

MANAGED SERVICES

HELPING ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS ON BUSINESS

A trusted partner can deliver essential technology services that reduce costs and improve performance while reducing the burden on IT staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many enterprise executives understand the power of today's technologies, yet take advantage of only a small percentage of them. The struggle is real; keeping pace with monitoring, maintaining, upgrading and securing their systems is a day-to-day challenge. A reliable managed services provider helps by providing several valuable benefits:

Improved operational performance:

Organizations often find that managed services deliver quantifiable gains in common metrics such as system availability, security and responsiveness, yielding improvements that include more stable IT environments and faster diagnosis and resolution of problems.

Decreased risk:

An outage or security breach may cripple an organization. While network and security engineers may take vacations, call in sick or switch jobs, a managed services provider delivers 24/7 coverage.

Reduced expenses:

Organizations often get more expertise at a lower cost from a managed services provider than by hiring specialized employees. A managed services provider also offers specialized toolsets, operations automation, administration, and facilities.

Reduced expenses:

A managed services provider frees up in-house IT staff to focus on innovation, allowing the design of state-of-the-art infrastructure and clearing the way for expert staff to deliver these advancements immediately.

THE VALUE OF MANAGED SERVICES

Organizations across every industry are discovering how today's technologies help them achieve their objectives. For example, retailers use beacons to personalize marketing messages to individual customers based on where they are inside a store. Hospitals use technology to track patients and understand their experiences, helping to reduce readmission rates. Airlines use apps to streamline check-in, and sports teams use them to boost stadium attendance.

While new technologies present powerful opportunities for enterprises, they also introduce challenges. The pace of change in IT is unprecedented. No longer can IT departments standardize on one or two computer models, a single operating system, and a short list of approved applications. The mobile devices and cloud-based technologies that have brought so much possibility have also introduced a hodgepodge of devices, platforms and apps for IT departments to manage and secure.

For many organizations, those challenges add up to significant expenses: the cost of hiring and training qualified workers, purchasing the infrastructure to support emerging technologies, and keeping systems up to date and secure. Rather than struggle to keep pace with technology,

Rather than struggle to keep pace with technology, many organizations turn to managed services providers for help. By trusting a third party such as SyS Creations to handle cloud deployments, data center solutions, mobile initiatives, collaboration tools and security, organizations can focus their time and resources on their core business objectives.

SyS Creations takes a holistic approach to IT services, resulting in a higher standard than many organizations are able to achieve in-house. Top service providers offer ongoing management and maintenance of the underlying infrastructure, along with end-user support and service guarantees.

The benefits are clear: In 2014, only 30 percent of organizations used managed services, but within a year, that figure had nearly doubled. Managed services can cut IT costs by as much as 40 percent while doubling operational efficiency.

How to Tell If a Managed Services Provider Improves Operations



Constantly putting off new projects and facing a backlog of user requests are clear signs that it's time to look into managed services, especially for a provider that delivers meaningful value.

Before choosing a partner, organizations should clearly define their requirements and the improvements they expect to see. For instance, they might want to introduce off-hours coverage for network technology or a mobile tracking platform that competitors are using.

When meeting with prospective providers, operational teams should ask how they would achieve these goals. Beware of providers who talk only about their own characteristics— the toolsets they use, their processes, the quality of their engineering resources — instead of focusing on the organization's goal.

Another factor to consider is the provider's breadth of experience. Many service providers focus on niche areas, but with the pace of change in technology, it's important to work with a partner that can meet an organization's needs now and in the future.

SyS Creations combines its own extensive experience with the specialized skill sets of its many partners to offer a holistic approach to managed services, and it maintains service level management of those partners. For instance, if an organization experiences a database problem that may be caused by a network issue, SyS Creations has the internal and external resources to bring together network and database administrators to find a solution and address the issue fully, regardless of where it lies within the technology stack.

MANAGED SERVICES

Turning to a trusted partner offers several advantages, including:

- **Freeing up IT staff to focus on business needs and innovation**

Most IT departments are stretched thin. By outsourcing back-end functions or complex, rapidly changing technologies, organizations dedicate their inhouse technology experts to projects that will further their core objectives.

