Accelerate IT Transformation: How Would You Use an Extra 1,000 IT Hours?

How managed services helps drive innovation

Everyone keeps reading about the need to transform IT operations to support business objectives. There's plenty of advice and guidance about this topic already. Yet, organizations continue to be challenged with how best to make progress in their own digital transformation.

Why? It can be summed up in three words: People, process, tools.

Transformation can be especially painful when it involves turning enterprise "ships" around after considerable time, money, and rework has already been invested in legacy IT systems and processes.

Yet, the need to transform is equally painful for an organization's IT operations staff. These are the experts often charged with "keeping the lights on" and "putting out fires" while simultaneously being asked to innovate to support the company's digital transformation.

Unfortunately for many organizations with lean IT staff, there's just not enough of them to go around. Thus, the title of this guide poses a provocative question…

> "What if your company had an extra 1,000 IT hours to spend on digital transformation?"

IT leaders are increasingly turning to managed services providers as a means to free up internal IT teams to focus on innovation. Cloud + Data Center Transformation (CDCT) helped one global company do just that. The company was able to reclaim over 1,000 IT operational hours in just the first three months of working with CDCT. After six months, this grew to over 2,000 reclaimed IT hours.

How was this possible? The company made a pivotal choice: They decided to outsource much of the day-to-day IT system patching, monitoring, and management to CDCT's Managed Services team.

And while there's no guarantee that every company can reclaim 1,000 or more IT hours, this organization's story isn't unique. Many companies have been able to redirect a significant amount of time to other tasks following a similar course.

Regardless of the type of managed IT services you leverage or the provider you decide to use, this type of IT savings bears further study. Especially when it could help accelerate your own digital transformation.

- What if you could reclaim 1,000 IT hours (or, even, a few hundred IT hours) over the course of six months?
- How far could you go?
- How much faster could you get there?
- What would your company look like a year from now?

While they might sound relatively unexciting, managed IT services are starting to reap big dividends for companies focused on accelerating digital transformation.

About this guide

This guide delves into the real challenges organizations face when trying to balance day-to-day operations with transformation initiatives. It also shares insights regarding the ways organizations are using managed services.

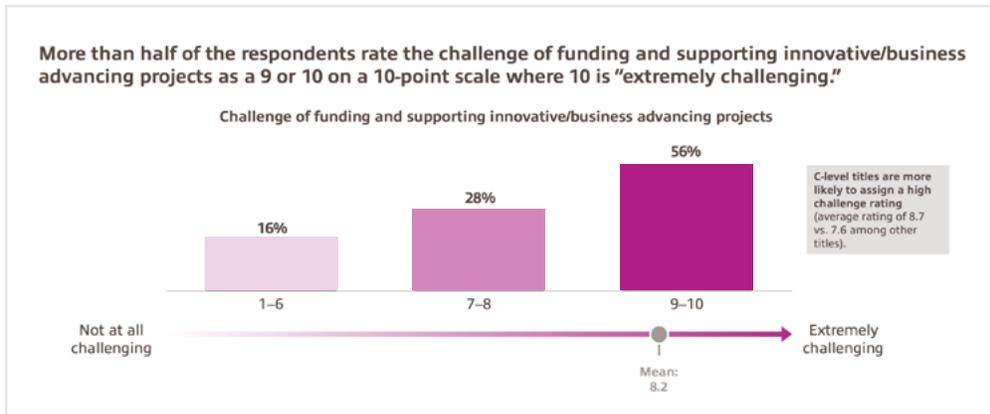## IT operations or innovations? The struggle is real.

Each year, Insight commissions IDG Research Services to conduct a survey to learn how enterprise and midrange organizations are doing with digital transformation and disruptive technologies like the cloud.

Striving for balance

Results from a past IDG Survey[1] found:

- Most IT organizations struggled to be truly bimodal. Many were still striving to strike the right balance between funding and supporting both "mode 1" IT operations projects (i.e., "keeping the lights on") and "mode 2" projects (geared more toward innovation and advancing the business).
- More than half of those polled said it was "extremely challenging" to fund and support innovative IT initiatives geared toward digital transformation. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1

More than half of the respondents rate the challenge of funding and supporting innovative/business advancing projects as a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale where 10 is "extremely challenging."

