




Handle **IT** with care

IT Services for Healthcare



A bright, modern hospital hallway with large windows and a polished floor. In the foreground, a woman in a white lab coat and a man in blue scrubs are looking at a document together. Other people in medical attire are blurred in the background, suggesting a busy environment.

The healthcare industry faces a number of unique challenges including user demands, industry regulations, stakeholder management, cybersecurity and more. So, how can these all be overcome whilst balancing tight budgets, ensuring high quality patient care, and staying competitive? Read our eBook to learn more

Overcoming technology challenges in the healthcare industry

The healthcare industry is in a state of rapid transformation, due to the strain put on healthcare providers from the pandemic, alongside population changes, the speed of technology innovation, and increased user-expectations. As a result, IT professionals are having to rapidly scale up and implement new technologies to support an influx of patients while still ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. This can be a daunting task for IT leaders who are not familiar with the latest technological advancements or have limited resources to implement them across their networks.

Furthermore, the healthcare industry is particularly vulnerable to cyber-attacks, due to the large amount of sensitive patient data they store. Maintaining a secure and compliant system is of paramount importance in order to protect patient data and guard against malicious activity. The challenge lies in finding a balance between limited budgets, high quality patient care, and the implementation of robust security measures.

Understanding common pitfalls is essential to overcoming

these obstacles so that the healthcare industry can quickly adopt new technologies to support demand and new working patterns, whilst delivering a seamless and secure service to patients.

For these reasons, healthcare organisations are increasingly outsourcing their IT functions to a Managed Service Provider (MSP), who can help healthcare providers overcome these challenges by providing comprehensive advice, support and infrastructure maintenance. This allows healthcare providers to free up their internal resources and focus on other core tasks while still staying updated on the latest technologies and compliance regulations. Additionally, MSPs provide effective cost management solutions that ensure a health provider's IT costs remain low while they benefit from the highest quality of service.

In this eBook, we'll discuss the key IT challenges currently facing healthcare organisations, along with the unique complexities of these, the changing landscape, and how to adapt and leverage technology to thrive in today's environment.



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Healthcare-specific IT challenges

Providing high-quality patient care whilst balancing budgets

IT leaders in healthcare organisations face a unique challenge when it comes to providing quality patient care while managing costs. The difficulty lies in finding the delicate balance between providing necessary services, maintaining standard operations, and staying within budgetary constraints.

Finding cost-effective solutions that also provide excellent patient care is a continuous battle for IT leaders as they must not only remain up-to-date with the latest advances in technology but also understand how to make the most effective use of existing resources. To overcome this challenge, IT leaders must find ways to maximise efficiency while considering factors like cost savings, quality of service and impact on patient outcomes.

Adapting to changing industry regulations

Implementing new technology and systems can be time-consuming and costly, and the risk of not complying with regulatory requirements could compromise patient safety and data security. IT professionals must stay abreast of all relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards in order to ensure that they are compliant. This can mean having to deploy additional processes and technologies, such as implementing strong cyber-security measures, to protect patient data; upgrading existing hardware; or building new applications and services that adhere to privacy rules.

In addition, IT teams must be able to respond quickly and efficiently when changes are made to regulatory requirements, which can add further pressure on staff members who need to effectively manage these changes while still providing quality care.



Recruiting top talent during a tech skills shortage

The current tech skills shortage is making it increasingly difficult for healthcare organisations to find the right people with the right skills to fill their IT roles. A report by Hays revealed that 95% of employers looking for tech talent have encountered a skills shortage over the past year, resulting in organisations struggling to find qualified candidates for crucial roles.

The lack of qualified IT professionals has also made recruitment more competitive, demanding higher salaries, benefits, and flexible working options, creating added strain to already limited resources.

This can have serious impacts on healthcare organisations – for instance delaying new system rollouts causing inefficiencies in the company, or lead to downtime delaying patient services.

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Maintaining multiple stakeholders

IT leaders in healthcare organisations are tasked with a huge challenge when it comes to managing the myriad of different stakeholders, from patients to suppliers and regulatory bodies. Each stakeholder brings its own unique set of requirements which must be taken into account if any solutions or updates are to be successful.

For instance, patients require an intuitive interface that allows them to review their records and complete forms easily. Suppliers, meanwhile, need systems that allow for efficient ordering and tracking of items. Regulatory bodies often demand compliance with stringent data security protocols while community organisations may need access to confidential information about clinical programmes and patient outcomes.

IT leaders must understand all these diverse requirements in order to develop effective solutions that meet all the stakeholders' needs. This demands exceptional communication skills and project management as well as strong technical knowledge in order to ensure that all perspectives are taken into consideration before proceeding with any changes or implementations.

