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OFFICE 365
THE BENEFITS TO SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

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SMBs need more than basic productivity software

No matter the industry they're in, small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) have one thing in common: they operate with sparse resources. They have limited budgets, relatively small workforces, and often don't have enough physical space in their offices for hulking servers. But they must make do with what they have and be as efficient as they can be in allocating every last resource to reach their business goals.

Indeed, many SMBs have become true experts in making do, and have grown enough to give bigger firms a run for their money. And one of the not-so-top secrets to their success is Microsoft Office 365.

Microsoft Office 365 is truly an essential tool for any business, regardless of its size or the industry it operates in. Your company can reap many benefits from using it, as it simplifies everyday tasks, team communication, and employee mobility.

And that's the least of the host of advantages Office 365 provides, all of which are maximized with support from a managed IT services provider (MSP). An MSP will help you pick the perfect Office 365 plan for your business, implement it, and ensure everything runs smoothly 24x7x365. When you don't need to worry about any of the logistics, you can focus on the thing that matters most — improving your bottom line.

Let's take a look at some of the ways managed Office 365 is a cut above the other productivity software suites.

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What makes Office 365 special?

Simply put, Office 365 is Microsoft's cloud version of Office. Being fully cloud-enabled, it combines all the benefits of cloud computing with the familiarity and ease of use of Office productivity apps, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. So if a client needs your input on a document, you can easily pull it up on any internet-connected device and make edits while you're on the go.

It's subscription-based

Office 365 offers four plans for business users, each with a different combination of productivity-boosting apps and tools. For as low as $5 per month, you'll get web-based versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Publisher, and Access, as well as popular Microsoft services like OneDrive, SharePoint, and Exchange.

The subscription-based model that Office 365 offers is perfect for SMBs, especially if money (and other resources) is tight. You get to choose the apps you need, creating a suite of productivity tools that fit your company's and industry's requirements. You pay only for what you need for a fixed per-user fee every month.

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What makes Office 365 special?

It offers anytime, anywhere access

Your team can work from anywhere, at any time, on any device, be it a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop. As long as they have an internet connection, they can create documents, edit spreadsheets, and share notes with their colleagues whether they're at the office, in the field, or at home. These files are stored in OneDrive, Microsoft's convenient file hosting and synchronization service, and can be retrieved when needed.

The mobility that Office 365 offers increases your staff's productivity, as they can work whenever and wherever. Additionally, it can help you cut operational costs by not having your entire team use on-site equipment and office resources every day.

What's more, Office 365 makes collaborating with freelancers, contractors, and business partners much simpler, allowing your in-house staff to keep everyone in sync over long distances.

It's available offline

Not even a lack of internet can stop your employees from doing work. By periodically syncing their devices with OneDrive, they can access offline versions of mission-critical files. Any file they create or edit offline will be automatically uploaded to OneDrive the next time they connect to the internet.

How can an MSP add value to Office 365

Office 365 offers ease, convenience, affordability, scalability, and productivity. But you can get more from it and realize its full potential by having a managed IT services provider (MSP) handle it for you.

MSPs maximize Office 365's cost-effectiveness

According to a recent survey, maintaining existing equipment and infrastructure takes the lion's share of a company's IT budget at 37%, and adoption and development of new technologies is not far behind at 33%. To deal with the rising costs of IT, companies are turning to intelligent technology as a smarter way of running their businesses.

One of these is managed IT services, including your Office 365 solution. By outsourcing your Office 365 needs, you get all the benefits of a comprehensive productivity suite at prices that don't break the bank. You also get to decide how much you're willing to pay for the tools that suit your needs. This can be especially valuable for SMBs when they are first starting out and resources are limited.

However, a poorly planned Office 365 migration can result in inflated costs and wasted IT resources. Fortunately, this problem can be avoided by consulting with a trusted MSP, who can help you determine your company's needs and recommend a suitable package for you.

How can an MSP add value to Office 365?

MSPs take data security to the next level

Office 365 includes rock-solid security, privacy, and transparency features that improve in functionality depending on the subscription plan you pick. But it never hurts to have extra protection, and this is exactly what an MSP can bring to the table.

Having an MSP manage Office 365 for you gives you better control over service levels, performance, and maintenance. This keeps data secure across a range of cloud services and applications, ensuring rapid data recovery and an actionable business continuity plan. As such, your operations can continue with minimal downtime even if disaster strikes. Plus, you get peace of mind that someone knowledgeable and familiar with your systems is in charge, leading to faster response times.