Challenge of funding and supporting innovative/business advancing projects

16% — 1–6
28% — 7–8
56% — 9–10

C-level titles are more likely to assign a high challenge rating (average rating of 8.7 vs. 7.6 among other titles).

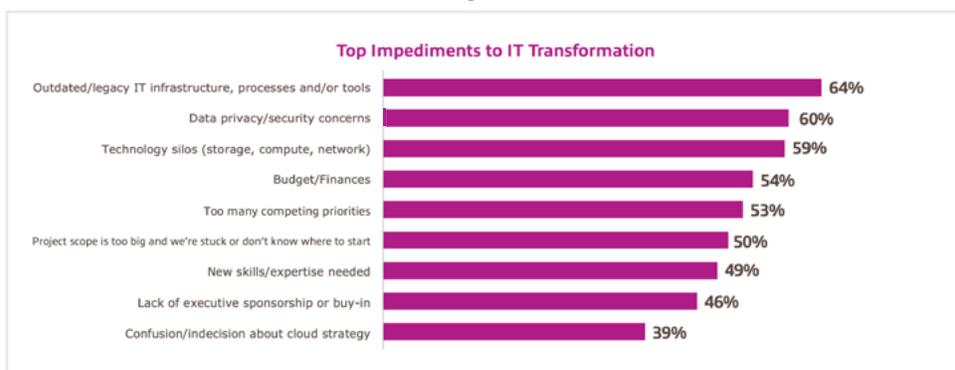Not at all challenging ———→ Extremely challenging

Mean: 8.2

Legacy infrastructure a barrier to transformation

According to the 2018 survey[2]:

- 64% of respondents consistently found legacy IT infrastructure, processes, and tools among the top five barriers to IT transformation (See Figure 2)
- 59% of respondents cited challenges with existing technology silos (storage, compute, network) among the top five barriers to IT transformation
- Just over half of respondents said transformation was also slowed because of too many competing priorities

Figure 2

Top Impediments to IT Transformation

Outdated/legacy IT infrastructure, processes and/or tools	64%
Data privacy/security concerns	60%
Technology silos (storage, compute, network)	59%
Budget/Finances	54%
Too many competing priorities	53%
Project scope is too big and we're stuck or don't know where to start	50%
New skills/expertise needed	49%
Lack of executive sponsorship or buy-in	46%
Confusion/indecision about cloud strategy	39%

Moving toward a better future

The challenges of enterprise and midrange IT organizations are real. While most organizations might recognize they need help, guidance, or a different approach, they don't always know how to get from where they are now to where they need to be.

What's the best way forward? What's the best way to minimize risk, make the most of the resources you already have and smoothly run day-to-day IT operations — all while making progress toward digital transformation?

Based on the field experiences shared here, managed IT services might just offer one key to this equation. Where you deploy managed IT services, however, can vary greatly for each organization. This might depend, for instance, on where you experience your most significant IT pain. For example, this could involve:

- Outsourcing and automating network operations, system monitoring, and patching
- Augmenting local IT security roles with outsourced security resources
- Outsourcing management or monitoring of mixed-environment workloads (i.e., private, public, or hybrid cloud)
- Specialized outsourcing of a more narrow or transitory IT function
- Transformation project-specific IT outsourcing

According to Insight's 2018 survey[3], organizations already anticipate significant help from an outside party in regard to digital transformation. Respondents indicated they expect more than one-third of their IT transformation initiatives will be handled by a third party.

Reclaiming over 1,000 IT hours: How it worked for one company

A global data center company asked Insight for help. Here's what they were facing: They had to manage thousands of servers and thousands of network devices across 31 different countries.

The company had been using another managed services provider to generate alerts but not provide much in the way of resolution of any issues that might arise. The organization was now faced with increased business demands and the need to add more data centers.

They ultimately engaged CDCT to manage their IT infrastructure. Among other things, this consisted of:

- 24/7 monitoring
- 24/7 incident management
- Day-to-day administration
- Patching
- Regular service reviews

Beyond relieving the company of the need to provide its own 24/7 IT operations, the organization gained measurable outcomes, including:

- An 83% reduction in network Priority 1 events within four weeks
- Patching of 750+ neglected IT servers in the first six weeks
- Over 1,000 IT operational hours saved by the organization in the first three months of its managed services engagement. Over 2,000 operational hours saved in the first six months.

