



IT SOLUTIONS FOR THE **PROGRESSIVE ENTERPRISE**

10 Benefits of Managed IT Services

This ebook provides an overview of managed IT services and describes the benefits of this model of service delivery. Read this document to learn how businesses with small technical staffs and modest IT budgets can use Progent's *ProSight* suite of managed services to slash the costs of managing network resources and supporting end users, minimize downtime, improve security, prevent data loss, optimize performance, and maximize the business value of their IT systems.

About Progent

Progent's Microsoft and Cisco-certified team of technology experts has almost 20 years of experience providing IT consulting and support services for small and medium-sized organizations covering all aspects of business computing. To learn how Progent can add business value to your network, check out our website at:

www.progent.com

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Executive Summary

Managed IT services are outsourced network support packages that provide end-to-end solutions for specific aspects of information technology such as backup/recovery, email content filtering, infrastructure monitoring, or endpoint security. Managed services are typically billed at a fixed monthly rate, delivered remotely rather than on premises, rely heavily on automated workflows based on best practices, and include functions like monitoring and alerts, patch/update control, diagnostics and remediation, reporting, analytics, and forensics. Managed services leverage cloud technology and support hybrid environments that include both local and cloud-based resources.

Traditionally, a smaller organization with little or no in-house technical support and a tight IT budget waits for something to break before calling in an IT expert. This invites occasional episodes of business disruption that can range from inconvenient to devastating. Managed IT services make it possible to leverage the skills of an outside support team staffed with a broad range of subject matter specialists and empowered with the same advanced technology used by many of the world's largest enterprises. This allows proactive network management that focuses on prevention and early detection to avoid crises.

Managed services leverage cloud technology and support hybrid environments that include both local and cloud-based resources.

The managed service model offers important advantages over the break/fix approach including predictable and lower IT management costs, immediate access to experts familiar with your network, a single point of contact for dealing with multiple vendors, fewer and shorter shutdowns and support calls, better network performance and security, and higher utilization of IT resources.

Progent has partnered with world-class network management technology companies to create the *ProSight* suite of managed IT services. These fixed-rate service offerings are designed to provide small and mid-size businesses with budget-friendly, enterprise-class solutions for all major aspects of network management and information assurance.

- **ProSight Email Guard** inbound and outbound spam filtering, data leakage protection, and content filtering
- **ProSight Active Security Monitoring** endpoint protection and ransomware defense and recovery
- **ProSight Enhanced Security Protection** cloud and hybrid network protection for virtual and physical endpoints
- **ProSight Data Protection Services** fully managed cloud backup and disaster recovery services
- **ProSight WAN Watch** network infrastructure monitoring and management
- **ProSight LAN Watch** server and desktop monitoring and management
- **ProSight IT Asset Management** documents IT resources, expirations, passwords, configurations and procedures
- **ProSight Virtual Hosting** lets you run your VMs affordably at Progent's secure and fault-tolerant Tier III datacenter

Progent has almost two decades of experience delivering remote and onsite IT support to businesses throughout the United States and currently has clients in every state in the country. Progent has worked with enterprises of all sizes but specializes in providing consulting services to small and mid-size organizations. Progent's team of more than 100 consultants includes experts who have earned some of the most prestigious certifications available from technology leaders like Microsoft, Cisco, VMware, Apple, Juniper, NetApp and many others. Progent also offers the assistance of security and compliance experts with certifications that include CISM, ISSAP, CISA, and GIAC.

Progent has the depth and breadth of skills and the range of industry partnerships to ensure that *ProSight* managed services maximize the business value of your information network.

How Managed Services Differ from Traditional Network Support

Managed Services is the fastest growing segment of the technology services industry. The managed services model is especially well suited to smaller organizations unable to afford a fully staffed in-house technical team to take care of day-to-day IT issues, provide help desk services, and perform required hardware and software maintenance.

In the traditional “break/fix” services model followed by small companies, maintenance is routinely deferred until a sudden IT crisis disrupts business. At this point, management calls vendors, a third-party technical support firm, a trusted guru, or any combination of these. Whoever responds to the call for help finds a maze of problems that are likely to include out-of-date or non-existent network topology maps, undocumented configurations and passwords, missing software patches, out-of-support applications, backups that never happened, vendors pointing their fingers at one another, and other issues that need to be resolved before the underlying issue can be addressed.

