



Everything You Need
to Know About

Protecting Your Business
with Managed IT Services

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INTRODUCTION

Protecting your business from a data loss is a top priority for businesses that want to remain viable. The volatilities of markets and the whims of customers have little effect on your business compared to what data loss or a breach in cybersecurity can do. You can lose your business overnight. Often the breach is more catastrophic due to the effects it has on your reputation to keep data secure than on what the criminals take or harm. That's why it's more important than ever to protect your business with managed IT services.

You buy insurance for the building you're in. You insure your inventory. You protect your employees with benefits. You insure your own health and well-being. You may even have patents protecting your intellectual property. Don't run the risk of leaving your business and data exposed to cyber attacks because you think a managed IT services company is only for bigger businesses.

There's no warning in a cyber attack and you don't have to be a well-known, large target. Cyber criminals don't care about the size of your business. They only care about ease of access.

There are a number of options on the market and things you should understand before selecting a managed IT services company; but the one thing you need to know is that vulnerability will make you a victim and that one time can claim your whole business.



WHY DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED TO BE PROTECTED?

Natural disasters used to be the largest enemy of data but now it's cyber attacks. In an article that appeared on CNN.com Money, it was estimated that nearly 1 million new malware threats were released every day. Many of them were simply preying on software bugs that were never fixed, allowing them easy entry.

Some of the most common points of entry, aside from users clicking on malicious links, are Oracle Java, Adobe Reader, and Adobe Flash. And most computers run these. Through security weaknesses in these programs, attackers can easily infect you with ransomware. There often isn't anything that can be done once you're infected. You either pay the price they're asking (which can be as high as several thousand dollars), restore from your backup (if you have one), or recreate your affected data.



WHY DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED TO BE PROTECTED?

COMPANY SECRETS

Hackers aren't just holding our data hostage as in the case of ransomware. They also can intercept important company information and use it to their advantage. According to Samir Kapuria, an executive at Symantec, this happened to a mining company. A draft report was stolen that detailed a potentially lucrative find. The hackers then tried to sell the information on the black market. Luckily, the mining company discovered this and by operating under a false identity, convinced the hackers the information was untrue.

DATA LOSS

You're also protecting yourself from infrastructure breakdown; malicious spam emails containing malware; file corruptions; data loss caused by natural disaster and flooding, and other security breaches.



WHY DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED TO BE PROTECTED?

BYOD

With the rise of “bring your own device” (BYOD), many companies are facing a potential data crisis like never before. Each day your employees report to work they’re connecting smartphones, tablets, and (potentially) laptops to your network. You have no idea what software they’re running, how up-to-date their virus protection is or even if they have any. And if you haven’t educated your staff on what to look out for, each day you open your doors, you open your risk.

It’s also important to note that it was estimated that 68% of the funds lost to cybercrime were considered unrecoverable according to the Ponemon Institute. The Institute also estimates that there are 138 successful attacks each week, up from 50 in 2010. If your business is vulnerable, it’s not a question of *if but when*.



WHAT IS MANAGED IT SERVICES?

Managed IT services take on two forms - server maintenance and application service. With the cloud, these options are available whether you host data through a managed IT services company's data center or at your business.

SERVER MAINTENANCE

This day-to-day management of your server hardware and operating system includes things like:

- monitoring
- applying security patches
- performing upgrades
- maintaining security

APPLICATION SERVICE

Application service entails managing server-level applications such as SQL Server, Exchange Server, CRM, engineering systems, etc.; to include:

- monitoring the applications
- enforcing security
- applying patches
- handling requisite storage



WHAT DOES PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES DO FOR THE BUSINESS?

To say managed IT services removes all the concern you have about business data is oversimplifying it a little but it does give you peace of mind that your business is recoverable and your data is secure. Here are a few things you can expect from managed IT services:

RECOVERABLE DATA

Without managed IT, unless you have a backup, your data will need to be reconstructed in the event of a natural disaster or cyber attack. Unless you have hundreds of thousands of dollars and work hours to dedicate to the efforts, you'll need a backup. With recoverable data and a reliable backup, recovering from an attack becomes as simple as selecting a restore point.

UP-TO-DATE SOFTWARE

One of the largest exposures for businesses is out-of-date software. Companies such as Microsoft spend large amounts of money on updates to ensure their software has the most recent security needed and that all vulnerabilities are closed. When people (company IT and employees) neglect to update their software -- or just forget to -- they are leaving their systems and your business, exposed. With managed IT services this is taken care of for you.



WHAT DOES PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES DO FOR THE BUSINESS?

MANAGED SECURITY AND FIREWALLS

No more worries about *what* was done and when with your security patches and employees turning off firewalls because they're interfering with something they're using. Instead, it's all handled for you.



HOSTED EMAIL

By hosting your email, a managed IT services company can give you more reliable service and reduce your exposure to harmful malware and other cyber attacks.



