

How a Single-Source IT Provider Can Make Your Company More Agile

In today's day and age, managing IT for a multi-site company with locations dispersed around the country presents an incredible challenge. Many businesses lack the time, resources, and budget to hire full-time staff to take care of physical infrastructure and perform emergency fixes. Now more than ever, companies of all sizes are leaning on outsourced IT service providers that contract with local technicians, who are ready to arrive on site when and where they're needed.

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MANAGING A “NEW (MORE COMPLEX) NORM”

During these uniquely challenging times, the strength and security of a company’s IT infrastructure is more vital than ever before. It is no small task to source reliable providers in several cities, handle scheduling, manage follow ups and requests, and deal with several separate invoices. As the number of serviced locations increases, so does the chance for inclement weather, late arrivals, wrong parts delivered, unforeseen site issues, and other variables to prevent prompt and reliable IT service. The pandemic has added to this already heavy burden with shrinking budgets, restricted travel for techs, and adherence to new safety protocols.

While the idea of outsourcing IT is nothing new, the added complexities impacting multi-location businesses has hastened the need for creative and streamlined vendor partnerships. The ideal solution for businesses with widely dispersed locations is a partnership with a single-source IT provider with technical knowledge, experience, and the right resources at the ready.

This approach gives you access to a single reliable IT partner that co-manages projects across all locations, helping you **cover all your bases...** effortlessly.

Could single-source IT outsourcing make your company leaner and more agile in 2021?

BENEFITS OF SINGLE-SOURCE OUTSOURCING WITH TST



Expanded Resources

In today's environment, travel limitations and budget constraints have made it increasingly difficult to send IT personnel to remote locations around the country. A single-source national IT company doesn't face this challenge, because their business model is built around utilizing local professional technician groups across thousands of zip codes.



Less Operational Oversight

Part of what makes managing IT across several locations so complex is the number of operational variables, which can be difficult to predict and even more difficult to manage as they inevitably crop up. Having a single-source provider to manage everything from centralized invoicing to scheduling delays caused by natural disasters leaves more time in the day to focus on your goals.



No Surprise Costs

When juggling multiple outsourced IT vendors, you likely don't have the bandwidth to negotiate or even fully decipher multiple convoluted contracts. It's essential to find a partner who provides clear up-front pricing across all your locations. You shouldn't have to deal with small print, night and weekend upcharges, or long-term commitments.



The Right Expert for the Right Project

As the ecosystem of specialized technology used to keep your business moving continues to expand, so does the need for a specialized technical resource. Not all IT projects are made equal and neither should your outsourced IT vendor. Look for a provider with technicians ranging in a variety of specialties and skillsets so you don't have to worry about finding the right fit for your project.



Quick Start

Every minute of downtime means lost potential profit for your company. You can't afford the time it takes to connect with the right local resources and wait for a qualified technician to arrive. A single-source IT company is prepared to provide qualified technicians who are ready to jump into your project immediately. National companies who have spent years building a vast technician network, aren't slowed by mandatory quarantines or travel restrictions.

Clearly, a partnership with the right outsourced IT partner offers obvious and immediate advantages. Read on to learn more about the types of services an ideal provider should be able to offer.

ONE CALL, ALL BASES COVERED

Installation, moving and changing infrastructure

Anyone who owns a smartphone knows that technology is in a constant state of flux. Getting new versions of software and hardware has become common, even for those who are not tech savvy. The same goes for your company's infrastructure: new network requirements, hardware compliance, vendor software changes, and technological advances are required to ensure full optimization.

By investing in an IT partnership, you will enjoy the benefits of hiring industry veterans with extensive experience implementing and maintaining network connectivity, telephony, A/V, POS, and other essential infrastructure systems.

A national IT vendor should have the depth of knowledge and experience to handle all your infrastructure-related projects. As you're evaluating vendors, consider what types of services they offer and if they're equipped to fully assist in the critical infrastructure maintenance of your growing company.

Common services

- Structured Cabling Systems (Cat5e/Cat6/Cat6a/Cat7 copper and single-/multimode fiber)
- System Upgrades and Enhancements
- Provider Cutovers and Rollouts
- PCS, Servers, UPS'S, and Printers
- Phone Systems (PBX & VoIP hardware/software installation and configuration)
- Point of Sale (POS) Systems (hardware/software)
- Sounds, Paging, and Intercom Systems
- Cable Management Solutions (raceway and ladder rack)
- Networking Equipment (routers)
- Wi-Fi and Wireless Systems (WAPs, antennas, controllers, and PoE connectivity)
- A/V Systems and Digital Signage/Menu Boards (TVs, digital displays, and media players)
- CCTV & Security Systems
- Server Cabinets and Equipment Racks (freestanding and wall mount)
- Electrical Wiring

THE CHALLENGES IN STAYING AHEAD

While rapidly evolving technology can play an essential role in transforming a business, falling behind on maintenance and upgrades can also mean unplanned expenses and costly downtime. For example, many companies have delayed replacement of their aging copper telecom systems (Plain Old Telephone Service, or POTS). Even though it often carries a high cost, companies can be deterred by the complex challenges an upgrade presents including a lack of insight into critical systems that may be disconnected in the process. A national IT provider can provide techs to perform thorough audits across all your locations. Once the audit is complete, they should work with you to recommend a plan for seamlessly rolling out a unified upgrade.