Meanwhile, while the network is analyzed and the main problem isolated, employees are unproductive, customers are unhappy, and the meter for tech support services keeps running. If the core problem results in massive amounts of lost or compromised data, as in a ransomware attack, the impact can be crippling to the small business.

The modern solution for IT support for smaller organizations is known as *Managed Services*. With this model, the management of specific aspects of running a network is outsourced to a third-party IT support firm. Managed services such as Progent’s *ProSight* suite address a range of crucial functions such as cloud backup/recovery, spam and email content filtering, endpoint security, or network infrastructure monitoring and reporting.

Managed services are typically billed at a flat monthly rate and are backed by a team of IT experts maintained by the service provider. This allows the small business client to leverage the skills of a fully staffed support group without the burden of building and maintaining an in-house service organization. The provider of managed services in turn leverages modern tools for network management, which are typically out of reach for small businesses because of the required investment in capital and training. Managed service providers also make extensive use of cloud technology to cut costs and provide on-demand scale. Supported small business network models include on-premises networks, cloud-based systems, and hybrid environments that incorporate both local and cloud resources.

Managed services providers follow key principles to support the mission:

- Regular maintenance prolongs and enhances the benefits of computer resources.
- Security patches and software updates protect the network from many threats and issues.
- Remote technical support reduces support costs and expedites problem resolution.
- Proactive monitoring and alerts can nip problems in the bud and avoid network disruption.
- Up-to-date configuration documentation and network diagrams save precious time in an emergency.
- Reporting and tracking can help detect device issues and network bottlenecks.
- Advanced network management tools offer a high level of automation.

The next pages describe the benefits small businesses can realize by using managed IT services vs. the traditional “break/fix” approach to network support. You will then learn about Progent’s *ProSight* suite of managed IT services.

In the traditional services model followed by small companies, maintenance is routinely deferred until a sudden IT crisis disrupts business.

1: *Managed Services* is the most efficient model for outsourcing IT support

Smaller organizations lack the economies of scale to build and maintain internal IT support staffs capable of handling all aspects of network administration, technical support, and IT planning. Out of necessity, small and midsize businesses (SMBs) outsource most or all of these services. Traditionally, small companies resorted to local consultants or IT service firms on an as-needed basis. In other words, they called for help when something blew up. The *managed services* model, which is the fastest growing sector of the computer support industry, offers a better and more affordable way to outsource IT services.

Virtually all small businesses outsource IT support tasks. The reason is simple. They can't afford to staff and manage a self-sufficient in-house service group. The big question is *right-sourcing*. With the traditional outsourcing model for small businesses, companies in need of technical support turn to either a local guru, a vendor, or an IT consulting firm. An individual guru may over time develop a strong relationship with the client but has limited technical scope and unpredictable availability. An IT consulting firm offers a broad range of technical skills but typically doesn't learn about the client's business goals. In both cases, outsourced support follows the so-called *break/fix* model. The service provider is stuck in a reactive state, continually putting out fires and with no incentive to explore ways to avoid future crises.

The modern alternative is *Managed Services*. Under this support model, the service provider offers an end-to-end solution to a specific aspect of your network management needs such as email content filtering, automated cloud backup, infrastructure monitoring, or endpoint security. The service firm charges a flat monthly fee and takes responsibility for the totality of services required for a complete business solution. The mindset is proactive and preventive, just like the IT department in an enterprise, because serious problems are bad news for both the client and the service provider.

The *Managed Services* model for outsourcing IT support provides budget-restrained small businesses the nearest practical equivalent to having an enterprise-class IT department.

2: Proactive IT management resolves most problems before they become critical

Computer problems are often like human health problems in that the earlier they are detected, the easier they are to fix. If left unattended long enough, they can become catastrophic. The *Managed Services* model for IT support is rooted in round-the-clock monitoring. Modern tools for network monitoring, when configured and run by experts, can detect and often automatically fix common issues before they result in downtime.

Monitoring and automatic alerts are at the heart of managed IT services. The latest tools deployed by managed service providers like Progent offer unprecedented sophistication for keeping track of the health of an information network. Typical targets of monitoring include the availability of devices and applications, the behavior of potential threats, network infrastructure performance, the successful completion of scheduled tasks, adherence to best practices in configuring resources, consistent policy enforcement, the currency of updates and licenses, and thousands of other issues that can impact a modern IT environment.