WHAT DOES PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES DO FOR THE BUSINESS?

PROTECT AGAINST OBVIOUS CYBER DANGERS AND NOT SO OBVIOUS ONES

There are a number of dangers out there so protection is essential to you remaining in business. Some breaches give hackers access to your data and passwords, while ransomware locks your files and the cyber extortionists demand payment from you for you to gain access.

Even if you're up-to-date on your average virus protection software, cyber issues like malware are often not detected by antivirus software. Instead, you need a solution that can scan your Internet traffic and warn you when potential threats appear. Managed IT services can also block access to hacker-controlled servers and keep your data secure.

Social media is one of the easiest ways for a hacker to penetrate your security. How often have you clicked on a link shared by a friend because you know that person? Never does it occur to you (or your employees) that the link was posted by anyone other than the owner of that account. Social media often sees link redirects that appear to go to one site and instead go to another. Some sites even use phony like buttons. When clicked instead of "liking" it, you've just downloaded malware.

A final sobering thought on social media and cyber crime: **more than 600,000 Facebook accounts are compromised every day.** Is one of them yours or your employee's? Don't run the risk. Use the services of someone who knows.

WHAT DOES PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES DO FOR THE BUSINESS?

EMPLOYEE ERROR

There's no nice way to explain but the people you employ are your largest liability when it comes to cybersecurity. Not only are BYOD and out-of-date security and operating systems issues, but people clicking on bad links can expose your business to terrible breaches and without managed IT services, everything could be lost. Often these cyber criminals masquerade as well-known companies like FedEx and Amazon. Sometimes they even pretend to be the IRS. All they want is for your employee to click their URL for "more information" and your entire company has fallen prey to their con if that employee is on your network.

In order to keep your employee from clicking, you must educate your team. Even with education, you'll sometimes have that one employee who is going through his inbox too quickly, not being mindful of the warning signs. Maybe he's expecting a package from that company and thinks nothing of getting an email from them and he clicks. Constant monitoring by managed IT services can catch issues like this shortly after they happen. Sometimes before the employee even realizes it's malware or a phishing scam.