Maintenance, Repair, Emergency Services

According to a Gartner report on the topic of how much IT downtime could cost a company: “Based on industry surveys, the number we typically cite is \$5,600 p/minute, which extrapolates to well over \$300K p/hour.”

Another report notes that the cost of network downtime “includes lost employee productivity (78%), lost revenue (17%), and actual costs to fix the downtime issues (5%).”

Network expert [Matthias Machowinski stated in an interview](#),

“You really need to have a multi-pronged strategy [and] understand the effects of downtime and the importance of creating equipment that minimizes downtime within ICT infrastructure. [Downtime] is a serious issue that companies really need to take a hard look at, and I think it’s a good example of where a small investment can have such tremendous benefits to a company.”

In short: network downtime = lost revenue and productivity.

When your mission-critical technology fails, your firm can’t wait for next-day or next-week service—you need an immediate response. You need a provider that responds in hours, not days.



Site Surveys

As your company grows, so will your IT needs—especially if you add new facilities. When you have more physical locations than IT staff members, it can be difficult to understand the intricacies of each environment before your installers arrive without actually visiting the site first. For large companies with multiple locations spread across a wide geographic area, this quickly becomes a challenge and even a risk.

Outsourcing a qualified IT team for site surveys helps your company’s existing IT staff discover hidden challenges that installers might encounter in remote facilities before launching a new technology rollout or replacement/refresh project. This insight allows your IT manager or a project manager to avoid or prepare for the potential dangers and obstacles associated with a specific site.

Cabling Cleanup Services

Networks almost never start out as a tangled, chaotic mess. But over time, as more devices and users get added or moved around, cables often become twisted and tangled instead of remaining neatly contained in cable managers. A cabling mess doesn't just look bad—it can obstruct access to the ports on rack-mounted equipment. It can also prevent proper airflow to sensitive equipment like servers, increase the possibility of accidental disconnects, increase the amount of time required to perform even the simplest moves/adds/changes and even cause kinks in cables that decrease their performance or cause total transmission failures.

Quality IT service providers can convert any chaotic cabling catastrophe into a clean, workable network environment again.



Cutovers, Rollouts, Replacements and Upgrades

Every IT Manager knows that occasionally equipment needs to be replaced or updated to keep communications systems running at optimal performance. And to perform that work properly, a certain degree of technical aptitude is required. For large companies that have far more brick-and-mortar facilities than IT staff members, it makes sense to rely on an IT service provider to deploy skilled technicians to their remote facilities, wherever and whenever they are needed.

An ideal IT service provider can provide boots on the ground when critical. In many situations, a remote resource cannot take the place of a trained Technician standing at your location, working independently or under partial direction from your centralized staff.

Decommissioning Services

Sooner or later, your current IT equipment will reach the end of its useful life. When equipment is no longer working, it's time to hire a professional IT service provider to properly dispose of it.

When it comes to disposing of technology equipment that has reached its end-of-life, there are two ways to deal with it: the right way and the wrong way.

The wrong way is to throw it in the trash. But the right way involves the disposal of equipment in a safe, environmentally responsible manner – often by recycling it – and the removal of sensitive data to ensure data security. While federal laws governing the proper disposal of electronics have been minimal, the European community and 25 U.S. States have passed very specific electronics recycling laws.

To ensure compliance with those laws, and to practice environmental responsibility, most companies now have well-defined, formal decommissioning policies. These policies not only detail proper procedures for disposal and/or recycling of electronics. They also ensure that all sensitive data is removed/destroyed from computers, servers, copiers, and external storage devices.

Large companies with multiple facilities scattered across a vast geography (like restaurant, retail and hotel chains) typically employ only a centralized IT staff because they can't justify the cost of having an IT staff member at every location. And it's certainly not cost-effective to fly someone to their remote locations every time a piece of equipment fails. That's why these companies hire independent IT service providers.



Quality IT technicians safely remove equipment without interrupting normal business operations – even if that means performing work in the middle of the night. They will prepare a detailed list of the IT assets being returned, take photographs of every item in its shipping box before it gets closed, sealed, labeled, and shipped, and make sure those assets are delivered safely. And, top-notch providers also provide certificates of e-waste and data destruction indemnification.

READY TO EXPLORE OUTSOURCED IT?

The state of the world economy is constantly shifting. Many of the challenges that have faced IT during this uniquely difficult time should not be viewed as fleeting inconveniences, but rather part of a new, complex normal. Any attempts to hit the pause button while your company optimizes its outsourced IT solution is not going to change that frenetic pace. Tech Service today is a national IT service provider with decades of experience. Talk to a member of our team if you're ready to explore how a partnership with TST could help you stay in the game no matter what we face.

LETS TALK!