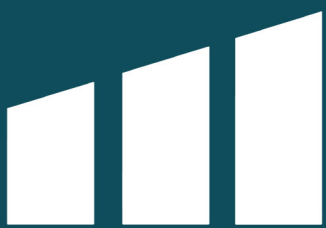
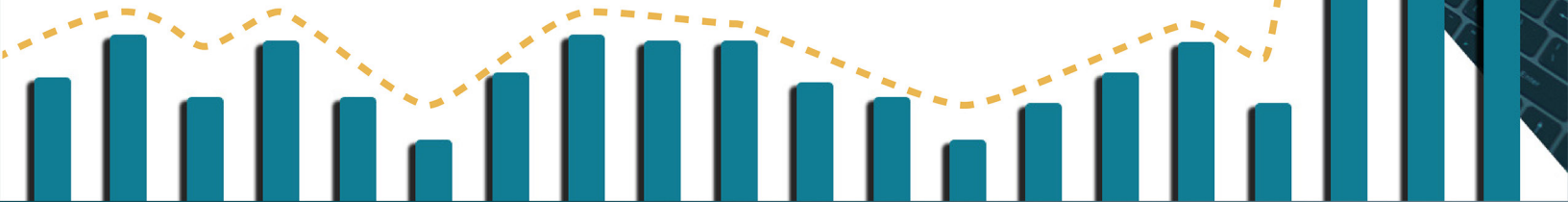


5

WAYS

I.T. Support Can Improve Your Bottom Line



TIER3
TECHNOLOGY

Managed IT Services & Security Solutions

5 Ways IT Support Improves Your Bottom Line

In this guide...

We'll outline **5 Unique Ways** that great IT Support
can help improve your business's bottom line.

(while doing our best to keep it non-boring)

The Chewbacca Effect

Galloping Gertie

Don't Fear the Reaper

Two Little Pigs Walk into a Bar

Dazed and Confused



NUMBER ONE: The Chewbacca Effect



1. The Chewbacca Effect

First, let's address the elephant — or maybe the big hairy Wookiee — in the room:

What the heck does Chewbacca have to do with IT Support?

Quite a lot, as it turns out.

Let's take a closer look at The Chewbacca Effect, starting with Chewie himself.

Chewbacca, affectionally known as "Chewie," is known for his loyalty, bravery, and intelligence. And, of course, his distinctive roar. Aboard the Millennium Falcon, the margin between success and catastrophe was often very thin. Without Chewie's technical know-how, loyalty, and consistency, Han Solo just wouldn't be the Han Solo we all know. Instead, he'd be, well... dead.

This is part of why some fans argue that Chewie isn't given his due in terms of his importance to the story. Despite being a major character, Chewbacca often takes a backseat to other characters when it comes to screen time and development.

It doesn't help that Chewie's dialogue is in his native Wookiee language (which isn't translated for the audience). This can make it difficult for viewers to fully appreciate his character and his contributions to the story. But while Chewbacca may not receive as much attention or development as some other characters in Star Wars, that doesn't mean he isn't a key player. In fact, aboard the Millennium Falcon, he's irreplaceable.

Imagine your business is the Millennium Falcon (which might just make you Han Solo). Where does that leave Chewbacca? You guessed it: Chewie

is a good IT Support team. If you have a Chewbacca, you'll recognize the signs: You might sometimes feel like he's speaking a different language. His contributions are often offscreen, so it's frequently hard to know how critical his role is — but when you find yourself in a pinch, he's right there by your side. When you call for him, he comes running. And most importantly, thanks to the underappreciated yet critical work he does offscreen and out-of-sight, the Millennium Falcon avoids disaster and remains operational.

The Chewbacca Effect occurs when you have a great IT Support team behind you. Your business is operational every day. Things work when you need them to work. Your IT Support team is diligent about the preventative maintenance that keeps things running smoothly and eliminates costly downtime. And when something does go wrong, your support team responds immediately. And even though it might not be the first thing you think of when you look at your bottom line, your great IT Support has played a considerable role in your success.

Q: Does your business have a Chewbacca?

A: Hopefully. If you're already experiencing The Chewbacca Effect, you might not even know it. Remember, much of Chewie's role in Han Solo's success occurs offscreen, unseen. Unfortunately, if you don't have a Chewbacca by your side, you're probably feeling the sting.

Much of Chewie's role in Han Solo's success occurs offscreen and unseen...

