


ROSE COMPUTERS

AND NETWORKS

 support@rosecomputers.com

 434-385-5000



Co-Managed IT Services

A collaborative approach to IT success

Rose Computers and Networks
Introduction to Co-Managed IT Services

Introduction

Organizations of all sizes grapple with the complexities of managing IT infrastructure and operations. A key challenge lies in ensuring seamless operations, security, and technological innovation while managing costs effectively. Co-Managed IT Services is a collaborative model that merges the strengths of internal IT teams with external managed service providers (MSPs). This white paper explores the concept of co-managed IT services, its benefits, and how businesses can leverage this approach to optimize IT operations.

What is Co-Managed IT Services?

Co-managed IT services combine the expertise of an in-house IT team with the specialized resources and support of an external managed services provider (MSP). Unlike fully outsourced IT services, where the MSP takes full control, co-managed services allow businesses to maintain oversight and control while benefiting from the enhanced capabilities of the MSP.

The primary idea is collaboration—internal teams focus on strategic IT initiatives, while the MSP handles day-to-day operations, support, and specialized needs like security, backup, and disaster recovery. This arrangement helps businesses scale their IT efforts more efficiently and frees up in-house teams to focus on core business functions.

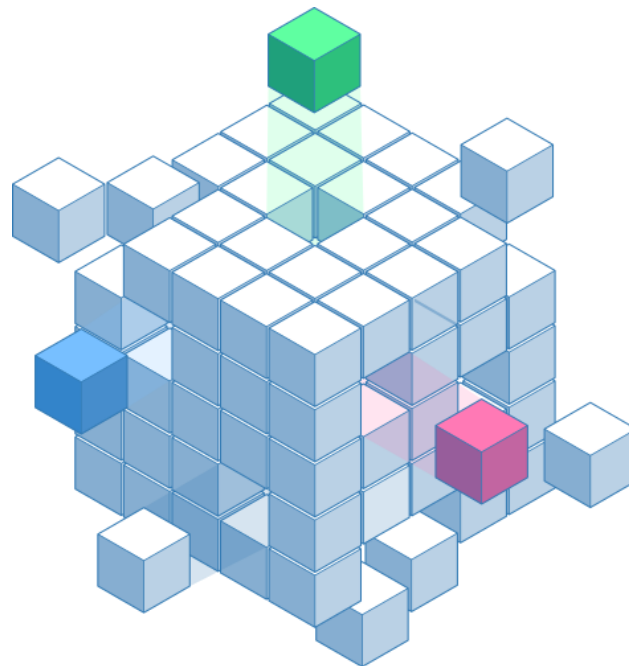


1. **Scalability and Flexibility** Co-Managed IT Services provide businesses with the scalability they need to grow. As organizations evolve, their IT needs change, and the co-managed model can easily adapt to those needs. Whether it's scaling up security measures during a period of heightened threat or adjusting the helpdesk capacity during a product launch, Co-Managed IT Services are flexible and scalable to match any organizational growth or challenge.
2. **Access to Advanced Expertise and Technology** With the rapid pace of technological change, staying current with the latest tools and best practices can be difficult for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). A co-managed approach

provides access to the expertise of seasoned professionals who specialize in areas like cybersecurity, cloud management, compliance, and network architecture. In-house IT teams can thus benefit from the MSP's technologies, ensuring that the organization's IT systems remain efficient and secure.

3. **Cost Efficiency** Managing IT internally can be costly, especially for smaller businesses that may not have the budget to hire a full-time team of experts. Co-managed IT services offer a cost-effective way to augment internal IT teams without the overhead of expanding staff. Organizations can pay for the expertise they need without the burden of recruitment, training, and retention costs.
4. **Improved Security and Compliance** Cybersecurity is one of the most critical concerns for businesses. With a Co-Managed IT model, organizations can leverage the MSP's cybersecurity expertise to bolster their defense mechanisms. MSPs typically employ a team of security experts who focus on the latest threat intelligence, firewalls, encryption, and proactive monitoring. This reduces the risk of breaches and ensures that the company is compliant with relevant industry regulations.
5. **Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery** A robust disaster recovery plan is essential for business continuity. Co-managed services allow businesses to develop and implement disaster recovery strategies tailored to their needs. MSPs bring advanced tools and methodologies to ensure that critical data is backed up and recoverable, minimizing the impact of any downtime or data loss.
6. **Enhanced Focus on Strategic IT Projects** Internal IT teams are often bogged down by routine tasks, like user support and

network maintenance. A Co-Managed IT structure offloads these tasks to the MSP, allowing internal teams to focus on high-priority strategic initiatives, such as cloud migration, digital transformation, or enhancing customer experience through IT innovations.



The structure of co-managed IT services is highly customizable to the needs of the business. Here's a general overview of how these services typically work:

1. **Assessment and Planning** Initially, the MSP works with the internal IT team to assess the current IT environment. This includes an evaluation of the organization's infrastructure, processes, and technology stack. Based on this assessment, a collaborative plan is developed that outlines areas of responsibility, service level agreements (SLAs), and specific goals for the partnership.
2. **Division of Responsibilities** The division of responsibilities depends on the needs and capabilities of the internal IT team. Typically, the in-house team focuses on higher-level tasks like

managing software deployment, overseeing strategic projects, and supporting end-users. Meanwhile, the MSP provides managed services for day-to-day operations such as helpdesk support, network monitoring, patch management, and security monitoring.

3. **Ongoing Collaboration and Support** The relationship between the internal team and the MSP is continuously evolving. Regular communication and check-ins ensure alignment between both parties. MSPs can provide monthly performance reports, cybersecurity assessments, and system audits, allowing the in-house team to monitor progress and ensure that the organization's goals are being met.
4. **Technology and Tool Integration** Effective co-management often involves integrating IT systems and tools used by both teams. This includes ensuring seamless communication between monitoring tools, ticketing systems, backup solutions, and security platforms. The use of centralized platforms helps both teams stay updated on the status of IT systems, enabling efficient collaboration.

Considerations When Adopting Co-Managed IT Services

1. **Defining Roles and Expectations** Clear expectations and role delineation are crucial to avoid overlap or confusion. It is important to agree on the scope of services, SLAs, and escalation processes from the outset.
2. **Cultural Fit** The success of co-managed IT services hinges on a strong partnership between the internal IT team and the MSP. It's important to choose an MSP that understands the business's culture and goals and is committed to a collaborative, long-term relationship.

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3. **Data Security and Compliance** With the MSP handling critical infrastructure, ensuring that both parties adhere to strict security protocols is essential. A clear understanding of privacy policies and compliance standards (e.g., PCI, HIPAA) should be addressed early in the relationship to ensure both teams meet regulatory requirements.

Conclusion

Co-managed IT services offer an ideal solution for businesses seeking to optimize their IT operations while retaining control over strategic decision-making. By combining internal resources with the expertise of an MSP, organizations can boost efficiency, security, and business continuity while reducing costs. Whether for growing businesses or enterprises facing complex IT demands, the co-managed model is a strategic partnership that helps unlock the full potential of IT resources, enabling organizations to stay competitive in an increasingly digital world.

Adopting co-managed IT services is not just about outsourcing—it's about fostering a collaborative relationship that enhances both the internal IT team's capabilities and the overall business infrastructure. When done right, co-managed IT services can empower businesses to achieve technological success while

For inquiries, contact us.

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