Monitoring can uncover problems before they cause downtime or data loss, but understanding and responding efficiently to the alerts and reports generated by modern monitoring tools requires a team of support experts with great depth and breadth of skills. Progent has been providing remote monitoring services for almost two decades and knows how to recognize and resolve the underlying problems that trigger alerts or show up in reports and error logs.

The proactive approach to network management combined with skilled IT service practitioners is one of the key differentiators between the traditional break/fix model for outsourcing IT support and the Managed Services model.

3: Remote consulting and repair can cut costs and improve network uptime

Today, most network management and troubleshooting can be performed with remote tools. Top vendors like Microsoft and Apple routinely offer to take remote control of a local device to fix a problem. House calls still have their place, but onsite support is expensive. Remote management and repair are key to delivering managed services efficiently, and Progent is among the industry's pioneers in providing remote network support.

Remote management and technical support are vital to delivering cost-effective IT services. At one time considered cutting edge, remote support is now often the only service alternative available, such as when configuring cloud-based infrastructure. Onsite service can occasionally be necessary. For example, you need a local set of hands to replace an on-premises disk drive or server. But remote service delivery saves substantial time and money and is suitable for the vast majority of management and repair tasks such as monitoring, cleanup following a cyber attack, applying patches and updates, setting up a VPN tunnel, scheduling and testing backups, and many other common operations.

Remote management technology has been expanding quickly. Many operations that only recently required long onsite visits can now be accomplished remotely. Examples of this include the ability to generate an accurate map of a client's network or to perform a wireless site survey to determine an optimum layout of Wi-Fi access points. Understanding the capabilities of modern remote management tools and knowing how to use them help the managed services provider to deliver maximum value. Progent has two decades of experience providing advanced remote consulting and troubleshooting services to clients throughout the United States. This background helps Progent fulfill a core promise of managed services, which is to do the most amount of useful work at the least cost.

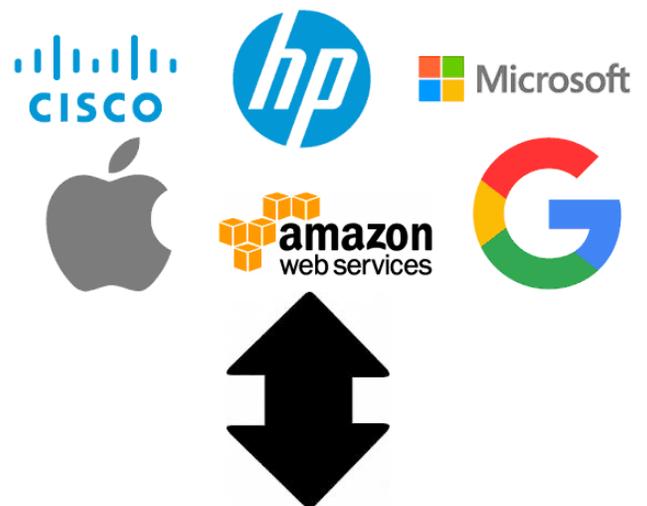
4: A single point of contact for all technical issues saves time, money and frustration

When something breaks, a common reaction is to call the vendor whose product appears to be the culprit. This typically launches a prolonged cycle of finger pointing where you get bounced around various call centers. Usually the problem does not get resolved on the first few calls and as your costs mount you repeatedly find yourself back to square one. As an experienced provider of managed services, Progent has the expertise to know which vendor, if any, to call, what to say, and what to do. Whether your issue involves a public cloud or a local ISP, having Progent on your side saves time, money and hassle.

Because managed service providers deliver end-to-end solutions for many clients, they are accustomed to dealing efficiently with issues that involve multiple vendors who can range from individual programmers to industry giants like Microsoft, Cisco and Apple. Over the years, managed service providers such as Progent learn the ropes of dealing with major vendors, understand their corporate culture and processes, and build relationships. In many cases, understanding issues surrounding warranties, licenses and support agreements can be just as important as knowing the core technology.

Also, working within mixed-vendor environments allows managed service providers to build internal databases about problems and solutions involved with combining products from different companies. By acting as a single point of contact with all your technology vendors, managed service providers can eliminate hours of wasted time and emotional stress while delivering fast, affordable solutions.

On top of that, managed IT firms like Progent have earned certifications from major vendors that allow them access to special solutions and services that aren't always offered to small businesses, such as bulk licensing and early access to special software and firmware patches.