In fact, it's probably not a question that requires much thought. You probably knew the answer as soon as we asked. If the answer is NO, your bottom line is suffering. But it's not all bad. If you don't have a Chewbacca, the solution is simple.

Go out and get a Chewbacca!

It really is that simple. Go get your Chewie, then watch what happens to your bottom line. The Chewbacca Effect is about having the reliable, high-quality

IT Support partner you deserve. But remember: just like Wookiees, not all IT Support Providers are created equal.

Next, we'll take a closer look at some of the things a great IT partner (your very own Chewbacca) does, day in and day out, to improve your business's bottom line.

NUMBER TWO

Galloping Gertie



2. Galloping Gertie

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge collapse was a famous engineering disaster on November 7, 1940, in Tacoma, Washington, United States. The bridge, completed and opened to traffic just four months earlier, was designed to span the Tacoma Narrows strait, which connects Puget Sound to the Pacific Ocean.

Stay with us, here. It will all make sense in a second.

On the day of the collapse, a windstorm with gusts of up to 42 miles per hour began to blow across the bridge. As the wind intensified, it caused the bridge deck to sway in a motion that was later dubbed “Galloping Gertie” by the press. (See?)

The bridge deck continued to oscillate, with larger and larger amplitudes, until it finally collapsed, plunging into the water below. Miraculously, no one perished in the collapse.

The Tacoma Narrows Bridge collapse was a significant event in engineering history, leading to new insights into the dynamics of bridge design. (The Tacoma Narrows Bridge was later rebuilt at great expense and still operates today.)

Q: What did Galloping Gertie teach engineers?

A: Plenty. The Tacoma Narrows Bridge collapse was caused by aeroelastic flutter, which occurs when wind interacts with a flexible structure and causes it to vibrate. In Gertie’s case, the effects of aeroelastic flutter caused a catastrophic failure.

Several steps could have been taken to prevent the disaster, including:

- Conducting more thorough wind tunnel tests.
- Increasing the rigidity of the bridge.
- Installing more dampers. If additional dampers had been added to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, they could have helped to reduce the oscillation that led to the collapse.

Q: What can Galloping Gertie teach businesses about their IT Support?

A: A heck of a lot, as it turns out. First and foremost, the story of Galloping Gertie is a masterclass in how solid, thoroughly tested infrastructure leads to longevity and consistent cash flow (i.e., traffic).

Chances are your IT infrastructure is already built. Let's hope it was built well. But there's no way to know for sure until it's tested. Remember, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge was a smashing success for four months.

And then something as simple as a gust of wind came along and tore it all down.

The good news, however, is that a quality IT Support Team doesn't need to rebuild the entire structure to ensure that traffic (i.e., cash) continues to flow unimpeded. They can step in on day one and begin improving your IT infrastructure.

Your IT infrastructure includes hardware like servers, computers, and networking equipment, as well as software like operating systems, productivity tools, and security solutions.

Q: How can a high-quality IT Support team keep your IT infrastructure from impeding cash flow (or, as in the case of Galloping Gertie, ending it all together), facilitate future growth, and withstand those inevitable gale-force winds?

A: Here are just a few ways that a great IT team improves and optimizes your IT infrastructure:

- Having a scheduled and automated system for updating and upgrading hardware and software. Every company is different, and no solution will look identical. However, some universal processes can improve your infrastructure starting today. One of these is managing your software patches and updates across your network to ensure they happen in unison and on time. This has many benefits, including fewer issues with machines and software crashing or not syncing correctly. It also helps keep your network more secure from costly (and potentially backbreaking) cyber threats.
- Implementing an onboarding process for software and hardware in place so that when you're ready to expand, your company's network will be ready for it. This allows you to bring new team members into your environment quickly and securely, saving you overhead costs and unnecessary headaches.
- Harnessing the power of cloud computing has revolutionized how many businesses operate. With cloud computing, SMBs can access computing resources such as servers, storage, and software applications over the internet rather than maintaining an entire IT infrastructure. Leveraging cloud computing comes with reduced costs, improved scalability, and access to cutting-edge technology that might otherwise be out of reach for SMBs.
- Building an incident response and disaster recovery plan. By implementing a backup strategy that includes off-site backups, you can ensure your data is protected in the event of a disaster or system failure. And depending on your industry, demonstrating a commitment to proper incident response and disaster recovery planning can give potential customers and clients peace of mind.

Investing in the latest technology is not enough—the right tools are only helpful when placed in capable hands. A great IT team leverages cutting-edge tools and know-how to streamline and secure your IT infrastructure. Let's go back to Galloping Gertie: the right IT team keeps the operation running securely and keeps traffic flowing where you want it to go.