- **Keeping pace with the demands for IT expertise**

Organizations around the world are struggling to fill IT positions, particularly in cybersecurity and mobile app development. Outsourcing these functions to a partner with technically skilled and specialized engineers in new and emerging technologies alleviates these pressures.

- **Greater scalability to match demand**

IT shops spend months — even years — deploying massive systems. Many organizations are finding it more effective to start small, move fast and expand as needed. SyS Creations modular approach to managed services makes it easy for enterprises to scale up or down depending on demand, such as a retailer increasing capacity around the holidays, or a startup experiencing sudden growth.

- **24/7 availability**

The 9-to-5 workday is as outdated today as the phone booth. When users work around the clock, so must the network. With a managed services provider, help is always available — days, nights, weekends or holidays — to support users.

- **Moving the burden of compliance off in-house staff**

In addition to regular audits, many organizations are obligated to meet standards and requirements with their IT initiatives. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Gramm–Leach–Bliley Act (GLBA), Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and Sarbanes–Oxley Act (SOX) spell out rules regarding privacy, reporting and security in the healthcare, education, financial services and retail industries. SyS Creations understands the regulations that organizations are bound by, and can provide the systems, processes and reports to guarantee that organizations meet their requirements.

- **Predictable monthly costs**

Every IT investment comes with peripheral costs. Organizations need adequate networks, storage, and security. They must train staff, deploy systems and manage equipment. Unexpected costs arise at any time. By outsourcing initiatives to a managed service provider, organizations can break down their costs into fixed monthly payments, as opposed to the large capital expenditures that come with managing systems in-house.

CLOUD SERVICES

Many organizations are limited in terms of the new technologies they can adopt because of the resources, time and expertise required to build and maintain an infrastructure strong enough to support them. The cloud can be a cost-effective solution to this limitation, but making sense of the vast array of products, services and providers can be daunting, as can the complexity of migrating data and applications. Today’s hybrid environments of on-premises and cloud-based infrastructures further complicate matters.

SyS Creations industry-leading experts can help. They offer clients vendor-neutral advice on cloud services, and they customize plans to migrate, integrate and manage systems with public, private or hybrid cloud services. They provide organizations with the scalable infrastructures necessary to adapt to technology and market changes without having to worry about deploying costly infrastructures and managing them day to day.

The cloud services team at SyS Creations works with clients to understand their technology challenges, customize the right solutions and migrate their systems to the cloud.

SyS Creations can also manage an organization’s software environment to optimize the adoption and use of the tools it delivers. It provides the following software and cloud services.

What Can a Managed Services Provider Do for You?

These are some of the tasks that SyS Creations performs for its managed services clients

- Performance and capacity monitoring and reporting
- Configuration backups
- Break/fix support and patching
- Changes
- Proactive patching and firmware updates
- Upgrades

- Capacity planning
- Backup management
- Underlying database management
- Incident management
- Problem management

• Infrastructure as a Service and managed hosting

Rather than spending the time and money building an entire data center, organizations can turn to SyS Creations to host servers, storage, networks or other infrastructure in one of its Tier 3 data centers. Clients can access the resources they need while their infrastructures are managed by expert engineers.

• Backup as a Service

Keeping pace with backups has long been a challenge for organizations. They can simplify the process by purchasing cloud-based backup services from SyS Creations, guaranteeing that they’ll have the storage space they need now and in the future.

- **Hosted private cloud**

Organizations have the option of moving their data centers to private clouds managed by SyS Creations. Since this is delivered as a monthly service rather than an upfront capital expenditure, it can shift to an operating expense, giving organizations the environment they need— and the private resources — without large expenditures. And unlike many other service providers, SyS Creations can manage the equipment, whether from its own data center, that of a partner or from a third party.

- **Azure public cloud services**

Organizations can purchase Microsoft Azure public cloud management services through SyS Creations and pay only a single vendor. SyS Creations can manage a client's platform, computing (virtual machines, operating systems and storage management), networking, SQL database and more within the organization's Azure environment. SyS Creations offers a Disaster Recovery as a Service plan using Microsoft Azure Site Recovery, a cloud-based solution that serves as a recovery site. It automates replication, safeguards against outages and supports multiple environments, including VMware and Hyper-V.

