



EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW

Designation	CTO
Country	USA
Sector	Education

Interviewer:

To what extent does your organization use the services of an MSP and in which areas of IT? To manage all your IT? To run projects on ERP, virtualization, SD WAN, Azure Stack, cloud migration or infrastructure, for example?

Respondent:

At present, the University does not use many MSPs, with a lot of work being done internally. This is due in part to cost as previous quotes for MSP projects would have put too much strain on the current budget for the year. This will be looked at again for the next fiscal year, as the University is eager to implement MSPs within their organization. When MSPs have been used by the University in the past, Microsoft technology has been used. This has been for storage and other infrastructure initiatives. Any implementation of MSPs must first go through a six-month approval process prior to project start.

Interviewer:

How has this helped in terms of cost benefits, such as removing capital expenditure, coping with skills shortages or with meeting specific targets, such as a merger or acquisition or perhaps a new product launch?

Respondent:

We are not currently using any MSPs within the University, but I am sure that by using them, we would begin to experience decreased operating costs for the University's IT department. It would help with our staff meeting targets too, as, due to our current workload, many tasks are being left to sit there for too long.

Interviewer:

What other factors do you envisage influencing your decision on employing MSP services over the next 12 to 18 months? For example, opening offices in new regions, impending regulatory changes (if so which?) or necessary technology change (if so what?). How will an MSP help you overcome this particular challenge? I.e. What do you see are the key benefits of using an MSP for your organization in the next 12 to 18 months?

Respondent:

At present, the University has brought in a new President, and one of her priorities for the future is to investigate the benefits of implementing more MSPs. If a strong case is made for the implementation of MSPs then current University strategies will shift. Legal wait-time is also a factor in deciding on the use of a

MSP. As I said previously, there is a six-month approval process for any MSPs we would look to implement. However, if a strong case is made for a MSP to be implemented, then I can see this being pushed through at a quicker pace. What would also affect this is if it were shown to management that no alternative internal solution is available, and the only option is to implement a MSP. So, a strong plan made by a vendor would be of great help in us choosing them as our MSP.

Interviewer:

What are the biggest pain points for your internal IT team? Skills shortages, too many IT projects, lack of management understanding, too much IT complexity? Maybe something else? How damaging could this be to your organization and why? Has it ever lead to failed IT projects or to over budget projects?

Respondent:

At the moment, our greatest challenge within the IT department would be disaster recovery. This is because we do not have a primary, solid disaster recovery plan in place. That is why, we are currently looking to solve this issue quickly. If a disaster were to happen now, our servers would be down for at least three weeks, which would result in the loss of millions of dollars in revenue for the University. It would have catastrophic consequences. We are working on establishing an offsite disaster recovery system to address this. However, if a viable and cost-effective solution from an external provider is presented to us, then we will go with that over an in-house solution.

Interviewer:

How is your organization managing its data, on premise, in the public cloud, both? Do you envisage a shift in strategy over the next 12 to 18 months and if so how and why and where do you see an MSP helping you?

Respondent:

Currently, 100% of the University's data is managed on premises. At present, the benefits of a cloud migration for data have not stood out to the University, which is why it hasn't happened yet. If a strong case is made for it, I can see University policy changing to accommodate the use of a MSP for offsite data storage. Another reason for this is for legal reasons: we can only use providers such as Microsoft Azure to host data in the cloud. We do use cloud providers for data analytics at the moment though.

Interviewer:

In terms of percentage, how confident are you that your existing IT strategy is working well and where do you think it could be improved? Do you think there are aspects of IT that will never truly be managed well internally and will always require the expertise of an MSP? If so what? (Security? Cloud? Infrastructure?)

Respondent:

Our current IT strategy is working well at the moment. Any demands that our users make, we have been able to provide a solution. The only area of our IT strategy we are lacking in would be with our disaster recovery plans. As I said, we are looking to implement a plan now. We're looking at doing it in-house at the moment, but if we get an offer from an external provider that has a good cost point and is viable for us, then we will go with that. Same for all projects we'd do: no point in doing a year-long project if we can use an MSP that can be implemented in under six months.

Interviewer:

What aspects of IT in your organization do you think should always be managed internally and not by an MSP? Are there any external or internal factors that could challenge this, such as skills shortages, M&A, business consolidation or regulation? If so what?

Respondent:

There is no aspect of our IT that always must be managed internally; it is a preference that we do it that way. However, if an MSP can provide a cost-effective and easy-to-implement option we would look at it. While our IT staff are extremely skilled, our workloads can be too large to be completed on time. This would be an instance we would be more than happy to implement a MSP to pass on non-critical tasks and issues. The sheer volume and the risk factors of being overloaded with issues to solve would be the main factors in implementing a MSP.