A subpar IT team can keep the bridge from collapsing entirely, sure. But they will inevitably slow your traffic with orange cones, yellow tape, and lengthy repair timelines. Maybe that's happening to you right now.

A subpar IT team is often unprepared for the worst-case scenario, too—the event that brings the whole thing crashing down.

What can Galloping Gertie teach us about IT Support?

**The right tools
are only helpful
when placed in
the right set of
hands.**

Time is money. It's a worn-out cliché, but it's true. Gertie shows us that your infrastructure can appear solid for months (maybe years when it comes to IT). But sooner or later, bad engineering catches up with us all. Fortifying and streamlining your IT infrastructure helps ensure that IT headaches won't impede your cash flow, but instead keep traffic flowing for years.

NUMBER THREE

Don't Fear the Reaper



3. Don't Fear the Reaper

For centuries, the scythe was the pinnacle of technological progress for harvesting grain and other crops. Using a scythe, a worker could harvest approximately a quarter acre per day.

(Note: If you're unfamiliar with a scythe and don't want to Google it, visit your local biker bar or tattoo parlor and look for the Grim Reaper. He'll be everywhere. That thing he's holding? That's called a scythe. Long ago, it was a commonly used tool that served a practical purpose beyond movie props, sew-on patches, and tattoo work.)

But even for experienced workers economizing their movements, maintaining a consistent rhythm, and working with a properly maintained blade, using a scythe all day was back-breaking.

Even worse, a quarter acre isn't much to show for a day of blistering, draining work.

The early 19th century saw the invention of the grain cradle (essentially a slightly more efficient scythe), followed closely by the introduction of the horse-drawn reaper, which increased efficiency and productivity exponentially. By the end of the 19th century, the combine harvester (at that time pulled by horses) had massively increased the output-per-man-hour. It paved the way for the air-conditioned, laser-guided combines that run through our fields today.

Here's the point: While it is true that productivity tools increase efficiency, lower overhead, and create room for growth, not all productivity tools are created equal.

Here's a key difference between harvesting tools and IT tools: it's much harder to recognize the impact of less efficient technology.

A subpar IT Support team can get by somewhere between swinging scythes and running a horse-drawn combine. They can operate suboptimal tools for years. You won't know the difference until you bring in a great IT team and see real, cutting-edge productivity tools in action.

Efficiency will boom, and you'll find yourself wondering why you sank all that time and money into feeding and re-shoeing tired old horses.

Don't fear the reaper (the tool, we mean). Instead, look for ways to improve it.

Here are a few tools a great IT team can implement to streamline operations and help grow your bottom line. More importantly, a great IT team can help you select the tools most suited to your needs and ensure they are implemented and used securely.

- **Automation Tools** help businesses automate routine tasks and dramatically reduce time spent on repetitive tasks. Some examples include Zapier, Hubspot, and Automate.io. These tools allow businesses to create workflows that automate tasks like data entry, social media posting, and email management. With the right automation tools, businesses can reduce errors, improve efficiency, and save hundreds of hours—valuable time that can be devoted to work that helps grow the business rather than just maintain it.
- **Cloud Storage and Collaboration Tools** like Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, and Dropbox allow businesses to store and share documents and files in the cloud. This means team members can access documents from anywhere, anytime, and collaborate on them in real time. Cloud storage and collaboration tools are particularly useful for remote teams, as they allow team members to work together if they are not in the same location. By using cloud storage and collaboration tools, businesses can improve their productivity, reduce duplication of work, and streamline their workflows.

Q: Hold on a minute. Can't I purchase and/or use many of these tools myself?

A: Yes. You can also buy a shotgun to kill a fly or spend five figures on a used car with a failing transmission—in short, it's easy to spend money on things. A great IT team can help you select the tools best suited to your needs, test those tools, and maximize your ROI on your investment. Most importantly, your IT team ensures that these tools are implemented and used safely and securely.