SyS Creations managed cloud services incorporate the following tasks:

- **Infrastructure and service monitoring**

With its cloud services, SyS Creations monitors physical and virtual servers, searching for events or irregularities that could indicate a problem. It provides 24/7 monitoring, and if it discovers an issue, SyS Creations responds quickly, minimizing adverse effects.

- **Upgrades**

SyS Creations takes care of upgrades and patches needed to keep the services and virtualized data centers secure and up to date. The cloud services team handles preproduction testing, installation, troubleshooting and version control.

- **Maintenance**

Among the largest costs for IT departments are resources devoted to the day-to-day tasks needed to maintain systems. Leaving maintenance to SyS Creations frees up IT departments to take on more critical, revenue-generating initiatives. SyS Creations can take care of maintenance for cloud services and virtual servers. It can administer access control lists and permissions, provision and configure cloud services and maintain both virtual and physical hardware.

- **Vendor incident management**

If an issue arises with a system within an infrastructure SyS Creations is monitoring, it will work directly with the vendor's technical support staff to get the situation resolved. SyS Creations has longtime relationships with leading cloud and hardware vendors, and it has experience working with them to resolve complex issues.

- **Reporting**

SyS Creations provides its cloud services clients with essential data regarding its systems. It offers historical and real-time reports about virtual environments — CPU, memory and disk utilization — so IT departments can determine when they need to purchase additional virtual machines or capacity. The services are available for Windows and Linux systems that are in-house, in SyS Creations data centers or at another data center or cloud provider. The data SyS Creations generates in its reports can help keep data centers synchronized.

Benefits of SyS Creations Managed Services for Cloud Environments

- **Cost savings**

Enterprises can purchase scalable services at an affordable monthly rate instead of buying, maintaining and upgrading costly infrastructures. They can also realize significant savings in labor costs because their in-house IT administrators don't have to maintain systems.

- **Agility**

The scalability of SyS Creations cloud services helps organizations to speed the time to market for new IT deployments — in some cases from months to hours.

- **Expertise**

SyS Creations highly trained, skilled and experienced IT engineers provide valuable capabilities that individual organizations may not have the resources to provide themselves directly.

- **Security**

SyS Creations security experts respond to emerging threats and attacks, helping both to prevent breaches and limit the impact of successful attacks.

- **Compliance**

SyS Creations cloud services enable a more efficient path to comply with government and industry regulations.



DATA CENTER SERVICES

In 2005, the world's population created 132 exabytes of data. By 2013, that figure swelled to 4.4 zettabytes, and it's expected to climb to 44 zettabytes by 2020. As the digital universe doubles in size each year, IT departments struggle to keep their data centers from crumbling beneath the weight.

When many organizations built their data centers, they never imagined the number of smartphones, tablets, wearables and other devices that generate the vast pools of data that exist today. Their systems weren't designed for such explosive growth.

Expanding data centers to accommodate Big Data and new technologies is costly and complex. Yet organizations can't afford to risk service interruptions and data loss due to inadequate data centers. Even state-of-the-art on-premises data centers can be crippled by an outage or natural disaster.

Rather than drain staff resources and budgets by bringing their data centers up to date — and training staff to maintain them — it makes sense to turn to a trusted partner to manage components of the data center, including storage, security, power and cooling, network services, and more.

SyS Creations data centers are cross-connected to high-performing cloud solutions that are privately networked via low-latency transport, and SyS Creations engineers manage them through two Enterprise Command Centers. Other vendors also offer robust data center management services, or organizations may choose to have their on-premises data centers managed by a provider such as SyS Creations.

By outsourcing data center management to a partner such as SyS Creations — whether on-premises or at a SyS Creations facility — or another provider, organizations can focus on other tasks while gaining access to powerful, scalable IT resources. SyS Creations offers the performance and security that organizations need from data center and networking services.

