A GUIDE TO IT MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Improving IT effectiveness while minimizing costs

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IT departments are under constant pressure to deliver a wide range of services and applications while ensuring efficient business operations. For small and medium-sized businesses, keeping pace with the rapid rate of change across the technology landscape makes maintaining the availability of line-of-business apps a daily struggle.

Advancements in technology can revolutionize the way a company does business. But ongoing maintenance coupled with the need for professional expertise to keep things running smoothly can also cause it to fall behind.

When important tasks are neglected, it opens the door for system failure, malfunctions and downtime that disrupts workflows and hinders performance. Inevitably, these issues will impact revenue and profitability.

Company growth can be slowed down by the lack of in-house IT expertise. However, very few organizations can afford to employ even one full time IT employee, let alone have a fully staffed department. Those companies lucky enough to field a dedicated IT employee can still find it difficult to stay on top of all that has to be done.

These challenges have forced organizations to find new ways to maximize their budget while ensuring they are not making sacrifices on IT efficiency. Managed Services Providers (MSPs) can step in to offer remote and on premise IT Monitoring and Management solutions to ensure that you get the most from your IT investment, while maintaining the highest standards of availability and performance for your users.

What is IT Monitoring and Management?

IT Monitoring and Management works to proactively eliminate malfunctions and other hiccups that can severely impact business operations. Service interruptions severely decrease productivity and profitability while increasing the time and cost of your employee's efforts. Issues that abruptly surface in an environment, even if minor issues, can lead to major problems in the future that cause unexpected downtime.

Remote monitoring and management of the critical components of a network, such as servers, databases, firewalls, devices and endpoints reveals system issues while they are still small and before they can significantly impact network performance. This is done by a 24/7/365 Operations Center, which is a secure, centralized location staffed with highly trained engineers. They act as an extension of the customer's internal team and provide an extra set of eyes, ears and skill sets that ensures IT efficiency and uptime - at any time, day or night.

According to a recent Dynamic Business Technology report from IDC, hardware failure is the leading cause of total unplanned downtime. In an IDC survey, 71% of participating U.S. businesses experienced 10 hours of unplanned downtime per year resulting in an SMB to see up to $125,000 in economic impact. Monitoring and management of critical network components assuages concerns about IT availability and ensure that systems are, in fact, performing at optimal efficiency.

Key Functions of IT Monitoring and Management

The main purpose of IT Monitoring and Management is to give companies peace of mind that no matter what time of

day, a trained expert is always making sure that every server, device and endpoint is functioning at optimal performance. IT Monitoring and Management ensures the health, productivity, capacity and security of your infrastructure and that changes are made to it when needed. If an issue arises, it is resolved as soon as it surfaces, no matter the depth or severity.

There are various types of monitoring and management that can be provided, from application monitoring to the speed of a fan, patch management and the self-healing capabilities of applications and networks. If these components are not properly managed and routine maintenance is not completed on a regular basis, organizations can be at risk of data loss, downtime and high remediation costs. Development of custom checks verifies that software, hardware and devices are up and running smoothly, 24/7/365, and that organizations are meeting their required levels of availability.

Regular maintenance and monitoring of employee endpoints is essential to optimized efficiency. MSPs provide comprehensive solutions within their IT monitoring and management offerings to ensure that machines are functioning properly and are protected against the latest cyber security threats and disasters. Help desk, anti-virus, patch management and backup will make sure that organizations are creating a fool-proof plan for if and when the unpredictable happens.

Some of the other functions of IT Monitoring and Management are:
- Network monitoring
- Incident response
- Communications management (email, voice, and video management)
- Performance, quality and optimization reporting
- Application software installation, troubleshooting and updating
- Patch management
- Backup and storage
- Firewall and IPS monitoring and management
- Threat analysis
- Anti-virus scanning and remediation
- Policy management
- Self-healing and remediation
- Help desk

Key Benefits of IT Monitoring and Management

When putting into perspective today's complex virtualized network environments, stretched IT staffs and budgetary constraints, IT Monitoring and Management can provide many cost savings. It is important to remember that the best products and services set up customers for longer term success – including risk mitigation, optimized performance, lower expenses and elasticity to scale with the evolving business landscape. A list of the top benefits of IT Monitoring and Management:

Proactive Prevention

Traditionally, companies have used the break/fix model, completing IT maintenance only when an issue arises. Using this model creates downtime, decreases productivity and increases maintenance costs. The break/fix model creates an inefficient workflow because it is not a proactive approach, it is reactive. Imagine this scenario: An issue has occurred that unexpectedly halted work activities. You called your break/fix provider to come resolve the issue, but they couldn't arrive for 5 hours. Employees can no longer complete their daily operations and downtime costs are quickly adding up every minute you are disconnected. However, when critical network devices, servers and endpoints are managed by an MSP, minor issues are identified before they become major issues that can cause downtime.

24/7/365 Expertise

With IT Monitoring and Management, small and mid-sized organizations gain access to certified IT professionals and emerging technologies in which they might not normally have access. Ever arrive to work on a Monday morning to find out that a critical application or network has been down all weekend that caused a stop in operations and an exponential amount of unplanned downtime? Many organizations cannot afford to build and staff a 24/7/365 Operations Center. By letting an MSP monitor and manage critical assets, organizations can ensure system availability and employee productivity, while reaping the benefits of best-in-class engineers and 24/7/365 operations.

Increased Uptime and Network Performance

Networks are becoming more widely dispersed and they are supporting more operations than ever before. IT Monitoring and Management provides real-time performance and health monitoring to eliminate disruptive problems that cause your systems to run slow or go completely offline. When issues are eliminated before they become system-wide issues, unplanned downtime and associated costs are minimized. Network and hardware performance is greatly improved and stabilized, and the increased efficiency leads to increased employee productivity and a higher return on investment. Custom reports help paint a clear picture of your overall network and performance so you and/or your MSP can better optimize and secure your operations.

Prioritize IT Staff Workload

MSPs provide affordable solutions that eliminate complex technology problems for organizations of all sizes from small and medium-sized businesses to enterprise organizations. An MSP is focused on keeping your systems up and running, no matter what. This enables you and your employees to focus on revenue generating and business-building projects.

Predictable Costs

Monitoring and Management is charged on a monthly basis so you have a predictable monthly cost for your organization. This eliminates spikes in costs for maintenance fees and the high costs of hiring employees to manage your IT.

An MSP like Magna5 can provide the best solution for SMBs and even some of the largest companies from a cost and efficiency standpoint. It frees them up to focus on their core business unimpeded by network downtime.

About Magna5

Magna5 is a nationwide provider of network services, unified communications, infrastructure technology and managed services. By bringing together enterprise-class platforms from leading providers and a 24/7/365 Operations Center, Magna5 has the unique ability to leverage leading software, carrier diversity and customize solutions that drive value to customers and vendors alike.

In working with private and public businesses of all sizes, from government agencies to manufacturing organizations, small businesses and large-scale operations, we believe that focusing on the needs of our clients through a boutique approach to customer service is key. With more than two decades of experience in the telecommunications and managed services industry, we've acquired the experience to understand the needs of your organization, the changing landscape of providers and diverse technologies to deliver targeted, strategic solutions that make a difference.

Whether you need voice solutions, managed services, security services or are looking to move to cloud-based infrastructures, Magna5 helps your business make smart connections.

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