Here are a few more examples:

- **Project management Tools** are essential for businesses with multiple projects running simultaneously. These tools help teams stay organized, communicate effectively, and stay on track. Some examples of popular project management tools include Asana, Trello, and Jira. These tools provide features like task assignment, deadline tracking, and progress monitoring. By using project management tools, businesses can ensure that their projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the satisfaction of their customers.
- **Communication Tools** like email, instant messaging, and video conferencing software help businesses communicate with customers, partners, and team members more efficiently. Email is still one of the most popular communication tools, but instant messaging apps like Slack and Microsoft Teams are becoming more popular. Video conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet have also become increasingly popular due to the shift towards remote work. Businesses can improve their response times, reduce miscommunication, and collaborate more effectively by using communication tools.
- **Productivity Suites** are software bundles that include multiple productivity tools in one package. These suites include tools like

word processors, spreadsheets, presentation software, email clients, and more. By using productivity suites, businesses can reduce the need for multiple software subscriptions and simplify their workflows. Productivity suites also allow integration between different tools for greater efficiency and productivity.

The quality of your IT team will determine whether productivity tools prove to be a safe and secure way for your business to streamline operations—or have the opposite effect.

The right combination of productivity tools can give your business a competitive advantage and improve efficiency, output, and, ultimately, your revenue.

A great IT team can help you select the productivity tools best suited to your specific needs.

And finally, remember that not all productivity tools are created equal. Is your IT team still using scythes when a reaper would dramatically increase your efficiency and revenue?

Are you still toiling away for twelve hours to harvest a quarter acre?

NUMBER FOUR

Two Little Pigs Walk into a Bar



4. Two Little Pigs Walk into a Bar

Have you ever wondered what the story of The Three Little Pigs would look like if somebody turned it into a terrible “dad joke?”

No? That’s understandable. We took the liberty of doing it anyway.

Here it is:

Three little pigs walked up to a bar. Two of them walked into it. The third little pig was smart. He ducked.

As far as terrible dad jokes go, that’s up there with “Why do cows wear bells? Because their horns don’t work.”

Like any dad joke, it gets worse when no one laughs, so we start awkwardly explaining it: “Get it? You see, it’s funny because it’s a bar, like an iron bar, and the first two didn’t see it...”

Not good.

But just like the story of the three pigs, it has a moral. You probably already see where we’re going. Don’t be the third pig, right? Only instead of two pigs with blown-down houses, we have two pigs with black eyes.

Q: Then why the bad “dad joke?” Why not just use the actual story?

A: Well, the moral of our dad joke is a little different than the time-tested story of the three pigs and their houses.

The basic architecture of The Three Little Pigs has existed in various forms for centuries, but the “modern” incarnation was published by James Halliwell-Phillips in 1886. The tale owes its popularity with teachers and

parents to its clear-cut moral: don't let yourself get caught unprepared like the first two pigs. (We can only assume it owes its popularity with children to its thrilling plotline and rip-roaring action sequences.)

The basic structure and morals are not unique to The Three Little Pigs. A couple of millennia earlier (give or take), the Greeks beat Halliwell-Phillips to the punch with a similar story about an ant and a grasshopper, which has roots in ancient oral tradition and was eventually attributed to Aesop. It's a similar cautionary tale: one character is prepared; the other is a complete dope.

Q: How does any of this apply to IT Support in any meaningful way — other than the obvious and predictable moral: "Be prepared," etcetera, etcetera?

A: First, we'll pull a quote from David Foster Wallace's 2006 Kenyon Commencement Address and ask you to "bracket for just a few minutes your skepticism about the value of the totally obvious."

Let's embrace the "totally obvious" for what it really is: often overlooked, underappreciated, and flat-out ignored.

According to Astra Security, in 2023, we'll see an estimated 33 billion account breaches. To be clear, that's not "attempted" account breaches. That's 33 billion successful account breaches.

And 99+% of these accounts, one can safely presume, will be maintained by individuals, groups, business leaders, or government officials who are all familiar (to some degree) with the story of The Three Little Pigs.

The value of the totally obvious isn't hypothetical. It can be measured in stolen dollars and stolen data. It can be measured in the percentage of those breaches that will have been entirely preventable.

So, there is little doubt that the totally obvious moral of The Three Little Pigs has more value than some people think.

But.

Here's where our lame joke "zigs" where the more familiar story 'zags." This is where our terrible dad joke separates itself and creates a new entry in the genre.

With that in mind, here's the lame joke again:

Three little pigs walked up to a bar. Two of them walked into it. The third little pig was smart. He ducked.

The moral of our cringy dad joke doesn't concern the value of preparation.

The third little pig was no more prepared than the first two. He noticed the bar and reacted in time.

Q: Wait a second. What if the third pig was trailing the first two, allowing him to see what happened and react accordingly?

A: Come on. For the sake of consistency with the original tale, let's assume that none of the three pigs had any unfair advantage over the others—outside of the actions of each pig. They approached the bar at the same time. That's our story, and we're sticking to it.