Migrating to a cloud environment is the first step in future-proofing your company. An experienced MSP can make the latest technology and services available to your business without any interruption to your operations. With Office 365, you no longer have to buy or upgrade hardware, or migrate, install, and patch software just to do it all over again in a few years. An MSP will take care of all that, allowing your in-house IT to focus on more important tasks.

An MSP can also help your business meet various data protection requirements, so you won't need to fuss with redundant physical infrastructure for data backup and disaster recovery. Office 365 solutions are hosted in Microsoft's secure data centers, which means that onboarded companies have multiple layers of security and service continuity.

How can an MSP add value to Office 365?

MSPs increase your productivity

Many organizations find managed IT services more beneficial than ever before, because it's so easy to combine Microsoft Office 365 support. Pairing managed services with Office 365 helps unlock even higher levels of productivity, which is evident across all verticals.

Microsoft's productivity software is extremely flexible, packed full of features, and can be deployed in a full cloud environment, or on-premises only, or in a hybrid environment. For example, we recommend that businesses move some employees to the cloud but keep others on-premises for compliance or operational reasons.

Needless to say, Office 365 has become an invaluable tool for businesses. By partnering with an IT provider that can support it alongside other apps and platforms, you enjoy a single point of contact and lower operational costs with one monthly bill for all your technology solutions.

MSPs give you constant monitoring and support

A reliable MSP never rests. Their IT experts manage and monitor every aspect of your Office 365 environment round-the-clock, and they employ a proactive approach to security, so that threats and potential problems are identified before they cause downtime.

And for even more flexibility, they can provide businesses in regulated industries with a support service that's customized to address compliance concerns in the short and long term.

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How can an MSP add value to Office 365?

MSPs ensure hassle-free Office 365 migrations and deployments

While becoming familiar with Office 365's interface is easy enough since most people have used Microsoft desktop programs before, an office-wide migration is not as easy. It involves a myriad of tasks that may be too complicated and/or complex for an in-house IT technician, or employees who have little to no IT knowledge.

Fortunately, MSPs exist to provide businesses of any size with the expertise and IT solutions they need. They have the know-how and experience to handle difficult migration and deployment tasks, so you can rest assured that your project is headed in the right direction from start to finish.

Partnering with the right MSP provides the dedicated attention necessary to properly execute an Office 365 migration. They can lay out plans and manage project milestones to make the process quick and painless. This includes answering questions or concerns you may have about your Office 365 solution, such as:

- Will your environment be 100% cloud or a hybrid of cloud and on-premises solutions?
- What are your security requirements?
- What DNS changes will be required?
- Who will provision your Office 365 environment?
- What changes will be made to your spam filter?
- What are your compliance requirements?
- Who will be answering phone calls and emails?
- How will files be secured that are accessed by employees on mobile devices?

How can an MSP add value to Office 365?

- Can your network bandwidth support this?
- Do any of your line-of-business applications need to be integrated with Office 365?

A good MSP will also provide you with an ongoing support agreement which gives you 24x7 assistance and a seamless end-user experience that frees your internal IT team to focus on developing and implementing solutions that will help your bottom line.

What does it take to migrate to Office 365?

After you answer all the pre-migration questions — either with your in-house team or with an MSP — you'll need to decide how to proceed. There are several migration paths, each with pros and cons. Some prioritize speed while others focus on thoroughness, and the approach that's best for you depends on your needs.

Once you have a solid plan in place, the nitty-gritty IT work begins. Network settings like DNS hosts, firewall settings, and storage drives must be updated to make way for your apps to be installed, user accounts created, and data access privileges configured.

Then you need to make sure your non-Microsoft line-of-business applications play nice with Office 365. Before you pop the champagne, you need to test everything to confirm that the migration was flawless. Ask everyone on your team to open documents, send emails, make edits, and anything else that comes up during an average day. If there are any hiccups, it's best to fix them early in the transition period.

An MSP that specializes in providing Microsoft cloud-based solutions can get you through the onboarding process more swiftly and painlessly than if you do it yourself. Our Managed Office 365 package includes everything from pre-migration consulting to ongoing support. Want to know about pricing our subject level agreement guarantees? Get in touch with us today.

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Are you ready to realize long-term value from Office 365?

Call us today to talk with one of our seasoned consultants.
We're happy to answer your questions, provide recommendations,
and audit your current IT network.

Request your free consultation today!

Phone: **(402) 502-7380** Email: **sales@egistech.com**