In addition, IT leaders must stay up-to-date on emerging technologies so they can identify opportunities for improving workflow and increasing efficiency while also staying vigilant on privacy regulations and compliance standards that protect patient data and maintain data integrity across all user groups.

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Ensuring data privacy and cybersecurity

The challenge for IT leaders in healthcare organisations to ensure data privacy and cyber-security is a growing concern. With the rise of cyber-attacks and the shift to hybrid working, healthcare organisations must be vigilant in protecting their data and systems from malicious actors. Healthcare organisations are particularly vulnerable to cyber-attacks due to the sensitive nature of their data, which can include patient records, financial information, and other confidential information. Worryingly, this is on the rise with Sophos finding that 66% of healthcare organisations were hit by ransomware in 2022, compared to 34% in 2020.

In order to protect against these threats, IT leaders in healthcare organisations must implement robust security measures such as encryption, multi-factor authentication, firewalls, intrusion detection systems and regular patching of software. They should also ensure that all staff members are trained on cybersecurity best practices such as avoiding suspicious emails or links and using strong passwords. Additionally, IT leaders should consider investing in advanced security solutions such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technologies to detect potential threats before they become a problem.



Legacy systems vs. leveraging new technology

IT leaders in healthcare organisations face unique challenges when it comes to leveraging new technology due to the prevalence of legacy or ageing technology. Many hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare providers rely on outdated systems that are difficult to integrate with new technologies. In addition, these older systems typically lack modern security measures which can leave them vulnerable to malicious attacks.

Organisations must find a way to cost-effectively integrate new technologies such as cloud services and analytics with existing legacy systems. This may involve creating custom solutions that enable data portability between different platforms or taking advantage of open-source tools and software packages. Additionally, IT leaders must ensure that all security measures are up-to-date across both old and new systems so as not to jeopardise patient data or leave any system exposed.

Enabling hybrid working

Enabling hybrid working has posed significant challenges to IT leaders in healthcare organisations. This is because traditional healthcare models were not designed with remote working or telemedicine in mind and existing systems may not be capable of supporting these new technologies.

For example, virtual consultations require specialised tools such as video conferencing platforms that can both protect patient privacy while also providing a high quality of care. IT leaders must invest in these specialised tools as well as essential hardware components such as webcams and external monitors so staff members can work efficiently from home or other remote locations.

Furthermore, healthcare organisations need to be able to communicate with many third-party or external contacts, such as regulatory bodies, individual physicians, or regional support teams, so having seamless and secure collaboration systems is vital.

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The healthcare industry is facing a multitude of challenges in the current environment, from the strain put on providers from the pandemic, to rising expectations and changes in regulations. IT professionals must stay abreast of these changes to ensure compliant and secure systems, while still managing budgets, recruiting top talent, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. Additionally, they must find ways to integrate new technologies with legacy systems and enable hybrid working, all while ensuring the highest quality of patient care.

So, how can they achieve this whilst increasing efficiency and staying ahead of the competition? One of the key ways organisations can overcome these challenges and accelerate digitally, is by outsourcing IT Services – either fully or just certain areas, to a Managed Service Provider (MSP). In the next section we'll outline some of the major benefits of this approach.



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Benefits of IT Outsourcing for Healthcare Organisations

Cost Reduction & Efficiency

There are a number of ways in which MSPs can help healthcare organisations reduce costs and drive efficiencies. Firstly, by leveraging the expertise of an experienced MSP, healthcare organisations can reduce the amount of time spent on IT maintenance and management tasks. This frees up valuable internal resources that can be used elsewhere, such as for strategic initiatives and other activities related to patient care.

With an MSP's experience and knowledge in various technologies, they can provide tailored advice on how to make the most of existing IT investments while reducing risks associated with security breaches or data loss. They can also often offer cost-effective solutions due to their economies of scale and partnerships with technology vendors. Outsourcing IT support operations to an MSP enables immediate access to skilled professionals who are available 24/7 for technical support for any business-critical processes or disasters that may arise. This ensures that any potential problems are addressed quickly without disruption to core services or operations.

Another key advantage is helping organisations adopt cloud technologies. Moving to the cloud can help healthcare organisations save costs in several ways. Firstly, cloud computing eliminates the need for large upfront investments in hardware and software licenses as resources are delivered on an as-needed basis. This helps healthcare organisations avoid unplanned expenses related to managing and maintaining their own IT infrastructure.

