Risk and reward
A personality quiz to help CIOs choose the right managed services
Executive summary

Today, CIOs face a baffling array of IT services to select—everything from simple server colocation to private and public managed cloud solutions. How to choose? What’s best for you and your organization? Your company has a unique profile that impacts what you do and the managed services you should use. Learn what makes certain managed services perfect for your business—and why others may not be the right fit. Discover your true IT identity and see which managed service offerings make the most sense.

Risk and reward

How to pick your spot in the managed services world

With revolutionary advances in technology, increasingly demanding customers and aggressive competition, it’s a formidable challenge for CIOs to select the appropriate suite of managed services that best suit their company’s immediate needs. No two corporate situations are ever identical, but we’ve developed a quiz that will help companies identify their managed services profile and guide IT decision-makers to explore a range of services appropriate for their firm’s risk appetite, growth rate, data usage and available budget.

Take the quiz. Discover your organization’s IT identity and find out which managed service offerings make the most sense for you.
The IT personality quiz

Answer these seven questions about your company’s characteristics, approach and attitude.

1. Your business is growing:
   A) Steadily
   B) Quickly
   C) Exponentially

2. With respect to server capacity, your organization’s requirements are:
   A) Steady
   B) Up and down, yet predictable
   C) Up and down, but unpredictable

3. Your organization sees experimenting with technology as:
   A) Risky and to be avoided
   B) A necessary evil
   C) A key competitive advantage

4. When addressing control of IT infrastructure, your organization is:
   A) Open to the idea of outsourcing IT work for cost savings and/or performance enhancements
   B) Wary of outsourcing IT work
   C) Not interested except when something absolutely can’t justifiably be kept in-house

5. When it comes to making sure data is accessible, your(3,7),(997,993)
   organization is:
   A) Moderately concerned, but generally pleased with current data-accessibility capability
   B) Vigilant, always looking for new ways to enhance data accessibility
   C) Always on edge. If staff can’t access company data, the organization would quickly be in serious trouble
6. The idea of sharing IT resources with other organizations in the cloud leaves you feeling:
   A) Indifferent
   B) Uneasy, until it’s clear exactly what would be shared
   C) Very uncomfortable. Control is the key to success

7. Your data analysis requirements are:
   A) Light. You rarely scrutinize your data
   B) Moderate. You analyze your data from time to time to verify certain models and strategies
   C) Heavy. You regularly analyze data to spot trends, uncover anomalies and find opportunities that you wouldn’t see otherwise.

Calculate your results

Answer key
No answer – 0 points
A – 2 points
B – 3 points
C – 4 points

IT identities
7 to 14: Poised, prepped and prudent
14 to 20: Ready and set to grow
21 to 28: On the edge and loving it
Poised, prepped and prudent
Your organization has established processes and systems. Sensible cost-saving measures and careful investment in technology performance enhancements are the cornerstones of your balanced IT platform. You’re not averse to new technologies, as long as they are secure, proven and very likely to help reduce costs or improve IT productivity.

Poised, prepped and prudent organizations would see the benefits of:
- **Public cloud** – Provides the computing power you need to run applications and software with a cost-effective pay-per-use model. When considering prospective cloud service providers, make sure to ask about options such as automation for increased efficiency and rolling backups to ensure your most recent data is protected.
- **Virtual cloud servers** – Secure yet inexpensive server functionality on a pay-per-use basis. Ask about failover and backup for reliability and load balancing for efficiency.
- **Direct-attached data storage** – Cost-effective information repository employing advanced features such as file clustering for reduced complexity. Ask about scalability: how much storage does the service provider offer via the direct-attached model? Look into the speed of the solution too: unless the system offers I/O functionality that outpaces that of local storage, look elsewhere.
Ready and set to grow

Your organization is expanding and changing. You’re looking for ways to optimize the benefits and mitigate the risks of transformation. You’re open to solutions, as long as the return on investment is evident in both the short and long term. You’re willing to experiment with technology, yet you remain unconvinced that certain outsourcing options make sense for you.

Organizations that are ready and set to grow would see the benefits of:

- **Managed private cloud** – A contained cloud supported by dedicated hardware, ideal for companies that seek cloud benefits without having to share resources with other organizations. Your managed private cloud provider should offer to customize the hardware and the service-level agreement (SLA) to your business’s precise requirements.

- **Hybrid hosting** – A combination of virtual cloud servers and dedicated servers for scalability and performance, ideal for organizations that need additional server capacity as they grow. Be sure to choose a hybrid hosting provider that allows you to drive complex solutions through an easy-to-use control panel.

- **Shared Disk storage area network (SAN)** – A portion of a SAN disk as an inexpensive yet advanced information repository. Shared disk SANs deliver the performance and reliability of complete SANs at a lower cost. Ask potential service providers about the reliability of their storage infrastructure. Some use dual storage processors and dual power sources on each processor to ensure platforms are always online.
On the edge and loving it

Your organization is buzzing with energy and change. The business leadership expects every aspect of its operations to perform extremely well, from IT and finance, to sales and marketing. Your technology requirements are difficult to satisfy and your team thrives on experimentation. Control is one of the keys to your company’s success.

Organizations that are on the edge and loving it would see the benefits of:

- **Dedicated servers** – Servers set aside for a specific end users, ideal for companies with demanding performance and reliability requirements. Features such as advanced monitoring, rolling backups and private cloud functionality afford a customized experience.

- **Colocation** – An organization’s servers are housed in a service provider’s data center for superior control and reliability. You own the equipment, but benefit from superior cooling systems, security protocols and other advanced features within the provider’s facilities. Make sure your colocation company uses fast networking technology and the latest space-management techniques to enhance the performance of your hardware.

- **Dedicated-disk storage area network (SAN)** – A complete SAN disk specifically for an individual company, suitable for organizations with a huge data appetite. Whether you are simply storing the data or combing through it for critical insights, ask prospective providers about their expertise as SAN managers. This is a technology system with a proven history, so it’s reasonable to expect a SAN management team to have more than a decade of experience.
Outliers welcome

If you’ve answered the questions and calculated your score but don’t think the corresponding profile matches your corporate goals, don’t worry. Even without a clearly-defined IT identity, there are a wide range of product experience and offerings. There are also a good number of service providers that are deft customization specialists. The best of them are experts in understanding what their customers need and how to develop a solution as required. So if you’re still not clear about your company’s personality, rest assured that a managed service provider probably can help you analyze your business and decide what—if any—IT services are suitable for you.

THREE MANAGED SERVICES THAT SUIT ALMOST EVERYONE

1. Data backup: Whether you colocate servers in a provider’s facilities or you run a complete software suite on a provider’s cloud, data backup services make sense. Many providers are well versed in the latest backup products and solutions, which spells reliable data management and fast restorations.

2. Email: Enterprise grade email systems run in-house result in unnecessary overhead associated with having to manage servers, software, licences and other administrative aspects. Consider using a turnkey email collaboration platform through a managed service provider to do away with those nuisances and benefit from the advanced security that an established provider should be able to offer.

3. Databases: Many managed service providers are experts in database management. Some even have database administrators available on a per-project basis. Database hosting often helps organizations improve reliability and efficiency.
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