Doing more with less:
A practical guide
for IT Directors

How to overcome the financial and
operational strains of internal IT

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Why are more IT Directors looking to do more with less?

IT Directors are under sustained pressure to reduce IT support costs while continuing to deliver reliable, secure, and scalable IT services. Budgets are tightening, cyber risk is increasing, and user expectations continue to rise. At the same time, IT leaders are expected to enable growth, support digital transformation, and improve productivity with fewer resources than ever before.

This has created a fundamental challenge: how to reduce cost without compromising service quality, resilience, or control. In this guide we explore the benefits of outsourced IT support and how you can optimise your current MSPs performance if you already have outsourced support in place.

These savings are typically driven by improved efficiency, shared access to specialist expertise, enterprise-grade tooling, and the replacement of unpredictable internal costs with structured service delivery.

As a result, many businesses are turning to outsourced IT support. Not as a tactical cost-cutting exercise, but as a strategic operating model designed to reduce overheads, improve performance, lower risk, and give IT leaders access to skills that are increasingly difficult to retain in-house.

Independent research consistently shows that managed services can reduce overall IT operating costs by up to 45 percent.

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The financial and operational strain of internal IT

Running an in-house IT function comes with unavoidable cost, much of which extends beyond salaries. A typical two-person IT team can easily exceed £150,000 per year in salary alone. Once employer contributions, training, certifications, licensing, hardware refresh cycles, recruitment fees, and downtime-related losses are considered, the true cost is significantly higher.

Despite this investment, most small internal IT teams struggle to provide complete service coverage. They are required to be generalists, supporting users, infrastructure, security, compliance, and projects simultaneously. This often results in a reactive operating model with limited capacity for proactive improvement or long-term planning.

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Outsourced IT is not as scalable and predictable solution

Outsourced IT replaces fragmented internal delivery with a structured service model built around defined responsibilities and service-level agreements. MSPs deliver support, monitoring, security, and governance under contract, providing clarity around performance expectations and accountability.

One of the most immediate benefits is financial predictability. Rather than fluctuating costs driven by headcount, contractor usage, and emergency fixes, businesses move to a fixed monthly fee that typically includes support, proactive monitoring, patch management, security tooling, backup, and service reporting.

Outsourced IT support cost comparison

Here is an overview of a current client of ours:
An 80-person professional services company had two internal IT staff handling everything from helpdesk support, printer issues, Cyber Essentials certifications to server maintenance.

As the business grew, helpdesk delays became common and major upgrades were being postponed due to lack of time and agreed investment. Finance flagged overspending on one-off consultants, and operations expressed concern over inconsistent system performance as well as their cyber security posture.

Average first-response times for support issues fell to under 15 minutes. The internal IT lead was able to focus on infrastructure modernisation and cloud migrations, while Opus ensured daily service coverage, monitoring, security and compliance. The shift enabled the business to expand to a new location without additional internal hires.

The company adopted a co-managed support model with Opus. Within one year, their annual IT spend dropped from £172,000 to £120,000.

Ashley Wyatt
IT Senior Account Executive

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Doing more with less when you already outsource IT

Outsourcing IT is often the first major step toward doing more with less, but it is not the end of the journey. Many businesses successfully reduce internal overheads by appointing an MSP, only to find that performance plateaus after the initial transition period. Costs stabilise, service improves, but the model stops evolving.

This is rarely because outsourcing was the wrong decision. More often, it is because the outsourced relationship has remained static while the business itself has changed. Headcount grows, systems move to the cloud, security requirements increase, and user expectations rise, yet the service definition stays largely the same.

IT Directors who extract the most value from their MSP treat outsourcing as an ongoing operating model rather than a fixed support contract. They continually refine expectations, challenge assumptions, and align the service with current business priorities. The result is higher performance from the same investment, not increased spend.

Haydon Kirby
IT Account Director

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Re-aligning service expectations as the business evolves

A common issue in long-standing MSP relationships is that service levels are based on assumptions that are no longer valid. Response times, coverage hours, security scope, and escalation processes may have been appropriate at the outset but no longer reflect the organisation's size, risk profile, or regulatory exposure.