Additionally, moving to the cloud enables healthcare organisations to scale up or down quickly according to demand, allowing them to reduce costs associated with unused storage or processing capacity. Furthermore, reducing operational spending allows organisations to free up funds for more strategic initiatives that can improve patient care and satisfaction.

Migrating data and services to the cloud also provides access from anywhere with an Internet connection, enabling remote employees and contractors to access critical information more quickly and securely from any location, driving up efficiency.



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Ensuring Compliance

MSPs are experienced in managing and maintaining a secure IT infrastructure that adheres to best practices for data security and privacy, such as encryption and two-factor authentication. This helps healthcare organisations comply with regulations like GDPR, which require data to be protected from unauthorised access.

An MSP will also ensure that all systems are regularly updated on an ongoing basis. These updates include patches and upgrades which reduce the risk of malicious attacks or data breaches which could lead to hefty fines in some cases. Furthermore, they can provide detailed reports on system performance and usage trends which allow organisations to proactively identify any potential weaknesses before they become major issues.

Overcoming the Skills Gap

Outsourcing IT to an MSP can help healthcare organisations overcome the tech skills gap by providing access to a larger pool of talent and expertise. As they employ specialists in various areas, they can provide healthcare organisations with more specific roles and resources than if they were to hire or train internally. This enables them to make use of niche skills and focus their efforts on critical tasks without recruiting new staff which is costly and in short-supply.

It also enables organisations to outsource time-heavy tasks so that business leaders can focus on innovation and strategic initiatives. You'll be able to scale up or scale down the services obtained, enabling you to only pay for what you use when you need it, giving you flexibility and cost control.

“An MSP can also provide project management and process development which allow healthcare organisations to effectively organise their workloads while ensuring that all tasks are completed on time and within budget.”



Managing multiple stakeholders

MSPs can provide Service Integration and Management (SIAM) services to healthcare organisations, which helps companies streamline their IT operations into one integrated system. This reduces the need for multiple vendors and systems which in turn lowers operational expenses. SIAM also makes it easier to manage change within an organisation as tasks such as system upgrades, migrations and integrations are much simpler to execute when there is just one unified service provider.

Moreover, SIAM can help businesses increase efficiency by eliminating silos and creating one single platform that allows information to be shared easily across departments. This facilitates better communication between teams and reduces duplication of effort as staff can access the same data securely from anywhere in the world.

Finally, SIAM helps companies ensure compliance with regulations and other guidelines by providing complete visibility into all processes, identifying any potential legal or regulatory pitfalls before they become serious issues.

An MSP can also provide project management and process development which allow healthcare organisations to effectively organise their workloads while ensuring that all tasks are completed on time and within budget. This results in improved operational efficiencies across departments, allowing healthcare organisations to better serve their patients.

Protecting your organisation from cyber-attacks

MSPs can provide healthcare organisations with a variety of cybersecurity solutions to help protect against attacks. They can provide full-stack managed security services such as Managed Detection & Response (MDR) which encompasses an end-to-end service, from project management and rapid installation of tooling, through to continuous real-time monitoring and remediation support.

They can also provide key services including data protection and backup, patch management and vulnerability scanning. This helps healthcare organisations identify risks early on so that they can take action to mitigate them before any damage is done.

MSPs can help healthcare organisations develop effective policies and procedures for protecting their systems from malicious activity. This includes implementing access controls, regular password changes and authentication protocols that make it more difficult for cybercriminals to access sensitive information. Finally, they can also advise on how to prevent attacks by offering security awareness training for employees and regular assessments of existing policies and procedures.

Fostering Innovation

MSPs can help healthcare organisations innovate by providing expert advice on cutting-edge technologies such as cloud computing, virtualisation and artificial intelligence. MSPs can also identify areas where existing processes could be improved, such as reducing costs or increasing efficiency, and recommend innovative solutions that would make a positive impact.

Additionally, MSPs can provide resources for implementing new technologies and integrating them into existing systems. This could involve assisting with development and testing of new software, setting up secure networks to facilitate remote working environments or deploying cloud-based platforms to store sensitive data securely.

“MSPs can provide healthcare organisations with a variety of cybersecurity solutions to help protect against attacks.”





Conclusion

Healthcare organisations face unique challenges in the current environment and are under pressure to deliver efficient, modern, secure, and cost-effective services while providing high-quality patient care. IT leaders can benefit from outsourcing certain tasks to a Managed Service Provider (MSP) who will provide access to skilled professionals who can help your business navigate through these changes quickly and securely so that you can focus on improving patient satisfaction and driving your organisation forward.

> Get in touch

Make **IT** work



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