

Art of Services

Sachin Bhardwaj, eHosting DataFort, director, Marketing and Business Development, explains how managed IT services can be beneficial instead of in-house IT infrastructure.

In today's business environment, organisations need to adopt new technologies in order to expand their operations and improve productivity and customer experience. Even small to mid-size organisations will not be able to function, let alone scale-up their businesses without a strong IT infrastructure to support their growth. Many companies do not have the required resources to support a dedicated in-house IT team. Faced with mounting costs and an increasingly complex IT environment to manage, organisations are now more than ever looking at managed IT services as an alternative to in-house IT infrastructure management.

There are a number of benefits that a managed IT services model offers:

- Converting CAPEX to OPEX and reduced Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)
- Minimising technology investment
- Access to skilled resources without having to spend on continuously hiring and training IT staff.
- Access to state-of-the-art infrastructure without having to build
- Upgrading infrastructure very fast without having to worry about buying, deploying, maintaining, etc.

- 24/7 Service Desk access
- Guaranteed SLAs which provide a high quality of service

MSP market in the Middle East is seeing a surge as enterprises look to sidestep the need for investment in ICT infrastructure and skills that are an expensive distraction from their core business. From network and data centre management services to disaster recovery, storage and backup, server management, security and IT support, it is possible to offload the day-to-day provisioning of significant chunks of the IT function. This liberates financial and human resources to focus on productivity and efficiency. Companies can opt for various IT infrastructure outsourcing options, which range from fully managed hosting to cloud hosting and collocation, as well as remote monitoring and management of their IT.

Traditionally, large businesses have been relying on the expertise and services of managed hosting providers to offer secure, flexible and scalable solutions. However, over the last few years, we are seeing a growing trend among SMEs choosing to work with service providers for their data centre

and infrastructure management requirements.

According to IDC, the managed and data centre service markets in the UAE will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.8 percent between 2013 and 2018 to reach a total of \$971.8 million by 2018. Data centre hosting makes up approximately 18 percent of the Managed Services market revenue in the UAE.

Industry sectors such as banking and finance, aviation, media, government, IT and telecom in particular, have taken to managed services as ensuring a 'secure and reliable system' is critical. In fact, according to a recent survey by Frost & Sullivan, the managed services market in the GCC region is projected to reach \$3,116 million by 2018.

Security is one of the biggest concerns because of which companies show resistance to MSPs. To overcome this, MSPs should ensure that they have the best and latest security systems and practices in place, offer round-the-clock monitoring and management of the IT infrastructure and comprehensive customised managed services - all with a guaranteed service level agreement that meets international industry standards. 