# The hidden costs of IT support

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**The total price of your multiple vendor support contracts is not what you actually pay for support. The bulk of support activities, and their associated costs, fall outside what most individual OEM vendors cover in their support offerings.**

Most of your costs for support are actually internal. If you want to save money on support, you need to understand your total support costs, including your internal costs.

The smart approach is to offload more of your internal IT support tasks, that drive up hidden costs, by consolidating support into a single contract. This should be with a support partner that can handle support across vendors and improve your operational efficiency.

## Multiple support plans push up your costs across many OEM vendors

One hidden cost lies in having to navigate many different support processes, which vary from vendor to vendor.

The more vendors you have, the more complicated your support environment is to manage. This leads to more mistakes being made, and more downtime occurring —which further drives up your operational costs and introduces more business risk.

Using many OEM vendors for support burdens you with more internal administration, training, and contract management — all of which add to your total cost of support.

By consolidating the number of vendor support plans in your environment, you can lower the total amount you spend on support.

**Businesses spend far more on 'cheaper' break- fix services than they realize. Relying more on a** specialist support partner's capabilities can lower your total cost of support.

**Use a support service which allows you to** specify the level of service for individual assets.

## Cheap break-fix plans only shift cost in house

The simpler and cheaper the support contract, the more costs you have to carry internally.

If you decide not to buy a premium level of service but opt for a simple break-fix plan instead, you end up having to do a lot of the management required to maintain the desired level of service.

The internal team would have to determine if the equipment is under contract with the OEM vendor, or another service provider. This takes time and effort, and the more out-of-date or incomplete your asset register is, the longer and more involved this tracking process becomes.

Even after you finally call the vendor support team and the replacement equipment is installed or repaired, it's still your responsibility to make sure the equipment is configured and patched and that service has been restored. The result is that businesses spend far more on 'cheaper' break-fix services than they realize.

Using a multi-vendor plan like NTT's Uptime might at face value seem more expensive than a simple break-fix OEM vendor plan, but you would need far fewer inhouse administration and engineering resources to deliver the same level of support.

Freeing up your internal support team by relying more on a support service provider that has capabilities across vendors can lower your total cost of support.

## Get exactly the right levels of service you need

Many businesses tend to under-spend on service levels. The best-practice way of determining what service levels you need is to categorize your locations by availability requirements.

The highest service level requirement might be for your data centers, which would need a 7 x 24 x 4-hour entitlement to ensure maximum uptime for business-critical systems and processes. A satellite location might need only an 8 x 5

x next-business-day entitlement, owing to its lower importance to the overall business.

When we do the location-versus-support analysis with some of our clients, we often find that their service level coverage is not the right fit in many locations. In a few cases, the service level may be set too high but, more often than not, organizations have opted for cheaper options with less support than they really need.

Use a support service which allows you to specify the level of service for individual assets, depending on how critical they are to the business.

## Let your support partner bridge your skills gap

One of the most important reasons why organizations need external support services is because they lack the necessary technical skills in-house, especially in emerging markets.

The biggest factor contributing to this skills shortage is the pace of technological change. With all the day-to-day pressures in-house IT support teams face, there's not much time or budget left for upskilling employees on the latest advances.

Keeping your in-house skills up to date with all your vendors' technologies is expensive and time-consuming. Of course, it's important to understand the technologies you use, but you shouldn't try to be an expert in everything.

Trying to maintain skills in routine operational tasks only binds your people ever tighter to performing low value activities and prevents them from learning value-adding skills (like developing containerized apps).

Using shared, skilled resources of a multivendor service lowers your total cost of support.

> **Avoidable downtime is the** biggest hidden cost **of a fragmented, OEM vendor-based approach to support.**

## Proactive support cuts the cost of downtime

Avoidable downtime is the biggest hidden cost of a fragmented, OEM vendor-based approach to support. With a unified support service like Uptime, you can adopt a proactive support strategy and reduce the cost to the business of unplanned downtime.

Proactive monitoring, for example, can provide more accurate fault information, more quickly, in order to restore outages faster. It's a valuable component to have as part of your support package, as it can dramatically reduce the cost of downtime.

**How reactive support can increase downtime**

Imagine a branch of a commercial bank. A device malfunctions outside normal business hours. It might only be noticed when the branch is about to open the next morning.

Only then is a call is placed to the bank's internal help desk, which may first attempt to solve the problem itself.

If this isn't successful, the OEM vendor is notified to provide the necessary support, and the description of the problem is repeated.

These manual processes increase the risk that information is passed on incompletely or inaccurately.

All of these steps consume business hours which translate into lost revenue.

**How proactive monitoring can reduce downtime**

With a proactive monitoring service in place, the support service partner has direct visibility of the client's infrastructure.

For many devices, the device itself can send an alarm automatically of an impending outage.

A support service partner with automation capabilities can then take the necessary action to rectify the problem – sometimes before the client's normal working hours recommence.

This eliminates the need for the client's own helpdesk to get involved, and there's no risk that information may be passed on erroneously.

In this way business downtime can be reduced or avoided entirely.

## Automated discovery will give you an accurate asset register

The larger the organization, the less likely it is to have an accurate view of all the devices in its environment - which vendor's support contract they're covered by, and where they are in their lifecycle.

Without an up-to-date asset register, a business exposes itself to the risks of security vulnerabilities, license expiries, or overlooked software upgrades and patches.

What these organizations need to do is a complete, proactive asset discovery exercise to catalogue all existing devices and their related support information.

Using a support service provider that provides automated discovery and asset tracking can lower the risks associated with an inaccurate asset register.

## Choose a support partner with global scale

While certain small, local support providers may be able to offer some of these proactive components, multinational organizations would be advised to partner with a global support provider that can offer all of them.

Most importantly, the service provider should be able to deliver these services consistently and reliably around the globe.

Using a global support partner can also cut your tax bill on international service operations.

If your vendor service providers don't have legal entities in all the countries in which you operate, you can incur a foreign tax liability for procuring services there.

If you're an international or multinational organization, choosing a single service provider like NTT, which has a sophisticated procurement and logistics function covering 160 countries, can minimize your customs duty and import tax liabilities.

Moving to a unified support service like NTT's Uptime will enable you to achieve a simpler yet more proactive support strategy, with fewer hidden costs.

## Your next steps

Find out why NTT's **Uptime is the smarter choice for support.**

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