As businesses grow or modernise, IT environments become more complex and more interconnected. This increases the impact of failure and raises the bar for service reliability. Re-aligning service expectations ensures that outsourced IT continues to support the business effectively rather than simply maintaining the status quo.

This does not necessarily mean paying more. In many cases, it is about resetting priorities, improving clarity, and ensuring accountability is aligned with what the business actually needs today rather than what it needed several years ago.

Moving beyond reactive support

Many outsourced IT arrangements are still heavily focused on reactive support. Tickets are logged, issues are resolved, and SLAs are technically met, but the underlying causes of disruption remain unaddressed. Over time, this creates a cycle of recurring issues that consume time and attention without delivering meaningful improvement.

IT Directors looking to do more with less push the relationship toward proactive service delivery. This means focusing on preventing incidents rather than simply responding to them. Trend analysis, root cause reviews, and proactive maintenance become as important as response times.

When an MSP actively reduces noise in the environment, internal stakeholders notice the difference. Fewer interruptions, fewer repeated issues, and greater system stability all contribute to improved productivity without additional cost.

Using service reviews as a performance lever

Regular service reviews are a standard feature of outsourced IT, but their effectiveness varies widely. In many businesses, they become retrospective reporting exercises rather than forward-looking discussions.

High-performing IT leaders use these reviews to drive tangible change. Rather than focusing solely on ticket numbers, they use the forum to assess risk reduction, service resilience, and alignment with business priorities. This shifts the conversation from activity to outcomes.

When service reviews consistently result in agreed actions and measurable improvements, the outsourced model continues to mature. When they do not, performance naturally stagnates.

David Callman
MSP Team Lead

Simplifying the environment to unlock efficiency

Over time, many businesses accumulate unnecessary complexity within their IT estate. Legacy tools, overlapping licences, and duplicated security or monitoring platforms often persist even after outsourcing.

This complexity increases cost, reduces visibility, and makes environments harder to manage. Rationalising tooling and consolidating services under a single operating model can significantly improve efficiency while reducing spend.

For IT Directors, simplification is one of the most effective ways to do more with less. Fewer platforms, clearer ownership, and consistent standards reduce friction and improve service quality without increasing resource requirements.

Clarifying responsibility and decision ownership

Performance issues in outsourced IT environments are frequently caused by blurred lines of responsibility rather than capability gaps. When it is unclear who owns what, decision-making slows down and accountability weakens.

Clear ownership across operational support, security, projects, and change management improves responsiveness and reduces escalation. It also allows internal teams and MSP resources to focus on their strengths rather than duplicating effort or waiting for direction.

Strong governance does not add bureaucracy. Done properly, it removes ambiguity and speeds up delivery.

Aligning outsourced IT with business priorities

Outsourced IT performs best when it is tightly aligned with what the business is trying to achieve. If growth, resilience, cost control, or compliance are current priorities, the service should explicitly support those objectives.

This requires ongoing communication rather than one-off onboarding. When MSPs understand upcoming business changes, peak periods, or strategic initiatives, they can plan and prioritise accordingly. Without this context, even a well-run service will default to maintenance rather than optimisation.

Extracting more value through co-managed models

For businesses with internal IT capability, co-managed IT is often the most effective way to increase output without increasing headcount. Routine operational tasks are handled externally, while internal teams focus on higher-value initiatives that directly support the business.

This approach not only improves performance but also helps retain internal talent by removing low-value, repetitive work. It allows IT Directors to scale capability without carrying the fixed cost and risk associated with expanding internal teams.

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Measuring success through outcomes, not effort

Ultimately, doing more with less requires a shift in how success is measured. Busy IT teams and high ticket volumes are not indicators of value. Reduced downtime, improved user experience, predictable costs, and lower risk are.

IT Directors who focus on outcomes rather than activity consistently achieve better results from outsourced IT. When outcomes improve, efficiency follows naturally.

Getting more from your existing MSP

If you are keen to benchmark your current MSP's performance and identify some quick win efficiency gains without increasing cost please get it touch and we will arrange a call for you with one of our IT Consultants.

Call 0800 0473537
Or **livechat** via our website **www.opustech.co.uk**

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