So, now that we settled that, what saved the third little pig's bacon? (Yeah, we did it. We've come this far, haven't we?)

It's simple. He recognized the situation, processed it, and reacted faster.

Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of well-known fairy tales touting the value of fast reflexes and awareness of one's surroundings. Instead, they focus on telling the truth, being prepared, and other ordinary virtues, like spotting the difference between your grandmother and a wolf in a bonnet.

In short, those stories skew toward teachable values instead of intrinsic skillsets, which makes sense. They are tales intended to teach lessons, after all. And as we pointed out before, these teachable values have tremendous value—particularly in IT and cybersecurity.

But the value of intrinsic (unteachable) skills is largely ignored in fairy tales. Perhaps these innate traits aren't "totally obvious" enough to make good children's stories. Still, when combined with a healthy respect for the obvious (preparation, etc.), they can be the difference between a healthy pig and a little pig with a black eye.

Or the difference between a bad IT Support team and a great one. If your IT Support team isn't up to par, they can prepare as much as they want. Eventually, it won't matter.

They can build brick houses, bunkers, and steel castles with alligator-infested moats.

Trust us. Eventually, it won't matter. Something will come along that requires more than a healthy respect for the value of preparation. A great IT Support team invests in top-tier talent and equips that talent with top-tier technology.

If your IT Support team isn't up to par, they can prepare as much as they want. Eventually, it won't matter.

The result is an IT Support team that is intrinsically more responsive and better equipped to react. Furthermore, they invest in ongoing education that makes them more situationally aware.

Imagine the third little pig as a great IT Support team. He was naturally quicker and had better reflexes (unteachable skills). But he'd also taken the time to read a news article about the increased construction in the area. He was not only faster, but he was also aware.

To sum it up, a slow-reacting IT team walks into the bar, then tries to figure out what happened and how they could've avoided it.

A great IT Support team ducks, and they don't have to think about it. They're built better. They know their environment and have the skillset to react to it. They've invested in the caliber of talent that makes them faster and smarter than a budget IT company. Their commitment to ongoing education makes them even savvier.

The implications for cybersecurity are apparent. While preparation is essential, something is bound to find its way into your network. The speed and agility with which your IT Support team (and its technology) can diagnose and react to that threat will often be the difference between an unsuccessful attack and a money-draining breach. We don't have to spend time spelling out how this can help a business's bottom line.

Let's set cybersecurity aside for the moment.

After all, this is about how a quality IT Support team helps grow your bottom line.

So, how does investing in a fast, agile, and situationally aware IT Support team result in a better bottom line for your business?

— **Downtime is a profit killer** that happens more than you think. Suppose routine help desk tickets are not resolved promptly, for example. In that case, you'll have team members waiting on IT Support to perform basic functions essential to their job. Here is a great, real-life example. In 2022, we became aware of an instance in Des Moines that perfectly illustrates the potential losses associated with technology-related downtime. A nursing facility relied on a dozen functioning PCs for nurses to "chart," shorthand among the staff for logging resident check-ins, vitals, medication distributions, etc. Thanks to lengthy waiting times (days to weeks) from their outsourced IT Support provider, they often found themselves down to one working PC. Because of the time-sensitive nature of the information and the need to chart data for each resident before leaving the building, the nurses had no choice but to stay late and wait in line to access the last functioning PC. HIPAA and

privacy laws meant they could not hand their data to the next shift for entry in the computer. They had to stay and wait their turn. RNs earning more than \$50/hr logged dozens of hours of overtime — not working, but simply waiting for their chance to chart their numbers. Many nights saw anywhere from three to five nurses, each earning \$75/hr to \$90/hr after overtime pay kicked in, standing around outside smoking cigarettes and/or looking at their phones while they waited for their turn to chart. The company spent thousands of dollars monthly paying these nurses for . . . nothing. Our monthly fee was higher than their current MSP charged, and their ownership group was frugal. They owned facilities in the Midwest and East Coast and used the same budget MSP for each. We couldn't make any headway. For all we know, it's still happening.

Speaking of unnecessary downtime, have you ever suspected that an IT-related project was taking longer than it should? It probably was. The problem is that it's hard for you to press for details without getting a load of "geek speak" that's hard to understand yet seems to justify the delay, mainly because you have no choice but to accept the explanation. A quality IT Support team saves time and money by completing project work promptly, and they explain their progress to you in plain English.