- **Systems management**

SyS Creations ensures that servers, operating systems, and applications are functioning properly. Its engineers install patches, troubleshoot issues and handle everything from applying Windows patches to working through server access administration. In addition to managing Microsoft Windows, SyS Creations can handle Unix, Linux, Red Hat, Oracle and other industry-leading products. It also manages VMware ESXi and Microsoft Hyper-V virtualized servers

- **Storage services**

SyS Creations hosts storage solutions from IBM, NetApp and EMC in its state-of-the-art data centers. Our experts monitor the systems and handle upgrades, maintenance and reporting, as well as hardware and software incident management and related services

- **Backup and disaster recovery**

SyS Creations hosts storage solutions at its nationwide data centers, offering clients a reliable, cost-effective disaster recovery solution without the capital expense of building their own backup sites. The secure, offsite facilities offer redundancy in case of weather-related incidents, outages or malicious acts. We also provide remote managed backup services, removing this burden from in-house IT staff.

- **Network infrastructure monitoring and optimization**

Today's networks, which integrate voice, data and video, have grown increasingly complex to maintain. As part of its data center solution management services, SyS Creations monitors network connections and devices, including routers, switches and firewalls, around the clock for any issues that could put the network at risk. It also monitors traffic and performance levels so it can make adjustments if key performance indicators are off. If a connection goes down with a carrier, SyS Creations will manage the situation with the vendor to resolution. It also handles all updates of software and firmware, including pretesting, installation and troubleshooting. Also included in the service are routine tasks, such as maintaining access control lists, backing up device configurations, monitoring security notifications, and controlling administrative access to network devices.

- **Database management**

IT infrastructures are built around data. Systems generate, gather, share, store and protect this data. Through Managed Services for Database Management, SyS Creations engineers serve as database administrators for organizations. They install, configure and manage the database software and handle backups and restores while maintaining high-availability solutions for Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle RDBMS, and MySQL, on both physical and virtual environments.



MOBILITY SERVICES

Mobile devices have become ubiquitous in such a short time that it's hard to grasp the extent of their growth. The number of devices (7.8 billion) has quickly outpaced the number of people on the planet (7.3 billion), and mobile data traffic has grown astronomically since 2000.

The mobile revolution has resulted in limitless opportunities for organizations to improve customer relations, increase sales, streamline processes, reduce costs and open new streams of revenue. It has already transformed the way people live and work.

Such rapid change, however, brings with it new challenges for IT departments. The number and types of devices they have to manage have exploded, and because of the devices' portability and mobility, they're more likely to be lost or stolen —along with the sensitive data on them. Connecting to unknown networks outside of an enterprise can also expose mobile devices to malicious acts.

Mobile technologies have the capability to revolutionize the way organizations operate, but they must be deployed and maintained strategically. In order to reap the rewards of mobility, organizations need a strong mobile plan and must closely monitor their networks. These tasks, however, can be time-consuming and tedious for IT departments. They can also present challenges because as mobile technologies continuously evolve, IT departments must retain expert staff and keep them up to date on changes in the industry.

It makes sense to turn to a service provider to take charge of mobility and wireless networking systems.

SyS Creations provides a number of valuable services.

Wireless Infrastructure

- **Wireless network monitoring and optimization**

SyS Creations monitors the hardware and operating system of the wireless controller for performance thresholds. It checks for Cisco Systems security patches and tests, and installs and troubleshoots them if necessary. SyS Creations also performs standard annual upgrades.

- **Access point management**

SyS Creations handles the configuration and security patching for access points within a wireless network.

Client Virtualization

SyS Creations can manage a client's entire Citrix environment and provide end-user support. It performs the following tasks:

- Monitoring the status of critical services, service ports, event logs for application issues and server resources
- Installing, testing and troubleshooting Citrix security patches
- Installing, testing and troubleshooting major software version upgrades
- Managing administrative access and server performance issues
- Providing incident and problem management for Citrix-related issues
- Producing near-real-time monthly automated performance reports on metrics such as CPU and memory
- Providing capacity reporting and health checks

COLLABORATION SERVICES

Communication and collaboration have become critical functions in the workplace, whether it's colleagues across the office trading quick text messages, partners around the world calling into a video conference or a sales team sharing a report with a client.