Progent ProSight Managed Services

5: Up-to-date network documentation streamlines network management

Having accurate network documentation saves precious time in a crisis. Sadly, most small companies wait for the crisis. Top-tier managed service firms know the value of thorough and accurate network documentation and use sophisticated, automated tools that ensure it is always up to date.

Good documentation can shave hours off tasks like finding which routers require a critical security patch, creating an accurate network diagram, or building a database of device configurations. Typical break/fix service providers often create documentation on an as-needed basis. Since nobody maintains the documentation between crises, it has to be recreated whenever there's a new problem. This can be good for the service provider, but it's a waste of money for the small business client and is especially costly if the customer's network is down or seriously impaired.

Top-tier managed service firms know the value of thorough and accurate network documentation

Like network health monitoring, documentation is a key area that benefits from the automation offered by today's enterprise-class remote management platforms. Deploying advanced documentation tools is part of the on-boarding process followed by Progent when setting up a managed services customer. This saves time and expense generating essential network documentation, ensures its accuracy, and keeps it current. This in turn saves time and money when troubleshooting, optimizing, upgrading or expanding your system.

Accurate documentation facilitates the proactive approach that drives managed services by making it easy to see whether an IT environment conforms with best practices or needs to be improved in order to avoid future problems.

6: Fixed-cost managed services simplify budgeting and planning

For a small business, planning your IT expenses under the break/fix service model is not an art or a science. It's impossible. Monthly costs can range from zero to huge. If serious problems like unsecured end points are left to fester, the results can threaten the life of the business. Spending plans for strategic initiatives must always be hedged with "As long as nothing breaks." Managed services are billed at a flat rate and focus on prevention, making budgeting realistic and planning possible.

Small businesses who follow the traditional break/fix service model have to budget for emergencies. That's virtually impossible, which is why there is an insurance industry. When an IT emergency arrives, the costs associated with repairs and downtime can easily force active fixed-bid projects to be paused or shut down.

Managed services are usually provided at a flat rate and they can be expanded (e.g., add a user or device) at a predetermined cost. This brings an element of predictability to the budgeting process and makes it possible to plan and carry out needed IT projects without running into unexpected cash flow dilemmas.

The proactive monitoring and preventive maintenance associated with managed services also help stabilize support costs and provide greater budgetary visibility. Routine management tasks covered by a flat-rate service plan can eliminate many looming problems before they impact productivity, and automated activities like performance monitoring can anticipate the need for future expenditures in time for them to be included in the budgeting process.



7: Managed IT services enhance the business value of your network

The primary purpose of small business computing is to improve the productivity of your employees. Managed services let your computer network do its job. When delivered properly, managed services protect sensitive information, block cyber threats, optimize performance and availability, recover quickly from disasters, provide the agility to adapt rapidly to changing business conditions, and allow management to focus on business issues instead of information technology.

Managed service providers (MSPs) and their small business clients share the same goal: keep the network working. This means following best practices in configuring and managing systems so they are easier to maintain for the MSPs and more productive for the small business. This way everybody wins

Well managed IT environments that adhere to leading practices deliver business value in many ways. They adjust to the modern landscape of cyber threats rather than trying to use old tools to combat new security attacks. They use resources efficiently and incorporate cloud technology intelligently to keep performance high and costs down. They stay current with software and firmware updates and patches so you can deploy powerful new applications without having to overhaul your environment. They recover quickly from disasters so you can get back to work.

All of these benefits of managed services allow you to maximize the business value of your network.



8: Managed services cost less over time than waiting for things to break

Just in terms of direct IT support costs, managed services cost less than the break/fix model. Proactive monitoring and ongoing maintenance reduce emergency support calls. When something does go wrong, up-to-date software and firmware, accurate network documentation, and the support of experts familiar with your system cut repair time and expense. Avoiding the indirect costs of downtime saves even more.



In general, it costs less to maintain technology according to industry best practices than to defer maintenance until something breaks and then scrambling to resolve the problem. That is why "best practices" exist. Managed service providers are experienced at using the most advanced network monitoring and management tools to minimize downtime and avoid emergencies. In the case of a breakdown, a managed service provider like Progent has the bandwidth to react quickly and the skill to work efficiently to provide a solution.

A major, and not always obvious, benefit of avoiding most technical emergencies and fixing the remaining problems quickly is lowering indirect expenses associated with network downtime. These "soft" costs are the result of idled employees, upset customers, missed sales opportunities, and stalled projects.