Remember: IT is easy to explain in plain English. We're doing it right now.

What you might have on your hands is one of the first two little pigs, and maybe they're very good at explaining their meticulously crafted straw house using the latest architectural jargon. (The same little pig who won't see the bar coming, either.) If you feel like you're in that situation, here's a friendly reminder: never underestimate the value of the totally obvious. If you're feeling it, it's probably real, and you're likely losing money because of it.

— **Promptly identifying and implementing innovative hardware and software** is instrumental to gaining and retaining a competitive advantage over your competitors. It further increases efficiency and eliminates even more of that nasty downtime we're always talking about. Depending on

your industry, certain innovations can add value for your target market — something your competitors will also be keenly aware of. Having a great IT team in your corner can speed up the recognition and implementation of new technology, which, in turn, can give your marketing and sales teams a valuable head start when it's time to communicate the value of that technology to prospects.

We touched on the **automation of routine tasks** in the “Don't Fear the Reaper” chapter as a great way to eliminate overhead by streamlining productivity. We'll cover two more aspects of the topic here.

- Automation just isn't as good for your bottom line when it takes your IT team 14 months to realize that there's a simple program that could be saving one of your most valuable team members up to 6 hours per week—6 hours they could've been investing in more substantial contributions. In fact, let's take that hypothetical scenario and tie a number to it. Your star team member is “Brenda” for the sake of this exercise. Let's take that 14-month delay caused by your slow IT team and break it down. We'll subtract 2 weeks for Brenda's paid vacation time. We assume she spent a week in Arizona during the Spring and used the rest around the holidays. That's 58 weeks that Brenda sank 6 hours per week into a task that could've easily been automated. That's 348 hours (8.7 full work weeks!) Brenda spent on a task she didn't need to be doing. Because of that, Brenda didn't have the bandwidth for lower-priority tasks with tremendous long-term upside. She had enough on her plate already. Brenda is salaried at 60k. We'll do the math: over 14 months, you paid Brenda \$10,038.46 to perform a task that a \$9/month service (\$108/yr) piece of technology could've automated for her. Compounding the financial hit caused by your slow IT team, the long delay robbed your business of any future growth potential that Brenda could've created with more productive projects during those 8 weeks.
- The second aspect of automation is simple: automation requires oversight and, when necessary, remediation. An IT Support team built

for speed and efficiency can identify and remediate potential problems immediately. Think of the old cartoons where the conveyer belt goes haywire, and there's no one there to fix it. It can get messy fast.

In summary, our lame dad joke may borrow from The Three Little Pigs, but the moral isn't the same. Instead of "Learn the value of foresight and preparation so you don't end up like the first two little pigs," we're pointing out that some qualities just can't be learned. When it comes to IT Support, you need to invest in a company that invests in talent.

We can boil it down to a simple formula:

great talent + preparation > **lack of talent** + preparation

Having a highly capable IT Support team in your corner allows you to adapt and react much faster to changes and new technologies. It reduces downtime and wasteful spending, giving your business a competitive advantage in your industry.

NUMBER FIVE

Dazed and Confused



5. Dazed and Confused

Weird title for our final installment, right? Allow us to explain.

The Yardbirds formed in 1963 and played a role in the British Invasion. By 1968, however, following years of high turnover on guitar, the Yardbirds finally crumbled. This happened primarily because of creative differences with their current guitarist, who had some strange ideas about the direction of the band's sound.

To their credit, vocalist Keith Relf, drummer Jim McCarty, and bassist Chris Dreja tried to make it work. During their final touring years, they agreed to play some of the new songs their eccentric guitarist was bringing them, including a long, psychedelic number called "Dazed and Confused." Relf did his best to cobble together workable lyrics, and the drummer and bassist struggled to meet the demands of the ambitiously arranged song.

Recordings of the Yardbirds playing "Dazed and Confused" are available on YouTube, but we'll save you some time: it's bad. It sounds exactly like what it was: four mismatched musicians playing a song only one of them really understood. It is flat, uninspired, and directionless. It was met with skepticism and confusion by fans who came to hear the bouncy, pop-flavored hits from their early years. You've been to concerts: it was the strange new song you have to sit through to get to the hits.

We'll pause here for a second. This final section is unique. It is about the value of Co-Managed IT and how to determine whether Co-Managed IT Support is an arrangement that can boost your business's bottom line. And Co-Managed IT Support is all about surrounding great talent with the right supporting team.

Back to our opening point. You can probably see where this is going.