How did this happen? CDCT:

- Optimized the environment by improving service levels and eliminating outages
- Automated manual processes like patching by using workflow and automation
- Freed people who had been tasked with reviewing alerts to focus on more productive work by leveraging a ZeroNOC approach that transforms alerts into actionable incidents sent to the right resource, in the right place, at the right time with event correlation and automation.

The resulting savings are summarized in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3

Time (in weeks)
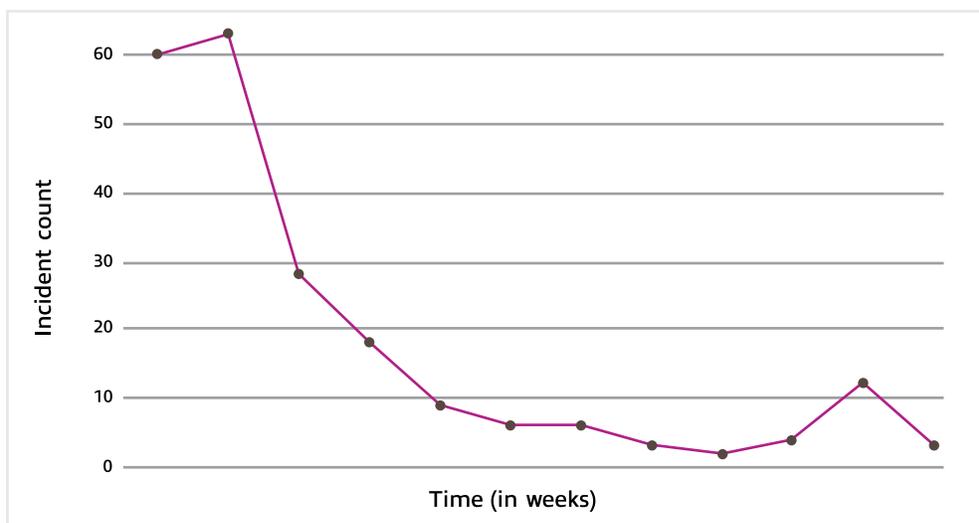
In the first few weeks of managing the environment, Insight reported that the company's network incidents had dropped dramatically from around 60 per week down to 10 or fewer.

Figure 4

Reduced risk
750+ servers patched in 1st six weeks of engagement

83% reduction in Priority 1 network events

1000+ Operational hours saved in first 3 months of engagement by Managed Services

90+ misconfigured VPN tunnels remediated

Increasing capacity of internal resources to focus on new projects

24/7/365 operations delivered through dual support centers

Applying best practices and protocols to update neglected software, devices, and servers, CDCT was able to boost operational efficiency significantly.

Could your organization have similar results?

This guide can't promise that every company will reclaim 1,000 IT hours or more if they use managed IT services. But, the majority of organizations find that working with a managed services provider helps them:

- Save time on IT operations
- Shift IT focus to higher-level tasks
- Streamline IT transformation
- Scale operations
- Leverage hard to find IT skills
- Manage both on-premises and cloud environments
- Drive up efficiency
- Reduce IT operation costs

Is it time to leverage IT managed services at your organization? How much of your IT staff time could you free up? Do you need a full-service provider with the resources to not only manage but also design and deploy managed services solutions if required?

Learn more or contact us today at insightCDCT.com/Managed-Services

Leverage our additional Managed Services resources for further details:

- Case Study: International Manufacturer
- Solution Brief: Managed Backup
- Solution Brief: Managed Cloud Services
- Solution Brief: Managed Infrastructure Services
- Solution Brief: Managed Monitoring Service
- Video: *Why Managed Services?*

1. "Stakes Rise for IT: The IT Transformation Journey," by IDG Research in conjunction with CDCT, 2017, https://www.insightCDCT.com/getattachment/4ca1d55c-fd54-451d-b665-0500a523382f/IDG-Survey-Stakes-Rise-for-IT.aspx
2. "The Challenge of Change: IT in Transition," by IDG Research in conjunction with CDCT, 2018, p. 12, https://www.insightCDCT.com/getattachment/5ced5297-e7b8-4321-b9e4-a1cf9ac557aa/IDG-Survey-The-Challenge-of-Change.aspx "The Challenge of Change: IT in Transition," pp. 4, 11.

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