LOGICALIS
Business and technology working as one

Optimize Operations

Organizations that used virtualization, managed services, and outsourcing to save money are finding the same technologies can now help them grow.

Face it. You don't really know what's going to happen in the next six months. You've got one foot on the brake and one foot on the accelerator.

Virtualization's ability to help organizations get new products and services to market faster is the ultimate benefit.

The vice president of sales was smiling the other day, but your CFO still looks anxious. Your staff wants to believe the worst is over, but no one seems convinced. It is neither the best of times nor the worst of times. It is between times.

There is no going back, but there is a way forward. IT leaders with the vision to look into the future see a dynamic data center environment on the horizon consisting of pools of high-performing computing resources that can be centrally managed, readily automated, and efficiently maintained. Security and compliance are built in instead of bolted on, and the upgrade path is evolutionary instead of disruptive.

This is better than "business as usual," and there is a way there. A best-practices approach to providing an efficient and effective IT infrastructure will put your IT department and your organization in the best position to respond to the changes you know are ahead. And, executed creatively, optimizing your operations can save you enough money and time to focus more on supporting the business-driven initiatives that boost the success of your organization.

The technologies exist. Virtualization, data center optimization, outsourcing, managed services, and software-as-a-service (SaaS)—these technologies are already in various stages of development or under consideration within most IT departments today.

Realizing the vision of the future, however, requires more than technologies. It requires an entirely new approach to the IT infrastructure. More than just isolated technologies advancing in their own silos within an IT department, the functional separation that existed between servers, storage, and networking is being replaced by a holistic approach to IT infrastructure that treats it as a single, dynamic environment that needs to be addressed and managed in its entirety.

This is the environment of the future, and the IT departments that get there first are going to give their organizations a major competitive advantage—whatever the future holds.

Get Growing

Virtualization is the enabling technology for optimizing your IT infrastructure. The emphasis of most virtualization initiatives in the past year or so has been on saving money by consolidating the number of physical servers and storage devices required to deliver the same computing performance. Virtualization excels at this task. Logicalis calculates that virtualization projects for its customers have resulted in at least a 12:1—and frequently much higher—reduction in physical servers.

Beyond saving money, virtualization's ability to help organizations begin growing by getting new products and services to market faster is the ultimate benefit.

Five Key Growth Practices for Optimizing Operations

- Conduct a comprehensive review of your IT strategy.
- Extend virtualization throughout your IT infrastructure.
- Take full advantage of rapid deployment and management and automation capabilities of virtualization.
- Outsource monitoring and management of select IT systems and leverage software-as-a-service opportunities. Exploit portal technology to include your employees, customers, and partners in ongoing and productive work sessions.
- Focus your attention on using technology to support business initiatives.

Further Reading

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Download Logicalis virtualization features at www.us.logicalis.com/cv

"In the past, if you wanted to be ready for a new line of business, you had to invest in something that sat around waiting for the market opportunity to arise," says Logicalis Virtualization Practice Manager Jeff Nessen. "Today, you can do the development and deploy it in the headroom you have in your own systems, and then plug in new capacity as you need it. You're not increasing the capacity of a system; you're increasing the capacity of a pool of resources. If you manage well, you can do just-in-time ordering and implementation of resources without slowing down the business."

Virtualization has raised the bar for IT performance in the marketplace. Organizations that have virtualized will be faster off the blocks after the recession. At this point, you need to use virtualization just to stay in the race. To start winning races, you need to use virtualization smarter than your competition. You may have virtualized your servers and storage, but what about your desktops? Have you taken full advantage of the management and automation capabilities of virtualization?

More has changed than just being able to put multiple applications on a physical server. Virtualization makes possible a degree of centralized management and control that hasn't been seen since the mainframe was king. Many virtualization projects can be financially justified strictly by how much they improve the management of systems. They also make providing redundancy, fault tolerance, and disaster recovery significantly easier and cheaper to accomplish. These are the next opportunities for virtualization. What was too expensive before virtualization may be affordable afterward.

Data Center Dynamics

Combined with data center optimization, a strategic approach to incremental changes in the data center can propagate benefits that extend from IT throughout your entire organization.

Blade servers, for example, have introduced the concept of high-density data centers that pack previously unheard-of performance in a single rack. New rack design and cooling technology provide a new level of control and dramatic savings in both cost and energy consumption. Advances in networking technologies promise to converge Ethernet and Fibre Channel networks into a single network environment that is faster and easier to manage.

Benefits of data center optimization include:

- **Reduced costs:** Consolidating data centers slashes operating costs and dramatically reduces energy consumption.
- **Centralized control:** Having one place to look for everything facilitates management and compliance, and ensures security.
- **Automated operations:** Automation tools free IT staff to focus on business initiatives.
- **Increased performance:** Advances in blade servers, storage, and networking combine to catapult performance ahead of business needs.
- **Mitigated risk:** Implementing high-availability and disaster recovery technologies minimizes downtime and effectively eliminates disaster.
- **Quicker response:** Flexible, scalable data center technology empowers your business to pursue opportunities wherever they lead.