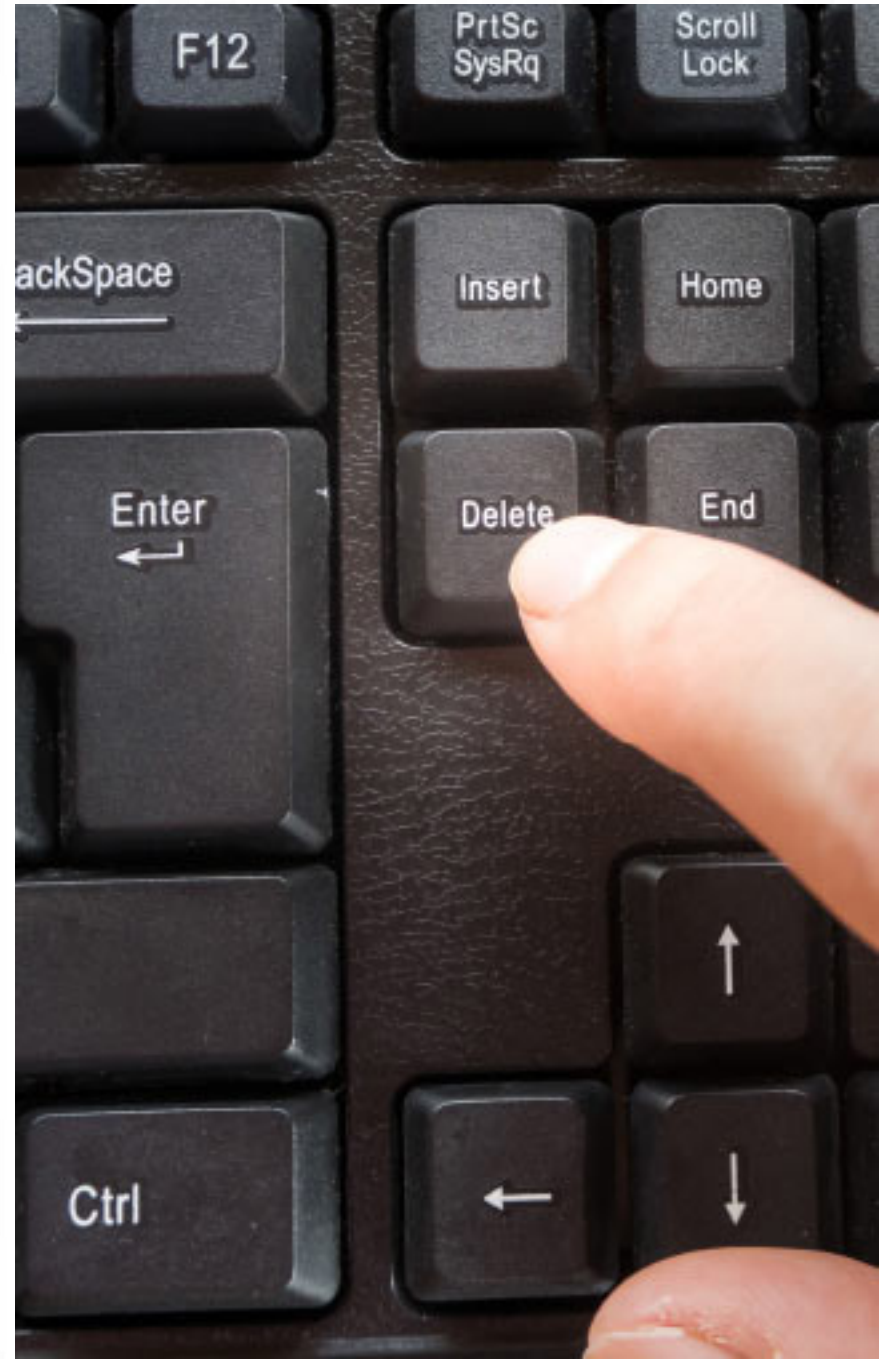


WHAT DOES PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES DO FOR THE BUSINESS?

ADDITIONAL INSIDE SECURITY ISSUES

It may sadden most businesses to know some cyber attacks or stolen data is conducted by former employees. These are generally the most malicious inside jobs. However, there are other scenarios as well such as a current employee being enticed to provide a third-party with insider information or access to data and employee error. Even in today's world of data redundancies, it is possible for an employee of yours to inadvertently delete critical information.

Insider threats are extremely difficult to detect because they're not hacking. They have legitimate access. That's why outside monitoring and backup is extremely important for business continuity.



WHAT DOES PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES DO FOR THE BUSINESS?

SAVES TIME AND MONEY

You can take on all of these cyber security issues on your own by choosing the best antivirus software solution, performing 24-hour monitoring, applying all necessary patches and updates, educating your team, backing up data, staying on top of issues on the horizon, and hoping you're doing everything that's necessary. This approach is timely and costly, not to mention the time and energy spent in wondering if it's enough. When you protect your business with managed IT services you know it is and someone else is helping you get some well-deserved rest each night.

IMPROVES YOUR CYBER SECURITY REPUTATION

In addition to peace of mind because your business is no longer vulnerable, managed IT services allows you to give your customers peace of mind as well. People worry less when they know their data is protected. It also discourages cyber criminals who are often looking for the easy, low-hanging fruit.



WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS SHOULD USE MANAGED IT SERVICES?

Since the inception of managed IT services, most businesses have believed that these types of security provisions help only large businesses with large budgets. This is no longer the case. Many managed IT service companies offer a range of plans to fit any budget with IT consulting, server maintenance, application service, and cloud services. They can create a data security plan that meets your business needs.



HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT MANAGED IT SERVICES FIRM FOR YOUR BUSINESS

This is an area where you want to do your research. When comparing managed IT service providers look for the following things:

365/24/7 REMOTE MONITORING

Cyber attackers don't take holidays. You need monitoring all-day, every day. The firm should be monitoring your firewall, servers, workstations, routers, and switches regardless of their location.

OFFERS A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR IT PEOPLE

This is not an "us" against "them" monitoring situation. You want a firm that looks to work with your team, building a relationship, safeguarding one another, and giving your business the best protection possible.

OFFERS IT CONSULTING FOR BEST PRACTICES

Cybersecurity is a moveable concern in that new threats are being discovered all the time. You don't need a business that is stagnant in its approach to protecting you.

UNDERSTANDS YOUR INDUSTRY

Certain industries are more vulnerable than others and some have regulations that must be met. Work with a firm that understands those.

ASKS THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Cybersecurity should be a customized approach. Choose a firm that is interested in learning about your business to better understand your vulnerabilities.

HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT MANAGED IT SERVICES FIRM FOR YOUR BUSINESS

PROVIDES REPORTING AND ANALYTICS

You should also have insight as to what's being done. You want to understand potential vulnerabilities or failures and what areas are performing well. You can use this insight to assess needs for upgrades and future expenses.

BE ABLE TO HANDLE YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS.

Some managed IT service providers cater to a particular size business. Make sure you know who they're looking out for. If they handle mainly big business and you're small, your needs may get lost among large contracts.

You should also understand the managed IT service provider's support packages as some of them vary greatly.

Protecting your business with managed IT services allows you to get back to handling the daily operations of your business and worry less about the technical ingenuity required to maintain healthy cybersecurity.



If you're ready to take the pressure off by trusting your business' cyber security to professionals, it's time to call CIO Tech. We'll discuss the needs in protecting your business with managed IT services and how cost effective the solution is.

Contact us today for your free assessment at

813-649-7762

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