9: Managed services offer affordable access to enterprise-class expertise and technology

Managed services provide small businesses with world-class technology and expertise for a range of specific service categories such as security, email content filtering or network health monitoring. In these cases, you get an ongoing end-to-end solution. A big advantage of working with a large IT consulting firm like Progent for managed services is that you also have access to high-level consultants to assist you with one-time projects like moving to a public cloud, opening a branch office, or developing a business continuity plan.

As a managed services provider with a substantial IT consulting practice and two decades of experience working with small businesses, Progent can act as your on-call Chief Information Officer (CIO). Progent's familiarity with your IT ecosystem and commitment to your success makes it possible to take on the role of a trusted advisor for occasional projects, vendor and technology recommendations, solution design, contract review, application development, or any other area where a little professional guidance can save a lot of time and money. Progent is also available to provide comprehensive project management services to make sure that your critical IT initiatives are completed on schedule and on budget.

A sample of popular areas where Progent can provide as-needed expertise include:

- Voice over IP (VoIP) and Unified Communications
- Business Continuity Planning
- Firewall and VPN Configuration, Secure Remote Access
- Public Cloud Integration and Hybrid Cloud/On-premises Solutions
- Server and Desktop Virtualization
- Stealth Penetration Testing and Compliance Review
- Cisco Network Infrastructure Design and Troubleshooting
- Wi-Fi Site Surveys and Deployment

10: Managed IT services allow you to focus on business, not technology

Because small businesses typically can't afford a dedicated IT administrator, network management duties often fall on the employee with the best computer skills. This means jobs like CIO, Help Desk Manager, Data Assurance Manager, Compliance Manager and other full-time positions within an enterprise are all handled by one person. And this person also has a "real" job. As a result, both IT management and business duties can be compromised. Managed services offer enterprise-class IT support while allowing business managers to focus on business.

You need a team of technology experts to keep up with the fast-evolving demands of modern network management and to deploy and use the advanced tools available to monitor, administer and troubleshoot today's business networks. Small businesses can rarely afford a dedicated IT person, and certainly not a complete staff, for network management and support.

By outsourcing IT support to a managed service provider, small businesses can leverage the investment that service firms like Progent have made in personnel and technology. Customers benefit from enterprise-class network management on a small-business budget plus the ability of all employees to focus on growing and improving their business.

With managed services, both your network and your business run better.

The *ProSight* Suite of Managed Services

Progent has partnered with world-class network management technology companies to create the *ProSight* suite of managed IT services. These fixed-rate service offerings are designed to provide small and mid-size businesses with budget-friendly, enterprise-class solutions for all major aspects of network management and information assurance. The *ProSight* product line includes:

- ***ProSight Email Guard*** inbound and outbound spam filtering, data leakage protection, and content filtering
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ProSight Managed Services from Progent

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ProSight Active Security Monitoring

Utilizes behavior analysis for endpoint and server protection from modern malware attacks such as ransomware. Covers the entire attack lifecycle from front-line defense to forensics.



ProSight Email Guard

Defense in depth stops spam, email-borne viruses, DoS and DHA attacks before they can cross your firewall. Outbound content filtering prevents data leaks, and support for email encryption enhances security.



ProSight LAN Watch

Server and desktop monitoring uses advanced RMM technology to keep your network running at peak levels by checking the health of key devices and streamlining troubleshooting and maintenance.



ProSight WAN Watch

Infrastructure monitoring/management service lets you map, monitor, optimize, patch, reconfigure and repair all your key network appliances (routers, switches etc.) automatically and remotely.



ProSight Data Protection Services

Comprehensive data protection with automated cloud backup plus support for one-click recovery, point-in-time restores, and bare-metal restores.



ProSight Virtual Hosting

VM hosting services in Progent's Tier III datacenter offers world-class levels of availability and physical security and saves you the need to invest heavily in network infrastructure and maintenance.



ProSight IT Asset Management

IT documentation management makes it easy to find information like passwords, expirations, app and device configurations, and standard procedures. Integrates with your CRM system.



ProSight ESP

ProSight Enhanced Security Protection offers ultra-affordable multi-layer protection for physical and virtual servers, desktops, smartphones, and Exchange email. ProSight ESP protects cloud-based, local, or hybrid networks.

*Focus on your Business
Not your Technology*

**Get a FREE Managed
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