The right collaboration tools can vastly improve productivity and efficiency. Collaboration platforms bring together voice, video and data on the same network so that they complement one another. For instance, with a collaboration suite, a customer service representative can escalate a text-based chat session into a video call, or a meeting host can share files from within a video conferencing tool.

SyS Creations has deployed thousands of collaboration environments through the years, and it uses its expertise to help organizations optimize their systems by managing the conferencing, messaging, voice and video applications that make users more productive. SyS Creations can also manage the contact center applications that fuel customer engagement.

SyS Creations managed services team supports Cisco collaboration products on-premises or through a hosted collaboration service, offering a customizable menu of options. It also offers managed services through its partners for Citrix, Calabrio, ESNA, Microsoft, Singlewire and IQ NetSolutions products.

Among collaboration services that SyS Creations provides

- **Hosted Voice over IP**

Hosted VoIP is a popular offering for enterprises today. They can get fixed prices that are lower than on-premises public branch exchange lines without having to manage a PBX infrastructure. Better yet, they get more features, including the ability to integrate a collaboration solution into their business processes. By turning to SyS Creations for hosted VoIP, organizations can get a complete solution, with VoIP and collaboration solutions integrated and managed as a whole.

- **Assessment and design**

Before implementing a collaboration product, organizations must determine which one is right for them and ensure that they have the infrastructure to support it. SyS Creations engineers can assess an organization's network to determine if it can support the data, voice and video requirements of a collaboration solution. If not, they can recommend infrastructure upgrades and the right collaboration products, and help to roll them out.

- **Customer engagement solutions**

Not long ago, customers had little choice but to wait on hold to speak with a contact center representative. Today, however, they expect a variety of options for connecting with organizations. Enterprises can take advantage of SyS Creations state-of-the-art omnichannel contact center solutions to engage customers in the manner that makes sense for each customer and each interaction.

- **Cloud collaboration**

Organizations can take advantage of Cisco's powerful collaboration tools without the expense of hosting and supporting them in-house. SyS Creations hosts and manages the Cisco Hosted Collaboration Solution in its own facilities, allowing clients to deploy the solution quickly and scale as needed, while keeping costs low.

- **Operational support**

SyS Creations engineers have the skills, certifications and experience needed to configure and manage the various components within collaboration solutions and ensure they work together efficiently.

- **Infrastructure monitoring and diagnostics**

The managed services team monitors servers and network infrastructures to ensure that they're operating properly. It can find and resolve issues as they arise so they don't negatively affect the performance of the system. If issues are detected through monitoring, SyS Creations can manage alert notifications, escalations and root-cause diagnostics, and make recommendations for remedial actions.

- **Help desk**

SyS Creations collaboration services include Office 365 support services and help desk support, which provides service-level agreement reports, contact statistics, incident metrics, root cause analysis and end-user satisfaction reporting.

- **Patch management**

SyS Creations managed services team can review patches and software version upgrades for collaboration components as they're released by vendors and install, test and troubleshoot them.

- **Vendor incident management**

SyS Creations works with more than 75 global telecommunications companies, so if issues arise with a collaboration product, the SyS Creations services team can work with vendors to resolve them, whether that entails repairs or replacements. It can handle everything from warranty questions to support for major software upgrades.



Webex Teams

Rogers Unison™

AVAYA

TELUS

SECURITY SERVICES

Organizations from Main Street to Wall Street struggle to keep their infrastructures secure. The never-ending headlines about malicious attacks have made even the most advanced IT shops concerned about their vulnerabilities.

The cloud presents organizations with valuable opportunities, but also creates risks. Cloud-based networks, applications and desktops have made it easy for users to access data and systems wherever they are, but they've also made it harder for IT departments to keep those systems and data secure. Mobile devices and the wireless networks they access open the door further to security vulnerabilities.

