

Managed Network Services Out-Tasking

When accountants and IT pros agree there are forces at work that need to be respected and one of those places may be the implementation of Managed Network Services in place of traditional MPLS networks. In a nutshell with Managed Network Services you are essentially out-tasking a portion of your networking services to a third party. Not to be confused with outsourcing, out-tasking does not relinquish management duties only specific functions such as; data storage, disaster recovery, internet hosting or VPN to name a few.

Bean counters love Managed Network Services because of their ability to reduce overall network costs. According to a Gartner study Managed Network services can lower network costs from 15% to 25% which is not insignificant making Managed Services an ideal solution for smaller companies lacking adequate resources to support a full-time IT staff. IT managers love it because it provides the resources they need to deliver the services required while keeping the accounting department satisfied with the cost.

Empowering a small IT staff to more effectively deliver the crucial core tasks without having to expand cost is a key advantage of Managed Network Services out-tasking. Short staffing issues are eliminated and internal network operations run more smoothly as a result. The savings can be added to the balance sheet or used to enhance other areas including training and equipment.

Many IT Managers express the valid concern that out-tasking network management diminishes their control and leaves them vulnerable on many levels. The reality is actually quite different; out-tasking is not an all or nothing proposition. Control of which services are out-tasked still rest securely with the manager who can make decisions based on his or her own needs and best practices by maximizing existing internal staff and equipment resources rather than trying to stretch them to fit.

Concerns about maintenance, uptime and security require careful research and negotiated agreement with providers to assure that services are delivered at a level that satisfies all parties concerned. Making sure that a potential Managed Service partner is capable of providing the level of quality of service that is need is central to successful implementation.

Perhaps the biggest concern for IT managers considering out-tasking is network security. Much has been written about the safety of data when placed in the hands of third party providers. HIPAA and other consumer privacy laws and regulations make security more than a passing worry. The expectation of top notch security from Managed Network provider is understood and a frank and honest discussion of concerns is usually welcome and should include a complete review of the security compliance expertise the provider before making a switch.

The bottom line for IT managers and accountants is that the implementations of a Managed Network Services project provide real benefits for the balance sheet and IT

performance. Quality service providers recognize these concerns and are ready to forge relationships that are built on clearly defined expectations.