From its experience helping customers in a wide range of industries with their data centers, Logicalis has learned the best way to proceed is to set aside discussions about which technologies to choose, concentrate on a comprehensive evaluation of the current infrastructure, and develop a set of requirements that accounts for the current and future needs of the organization. Included in this strategy should be multitier archiving for storage and a compliance assessment that will ensure you don't get yanked back by regulators just as your business speeds up. A well-thought-out strategy for optimizing operations has the additional benefit of enabling your IT department to proceed incrementally as manpower, time, and budget allow.

You also need to keep an open mind about innovation. New options become apparent as you reach each successive vantage point. "When you deploy any sophisticated, new technology, there are things you didn't know it could do until you've had it deployed for a little while," says Logicalis Senior Vice President-Solution Service Eric Linxweiler. "After they've had it for a while, many customers say, 'Wow, now I understand the possibilities!' That's when innovation can really begin."

Source of Revenue

Like virtualization and data center optimization, the need to save money drove many IT organizations to consider managed services. Those that gave it a try found managed services helped them make money as well as save it.

Logicalis Vice President of Managed Services Wayne Kiphart estimates Logicalis can support an organization's infrastructure for generally one-third the cost to support it internally, and Logicalis can support it at a higher level.

Your CFO will tell you—he or she probably has told you—that every asset, including every device and every employee, has to be allocated to a source of revenue. Managed services helps IT departments transform themselves from a source of expense to a source of revenue.

Further Reading

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www.us.logicalis.com

Read
Reimagine, Reinvent, and RevITalize your data center at www.us.logicalis.com/dc

While your service provider is taking care of mundane tasks—i.e., monitoring routers and resolving user problems, you and your IT team can complete strategic projects that directly support moneymaking business initiatives.

Stepping Out

The writing has been on the wall for some time. Remote monitoring and management are accepted practices within most IT departments.

At this point, any reluctance to extend those capabilities to a qualified third-party managed services provider is a cultural issue, not a technology issue. The decision to use managed services has been supplanted by the more pressing question of how to use managed services to gain competitive advantage.

"The ideal way to leverage managed services is to have your IT department focus on business processes that are unique to your organization and leverage managed services for the IT tasks necessary to support those business processes," says Logicalis Business Manager for Managed Services Kevin Clark.

The success of managed services has encouraged forward-looking organizations to take the next step away from hosting all of their applications internally to buying application services from a third-party provider.

Logicalis now provides a growing SaaS menu that includes contact management, hosted email, monitoring, and IT service management.

On the Horizon

The image on the horizon we are all approaching with varying degrees of enthusiasm is what is generally called "cloud computing." Having such an ethereal name adds to the mystique, but vague promises of what will actually happen in the cloud keep it swirling in the distance.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to take a leap of faith. In fact, notes Logicalis' Nessen, "At the end of the day, cloud computing is just the evolution of all the things we've been talking about for the last few years. Twenty ten will be a year when we get some more cohesive definition and practical implementation of cloud computing."

Evolving technologies are changing the rules—pushing IT departments out of the comfortable seclusion of the once self-contained data center and into the mainstream of the workplace and the marketplace. IT doesn't just happen in the back room anymore. Technology is rapidly becoming an externalized nervous system. There is no back room.

Further Reading

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Check out our Get Ready to GROW microsite to download all of the features and other resources at www.us.logicalis.com/grow.

Further Reading

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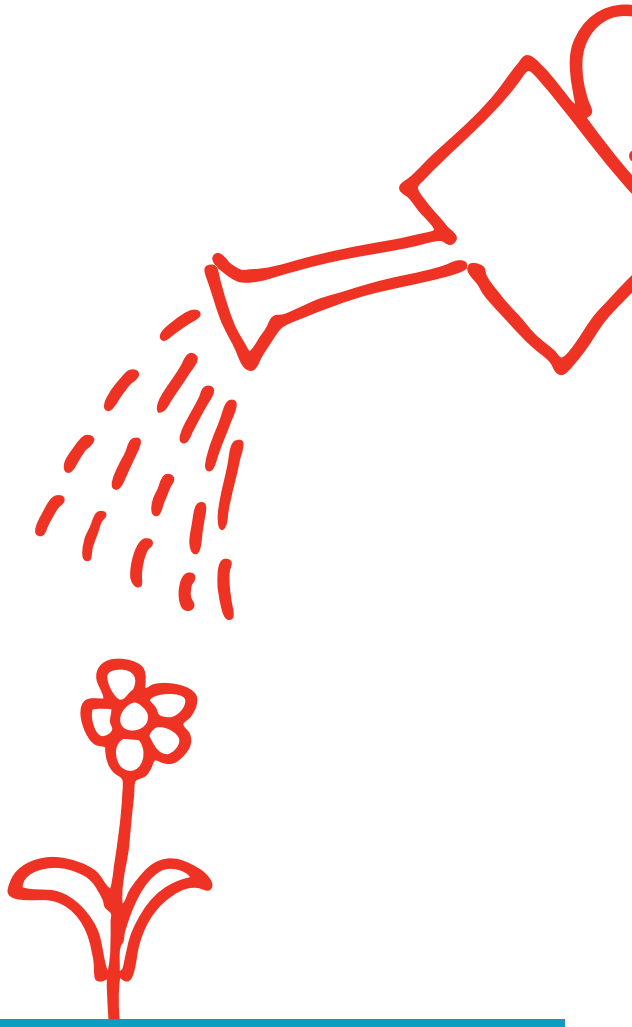
Download the Logicalis feature "Efficiency on Demand" at www.us.logicalis.com/ms

