might not even know you need!

Certified.

We're certified MSPs, meaning we hold professional industry credentials that can open new opportunities for you. These certifications aren't just for show—they're essential for the work we do. In fact, 36.9% of IT professionals say certifications help them tackle complex tasks with more confidence. Certified MSPs show their commitment to continuous learning and staff training, ensuring we consistently provide top-notch service to our clients.

A better way to manage risk.

MSPs can often provide greater security expertise and coverage than you can provide in-house. MSPs manage security risks by not only protecting their own network from intrusion attempts, but by also protecting client networks and data from being compromised by implementing 24/7 monitoring, threat intelligence development, and enterprise grade solutions.

An extra set of hands.

MSPs provide an extra set of hands and eyes to help with the daily needs of your practice. That means when your practice or your IT team doesn't have time to resolve an issue, they can submit a ticket to your MSP and know it will be handled in a timely, efficient, and professional manner.

Managed service providers are *NOT*...

A one time break-it/fix-it solution.

MSPs should be viewed as partners, not one-off contractors that come in, fix your IT problem, and then be on their way. If you want to get the most out of your relationship with an MSP, it's important to view them as a logistical partner that will act as a natural extension of your own team; a partner that's there to help you work towards and achieve your veterinary goals.

A hands-off provider.

In fact, MSPs are very much hands-on. They can provide the guidance and support your in-house IT team needs—or even be that IT team—to optimise its efforts and focus on higher-level tasks. For example, MSPs can handle standard infrastructure maintenance and updates so that your in-house IT team can focus on custom configurations or integrations, enabling your organization to focus strategically in support of revenue growth.

Time intensive.

As we mentioned in the last point, by taking infrastructure management and maintenance off your hands, MSPs can provide you with more time to focus on the more important aspects of your practice, including money-making opportunities and resource optimization. MSPs' proactive approach can also help you avoid downtime, thereby improving your team's availability and performance.

Part 1: What Does an MSP Do?

An MSP is your strategic partner. While they help manage daily support tickets and assist employees, their role goes beyond that. The benefits of working with an MSP apply to both small and large veterinary practices as well as corporate-owned practices. We'll highlight the key perks for each type of client.



For Big Businesses

MSPs can also allow big businesses to become more agile and grow with the market faster. Here's how.

Faster Technology Adoption

Steep learning curves, time spent assessing available options, and sunk capital costs for expensive migration projects and on-premise infrastructure can all serve as barriers to adopting faster, more efficient tech solutions.

Thankfully, MSPs can do the hard work for you. By researching and evaluating hardware solutions, software applications, and different providers, they'll be able to find the most cost-effective solutions that offer added value to your organization.

An MSP can further reduce technology adoption barriers by:

- Training your employees
- Staffing experts for migrations
- Providing infrastructure as a service
- Managing your license agreements
- Providing business intelligence via reporting
- Helping you make informed choices on which solutions make sense for your business objectives

For Small Businesses

Small businesses can also enjoy the perks MSPs provide. In order to run a tech-savvy business, you'll need to dedicate a sizable chunk of your budget to the latest software and hardware, as well as the personnel to manage and maintain them. To keep operations streamlined, many smaller organizations look for partners to outsource such work to; but without the deep pockets of a larger organization, acquiring additional manpower and technical resources can be tough.

Thankfully, instead of hiring their own in-house IT professionals, small businesses can partner with an MSP. Here's how they can help.



Boost Business Productivity

MSPs enhance SMB productivity by:

- Aligning IT solutions with business goals
- Proactively monitoring systems to avoid downtime
- Offering cloud-based backup and continuity solutions
- Providing 24/7 help desk support
This reduces downtime and keeps your data secure.

Keep Costs Low

Small businesses can achieve all this while keeping costs low by making use of the shared model, using cloud-based services—including monitoring systems, help desk systems, tools, and more—at a lower operational cost.

For corporate-owned practices

Recognizing MSPs' ability to:

- Increase operational efficiency
- Reduce costs, and
- Minimize business risk

...among other things, MSPs are becoming an essential resource for veterinary practices, especially those owned by corporate groups.

Let's take a closer look.

Local Perks

A local MSP can be onsite ready to solve issues that corporate can't get to. They work to be familiar with the specific software your practice uses and can provide a more personalized approach. Unlike corporate teams, an MSP prioritizes a relationship with your practice, understanding how it operates and offering tailored solutions.