After their final lifeless performances of “Dazed and Confused” in 1968 and the departure of his three bandmates, their eccentric guitarist, Jimmy Page, was determined to keep the Yardbirds going—even if it meant rebuilding the band from scratch.

He began recruiting and soon launched the “New Yardbirds” with an obscure lineup of names: vocalist Robert Plant, bassist John Paul Jones, and drummer John Bonham. Soon after that, they decided a name change was in order. This is how the “New Yardbirds” became Led Zeppelin. This now-legendary rock band quickly earned a reputation for their uncanny onstage chemistry. “Dazed and Confused” suddenly came to life and, after appearing on their first album, helped influence the sound and direction of rock music over the following decades. However, you wouldn’t know it from listening to those early live performances. Page didn’t have the right team around him to execute the song.

This is a great example of having the right idea, but simply having the wrong team around you.

We made this last story fairly transparent.

You can have the most talented IT Support technician(s) in the world, but if you don’t put them in the right position with the right people around them, their results will be mediocre. And the most important takeaway from those early disastrous performances of “Dazed and Confused” is this: Those results have nothing to do with the ability or talent of your IT personnel. Jimmy Page is considered one of the greatest guitarists of all time. But it would have been easy to listen to those clumsy early performances and think, “boy, that guitarist of theirs is going nowhere fast.”

Important: Bringing in the right supporting cast has **nothing** to do with the talent of your existing IT team. It is not an indictment of their ability. In fact, it’s a way to bring their unique skills to the foreground and allow them to fully execute their vision for your business.

Co-Managed IT is about unlocking the true potential of your in-house talent by surrounding them with the right people.

What exactly is Co-Managed IT Support?

Co-Managed IT is a collaborative partnership between your in-house IT department and a Managed Service Provider (MSP). In a Co-Managed IT environment, both parties play pivotal roles in overseeing your IT infrastructure and resources.

Co-managed IT is different from Managed IT support, which is entirely outsourced. Trust and communication are foundational components of an effective Co-Managed IT arrangement, and both sides are responsible for defining the parameters of this partnership.

There is no one-size-fits-all blueprint for Co-Managed IT. Instead, each arrangement will differ according to your in-house IT department's needs, capabilities, and workload.

A Co-Managed IT relationship begins with introducing a high-quality managed service provider (MSP). An experienced MSP will work closely with your IT team leaders to comprehensively understand your strengths, needs, and challenges.

The MSP will then tailor their level of involvement and service to augment the efforts of your in-house IT department. When executed correctly, this process creates a more dynamic and efficient team that immediately meets and exceeds your short- and long-term goals.

Although the concept may be new to some business owners and decision-makers, Co-Managed IT is becoming an increasingly common solution for many businesses.

Why are more businesses embracing co-managed IT?

According to a survey by Capital Counselor, some of the top challenges small businesses face today are hiring new team members (50%), managing team member healthcare (46%), and managing cash flow (34%). To make matters worse, 43% of all cyberattacks target small businesses, and only 14% are prepared to defend themselves.

An ill-fitting IT model leads to inefficiency, loss of revenue, and greater risk. In today's technological and economic landscape, many businesses succeed (or fail) based on their ability to recognize and embrace the IT support model most suited to their needs.

Of course, no business is intentionally mismanaging its IT.

Many businesses need a form of compromise. They need a way to augment the work of their internal IT team and do so in a budget-friendly manner. That's where Co-Managed IT comes in.

But while this all sounds good on paper, every business is unique.

How can you tell whether Co-Managed IT is right for your business?

How can you tell if Co-Managed IT is right for you and your organization?

There are many indications that it's time to reevaluate your existing IT support model. However, some are easier to recognize than others.

Here are some of the most obvious signs that it's time to talk to an MSP about Co-Managed IT.

— **You need more from your IT department but don't have the budget to bring in additional personnel.** This is the most common scenario that leads businesses to the Co-Managed IT model. Adding the expertise and

resources of an MSP to the fold is a much cheaper option than hiring additional in-house personnel.

— **You recognize the need to improve your security posture in the face of steadily growing threats.** You've seen the stats; they're hard to miss. The cyber threat landscape is worse than ever. Co-Managed IT adds extra muscle to your defenses and can quickly improve your cybersecurity posture.

— **Your IT department is having trouble with daily tasks, project management, or meeting timelines.** Your in-house IT team is overtaxed and cannot keep up with everything your business requires. This common problem is often due to scaling, personnel changes, or unexpected projects—all issues outside your IT department's control. An outsourced IT partner will allow your in-house team to focus on what they do best.