As IT increasingly facilitates and defines how people interact throughout and between organizations, IT departments are going to have to spend more of their time interacting with people. The traditional relationship between IT and users has been more of a tug of war than a collaborative discussion. In the future, everyone must push and pull in the same direction.

An optimized IT infrastructure is the nervous system of the organization of the future. Centralized pools of computing resources, lights-out data centers, 24/7 monitoring and management of IT infrastructures, and SaaS—these technologies enable IT professionals to spend more of their time collaborating with users on ways to make their organizations more successful. After all, the true value of an efficient nervous system is not that it functions well but what it lets you do.

"Win More," the last feature in our four-part Get Ready to GROW series, will look at the rewards that an active collaboration between users and IT professionals can produce.

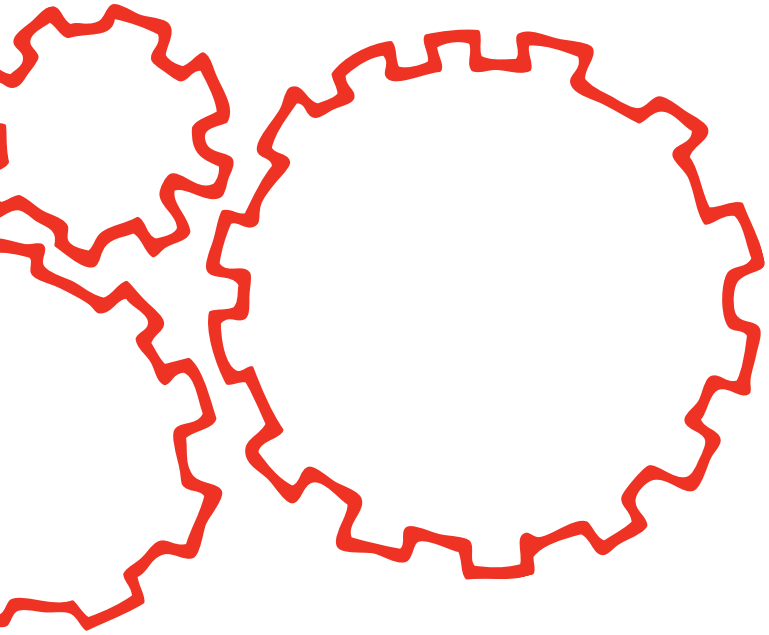


The Business Case for Managed Services

- Access to technologists with high-level certifications and diverse experience
- Implementation of the information
- Technology Infrastructure Library's (ITIL v3) best practices
- Predictable monthly costs and stringent service-level agreements
- Reduced risk of downtime
- Detailed quarterly performance reviews
- Flexibility to change coverage as your needs change
- Opportunities to focus on supporting business initiatives and building competitive advantage

Eric Linxweiler
Senior Vice President
Logicalis

"If a project has been around for awhile, you may no longer have the same need anymore, or there may be a better way to meet it."



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Logicalis is an international provider of integrated information and communications technology (ICT) solutions and services founded on a superior breadth of knowledge and expertise in communications and collaboration, data center, and professional and managed services.

Logicalis Group employs over 1,900 people worldwide, including highly trained service specialists who design, specify, deploy and manage complex ICT infrastructures to meet the needs of over 5,000 corporate and public sector customers. To achieve this, Logicalis maintains strong partnerships with technology leaders such as Cisco, HP, IBM and Microsoft.

The Logicalis Group has annualized revenues of $1 billion, from operations in the UK, US, Germany, South America and Asia Pacific, and is fast establishing itself as one of the leading IT and Communications solution integrators, specializing in the areas of advanced technologies and services.

The Logicalis Group is a division of Datatec Limited, listed on the Johannesburg and London AIM Stock Exchanges, with revenues in excess of $4 billion.

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1/11