Time Efficiency

A local IT company is often more time-efficient for a veterinary practice owned by a corporate group due to its proximity and personalized service. Unlike corporate IT teams that may be located far away or deal with multiple locations, a local IT provider can quickly respond to issues, reducing downtime and minimizing disruptions to your practice's operations.

Local IT companies can be on-site faster, providing hands-on support when needed, whether it's for system troubleshooting, software updates, or emergency repairs. Their familiarity with your specific practice's workflow allows them to resolve problems more efficiently, without the back-and-forth delays of remote support.

By offering quicker response times and more tailored solutions, a local IT provider saves valuable time, helping your practice run more smoothly and effectively.



The main functions of an MSP

Now that you have an idea of how MSPs help their clients, let's take a look at the main service offerings they provide.

Security

Cybersecurity isn't for the faint of heart. There is a constant barrage of attacks happening that you are likely unaware of, and they evolve quickly—as fast as countermeasures are developed and implemented. This makes the cybersecurity of your practice a full-time job that is all-encompassing. Did you know there are recorded instances of a smart refrigerator being hacked into and used to enter a company's network?! It's the role of an MSP to be aware of cybersecurity threats, manage risks, and implement best practices and tools to prevent or reduce impacts of such threats.

Email Services/Management

Whether you're looking to migrate your email, contacts, calendars, and files from enterprise sources to the Office 365 environment or want a smooth transition to Google Apps Business (G-Suite) with continuous access to email, documents, calendars, and web conferencing facilities, MSPs have you covered. Not only can they migrate and manage your email, they also provide security and staff training campaigns against increasing email cybersecurity risks.

Cloud Services

Managed hosting is the first step for any company ready to make the shift to the cloud. Managed hosting is a logical decision for industries with stringent regulatory or security requirements, like healthcare or the public sector. An MSP that offers managed hosting services will need proper certifications and security clearances, which reduces the burden, cost, and risk placed on the client.



Network Management

Network management is the lifeblood of your IT infrastructure. You need a partner who takes time to understand your practice from the overall strategy to the daily needs of its users. Any network is complex and management of it is a full-time job as you walk the fine line between air-tight security and efficiency.

End User Support

An MSP is the front line of your end user community; when users have a problem or a request, the MSP is the first person they call. The default attribute when thinking of an MSP is its ability to support your IT team or your associates in a time of need. Staffed with a full team of IT professionals who are briefed on the needs of your practice—as well as your associates, mission, and network—an MSP can assist as a strategic partner and as daily ticket support.

Deferred Risk

All sensitive data, including client data, employee information, client information, and more. By using an MSP, your practice defers much of the risk that comes with storing that sensitive data if there is some sort of breach. The MSP will typically bear the brunt of responsibility for the security and safety of this information.

Hardware Monitoring

Carefully selecting and monitoring the hardware used to manage your business is critical. You'll need to take into account the overall strategy and needs of the business before selecting the tools you use to implement that strategy. Furthermore, once you've selected hardware, you need to monitor it in the short-term for inefficiencies and in the long-term for both inefficiencies and opportunities to upgrade and/or shift to cloud-based services.

Quality Assurance

A feeling of being overwhelmed and inundated with work is a hallmark of an internal IT department. It's not your teams' fault; the needs of the job are immense and 100% quality assurance can be difficult to maintain. With an MSP, you're not assigned just one professional to manage your IT needs; an MSP divides its caseload and client needs amongst its entire team of trained professionals who lean on one another to ensure that every need is handled with the highest level of quality.



Part 2: How Do MSPs Work?

An MSP can seamlessly *integrate with your current IT team* to handle overflow tasks, provide specialized expertise, and support your overall business strategy. It can also *act as your entire IT department*, covering all your IT needs. Let's take a closer look at each.

An MSP is an extension of your team

An MSP consists of a team of certified and credentialed professionals that serve as your strategic partner and work through your daily support needs.

If you have an IT department right now, think of an MSP as an extension of and enhancement to your team. With the onboarding of an MSP partner, you're adding new weapons in the form of experience, manpower, tools, and access to your entire practice.

When an MSP is brought on to support an in-house IT team, we see the largest benefits in the following areas:

Staff Gaps

You've experienced recent turnover or are experiencing high levels of turnover. An MSP can fill the gaps as you recruit, hire, onboard, train, and develop new talent. The one thing that never turns over is the consistent support provided by a quality MSP partner. Plus partnering with an MSP means they don't take sick/vacation days, they don't require benefits of a full-time employee, and you won't have to worry about IT coverage when an IT employee takes off.