— **You're experiencing rapid growth that is outpacing your IT capabilities.** Some would consider this a good problem to have. However, scaling issues can cause many complications, including heightened cyber risk. Co-managed IT is a perfect solution to scaling issues. Flexibility is one of the primary advantages of the co-managed model. You can dial up or scale back your MSP's involvement as your business's needs dictate.

— **You've recently lost a key IT team member, and you're struggling to find a quality replacement.** You're not alone here. Many businesses are finding it hard to attract reliable talent. Co-managed IT is a budget-friendly alternative to sinking more time and money into job listings and interviews with underwhelming candidates. Rather than hiring an underqualified replacement and hoping they'll stick, outsourcing some of these responsibilities is a cheaper option with more long-term stability.

— **You have new ideas for growth, but your in-house IT support team does not have time to implement them.** There are only so many hours in a day. Most in-house IT teams are stretched thin enough with critical tasks

like monitoring, maintenance, and troubleshooting. Co-managed IT can help take the burden off your in-house team and free up room for growth, evolution, and long-term project implementation.

— **You need a way to compete with a larger company's IT resources without breaking your budget.** This is one of the most significant advantages of a co-managed IT model. An MSP's diverse expertise will augment your in-house IT team's strengths. This dynamic combination gives you capabilities typically reserved for a larger company with an expansive IT budget.

— **IT headaches are preventing you from focusing on what matters.** Ultimately, if you're constantly drawn into IT problems, you're not focused on your core competencies and strengths. These strengths make your business tick; they attract, retain, and delight customers. An MSP provides critical support to your in-house IT team members in a co-managed model. This arrangement reduces distractions and lets you focus on what matters most: growing your business.

If you're on the fence about Co-Managed IT, contact a reputable managed service provider (MSP). Unlike some less-than-reputable companies, a good MSP is not looking to shoehorn itself into your organization. That wouldn't be good for either party. Instead, a high-quality MSP will discuss your current IT needs. They will then help you determine whether shifting to a Co-Managed IT arrangement might be the right move for your organization.

NEXT

Takeaways and Next Steps



Takeaways and Next Steps

If you didn't read the points and skipped to the last page, that's OK. This is the part where we summarize the high-level takeaways from each of our 5 ways that great IT Support can improve your business's bottom line.

1. The Chewbacca Effect

Great IT Support ensures you're prepared, flexible, and have contingency plans when things go wrong or disaster looms. Like Chewie, the full impact of high-quality IT Support doesn't always get the attention it deserves. But if you don't have it, your operations (and bottom line) will suffer.

2. Galloping Gertie

Your IT infrastructure is like a piece of architecture: a bridge, for example. It needs to be built solid and with an eye on the future. Once constructed, it needs to be maintained. Entrusting your IT systems to a quality IT Support team will help minimize repair timelines, keep traffic flowing, and help prevent the disruptions and disasters that arise from poor planning and inconsistent maintenance.

3. Don't Fear the Reaper

Productivity tools can eliminate overhead and create more time for your team members to devote to growing your business. A great IT Support team lets you quickly identify and implement valuable, time-saving productivity tools.

4. Two Little Pigs Walk into a Bar

This one is simple, but it's also perhaps the most crucial point on this list. When it comes to IT Support, there is no replacement for high-end talent. No amount of preparation makes an IT Support team a complete package. You need talent that reacts quickly to industry trends, changes within your IT environment, and emerging threats.

5. Dazed and Confused

Co-Managed IT support is all about maximizing the potential of your IT team by surrounding them with the right talent. You can have the most talented IT team member within a hundred miles in any direction. Still, it won't matter if he's put in a bad situation. Bringing in the right Managed Service Provider brings out the best in your existing IT Support team.

If there is one common thread to the 5 items in this paper, it is that **great IT Support** (the kind that boosts your bottom line) is about putting the **best people** in the **best possible position to succeed**.

Q: That's all great, but where does Tier 3 come in?

A: Easy. Tier 3 Technology provides great IT Support.

It's that simple.

Our passion is providing the ultimate experience for our clients.

We check all five of the boxes in this guide and, as a result, we put our clients in a better position to focus on what matters: growing their business (and, naturally, their bottom line).

Learn more about Tier 3 Technology at www.GoTier3.com

– or –

Check out [Our Story](#) on YouTube

– or –

Take the fast track and [get a quote now!](#)