Even the most sophisticated IT shops are susceptible to attack. Fortune 500 companies, federal agencies, even technology leaders have fallen victim to high-profile hacks. And these threats are constantly evolving — an organization may be protected one day but succumb to a new form of malware or a phishing scam the next.

Artificial Intelligence Supercharges Collaboration

One of the main benefits of mobility and cloud computing is also one of its biggest drawbacks. Giving users the freedom to work anywhere means it's harder than ever to bring teams together in a room to get work done. Collaboration suites, however, can solve that problem.

With Cisco Spark, for instance, teams can create virtual rooms where members can send secure messages, share files, hold voice or video calls or meetings and share their screens. But because every organization — every team, for that matter — has different needs, Spark allows them to create customizable tools within its suite using bots, which are powered by software that automates processes.

Bots use artificial intelligence to perform tasks for users — anything from scheduling meetings or polling team members to organizing emails or booking flights.

Because they can be created to address teams' unique needs, bots hold the power to build on the benefits of collaboration software and make users and teams even more efficient and productive in their daily work environments.

To guard against attacks and to remain compliant with security regulations, organizations must remain vigilant in monitoring, upgrading, testing and maintaining every layer of their infrastructures. This, however, can drain resources from IT departments already struggling to keep pace with workloads.

Organizations have plenty of reasons to turn to managed services. They streamline workflows, boost efficiencies, cut costs, even generate revenue. But many also count on service providers to protect them from the growing security threats they face. When asked about their goals in using a managed service provider, 38 percent of organizations cite security and compliance.

A managed services provider helps organizations stay ahead of threats without having to devote scarce resources to security. SyS Creations engineers have the skills, certifications and knowledge of new security practices and trends to keep organizations protected.

SyS Creations can provide clients with security infrastructure monitoring, updates, maintenance, reporting and management. Its cloud-based security information and event management (SIEM) solution provides real-time incident response, log collection and correlation, and reporting.

Among the security services SyS Creations provides for its clients

- **Security tools and processes**

SyS Creations delivers solutions that are robust and proven, based on a mature IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework, and are supported by security credentials including SAS 70 Type II, SysTrust, and PCI certifications

- **Continuous management of security infrastructure and network security policies**

SyS Creations security services integrate seamlessly with its clients' IT teams, policies, procedures and systems. Its industry-leading engineers have extensive experience with security infrastructure and know how to quickly diagnose and respond to security alerts.

- **Next-generation firewall management**

NGFWs combine the processes of traditional firewalls with more robust functions, such as the ability to analyze applications for malware and manage deep packet inspection, as well as enhanced intrusion prevention services.

- **Secure access management and authenticated device administration**

The security services team manages virtual private network clients so that they function properly with other products in SyS Creations suite, including Cisco's AnyConnect Secure Mobility Client and the Cisco Identity Services Engine platform, an access/workflow product that checks machines to ensure they have the proper permissions and software to be on the network. ISE can sequester devices into different zones based on their levels of access to systems and data.

- **Around-the-clock support**

While SyS Creations can significantly minimize an organization's risks, no organization is immune to attack. How an organization responds to an attack makes a critical difference. With SyS Creations managed services for security, organizations receive support from certified security professionals. They don't need to worry about hiring or training in-house security engineers, because SyS Creations is on the job 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

- **Security information and event management**

SyS Creations managed services team consolidates real-time and historical data regarding systems into a single platform, providing a holistic view of an organization's security posture. The platform compiles and analyzes logs so that if a security event arises, it can be detected and prevented immediately, as the client is notified of the event and remediation.

- **Compliance**

Cyberattacks pose a big enough threat to organizations, but failure to comply with state and federal security and privacy regulations can spell disaster. SyS Creations SIEM platform enables organizations to achieve compliance with regulatory requirements such as collecting logs and running audits. SyS Creations engineers are well versed in the regulations spelled out in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, the Sarbanes–Oxley Act, the IT Infrastructure Library guidelines and more.

- **Multivendor support**

Because of its extensive partnerships with IT vendors of all sizes and types, SyS Creations has a unique capability to support the many layers of its clients' IT infrastructures. This ensures that all systems — not just SyS Creations -branded ones — are secure.