Training

MSPs are experts in the field. Let their experts offer to train your people on best practices, the latest technologies, skills development, and more. An MSP's wealth of industry knowledge means they'll be able to customize training for your employees and their roles within the organization.

Experience

MSPs are focused on technology 24/7. That means they're abreast of the newest technology developments, latest security threats, best industry practices, and more. Don't waste your team's time reinventing the wheel; hire a trusted, strategic partner who's already in-the-know to help lead your organization's IT initiatives.

Support

When you work with an MSP, you'll never be left in the dark. 24/7 monitoring and support mean quick response times to your critical IT issues by experienced technicians—ensuring your practice can operate efficiently and with maximum data security.

MSPs as your I.T. department

An MSP is an excellent alternative for building an internal IT department. By hiring an MSP that consists of reputable IT professionals consisting of a wide range of knowledge, skills, and expertise, you are ultimately saving yourself time and money. Fully outsourcing your IT needs to an MSP partner means you'll be able to use that time saved to focus on other areas of your practice that need your attention and expertise. Additionally, by providing clients with transparent operations and detailed metrics and reports, MSPs ensure you always know what's going on with your organization's IT developments.

Part 3: Why Use an MSP?

Let's review one last time all the perks of working with an MSP, particularly us, Computer Services Unlimited!



Experience and Expertise

MSPs provide certified engineers with decades of practical IT experience. This means they have the knowledge and expertise to monitor, maintain, and fully support the entire spectrum of your organization's technical environment.

Industry-Specific Knowledge

Whether you're in finance, healthcare, or Commercial Real Estate, an MSP's industry specific knowledge will ensure you're protected and compliant. That's because they ensure all clients adhere to the cybersecurity compliances mandated by authorities for their industry.

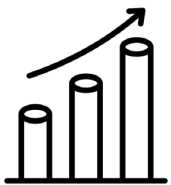


Time Savings

Partnering with an MSP means you'll have access to support around the clock something you could otherwise only achieve with multiple, in-house hires who are always on-call or working shifts. Using an MSP means you always have experts on demand, without paying for all of their time and benefits. You can use that time saved to focus on more pressing business needs.

Cost Savings

MSPs can save you the labor and training costs associated with hiring your own in-house IT department. They can further save you money by streamlining and automating processes, adding to overall organizational efficiency. MSPs also forecast future savings and spend so you'll know exactly what to expect. All of this for a cost-efficient, retainer-based monthly fee.

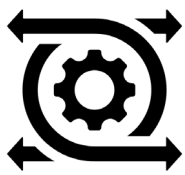


Scalability

MSPs are able to scale the volume of services they provide, users they support and/or resources they consume depending on your organization's needs. This means they can scale up and increase volume or scale down to consume fewer resources depending on your budget and business goals, ensuring cost effectiveness while providing your organization with the protection it needs. Both can be achieved by using tried-and-true scalability playbooks, automating processes, implementing necessary tools, moving to the cloud, and adopting modular architectures.

Access to Tools

MSPs have access to tools and partnerships that you likely don't have the time or resources to acquire. Let an MSP do the heavy lifting for you. They already know about the latest developments in the IT world, have tried out numerous tools, and know what's best for your business needs. They'll also have partnerships and alliances that can be beneficial to your business systems and your bottom line.



Flexibility

An MSP can work with you, offering flexibility when it comes to your needs for usage of network, storage, or computing requirements. Additionally, they can address urgent or spur of the moment needs, jumping into action when needed. The right MSP for your organization should be flexible having the ability to take action at the drop of a dime not inflexible due to size, scope, location, staffing, and more.

Computer Services Unlimited is What You're Looking For!

Conclusion:

Founded in 1991, Computer Services Unlimited has helped many companies across various industries maximize the performance of their IT infrastructure and improve the overall end-user experience.

CSU's entire staff is comprised of a deep bench of certified engineers who have decades of practical IT experience and are equipped with the knowledge and expertise to maintain, monitor, and fully support the entire spectrum of your organization's technical environment.

We serve government contractors, corporations, SMBs, and more. Furthermore, we have experience servicing clients in the construction, veterinary, law firms, mechanics, financial, federal government, medical industries and others.

Honesty, communication, and customer service are just some of the reasons our clients stay with us. You can always count on our uncompromising and talented team to support all your IT needs!

Let's Connect!



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