

# Why choose IBM as your technical support services provider?

*Proactively support your IT needs in the cognitive era*



### Highlights

IBM Technical Support Services can help:

- Mitigate business risk with services from a forward-thinking industry innovator
- Enhance IT availability with a virtually unmatched global infrastructure
- Support your unique needs with extensive, flexible and customisable service options
- Facilitate easier access to the support you need
- Reduce complexity with a single point of contact for nearly all your IT needs
- Facilitate a positive return on investment (ROI) and performance results.

In today's always on world, IT systems are so interdependent with business operations that even a few minutes of downtime can have big implications for your productivity, reputation and finances. New technologies like cloud, mobile, analytics and social can help your business be more flexible and responsive, but at the same time they increase your risk.

As your business steps into the cognitive era, where technologies like programmable computing and cognitive technologies like IBM® Watson help your business outthink the competition, the risks can be even higher. When something goes wrong, the ripple effect can cause outages, performance degradation, downtime and lost productivity.

The cost associated with outages continues to escalate. According to IDC, the mean cost of an hour of downtime can range from USD\$224,952 to USD\$1,659,428, depending on the size of your organisation.<sup>1</sup> IDC has also found that between 21 percent and 31 percent of 30-minute outages cause severe business impact, where user productivity is severely impacted.<sup>2</sup>

It is practically inevitable. All systems eventually malfunction at some point. And when they do, downtime can cause far more than lost time and money. It can also result in missed opportunities, a damaged reputation and customer dissatisfaction that can be disastrous for your business. Without the appropriate technical support expertise and service levels, you may feel like you are always reacting to problems instead of focusing on your business.

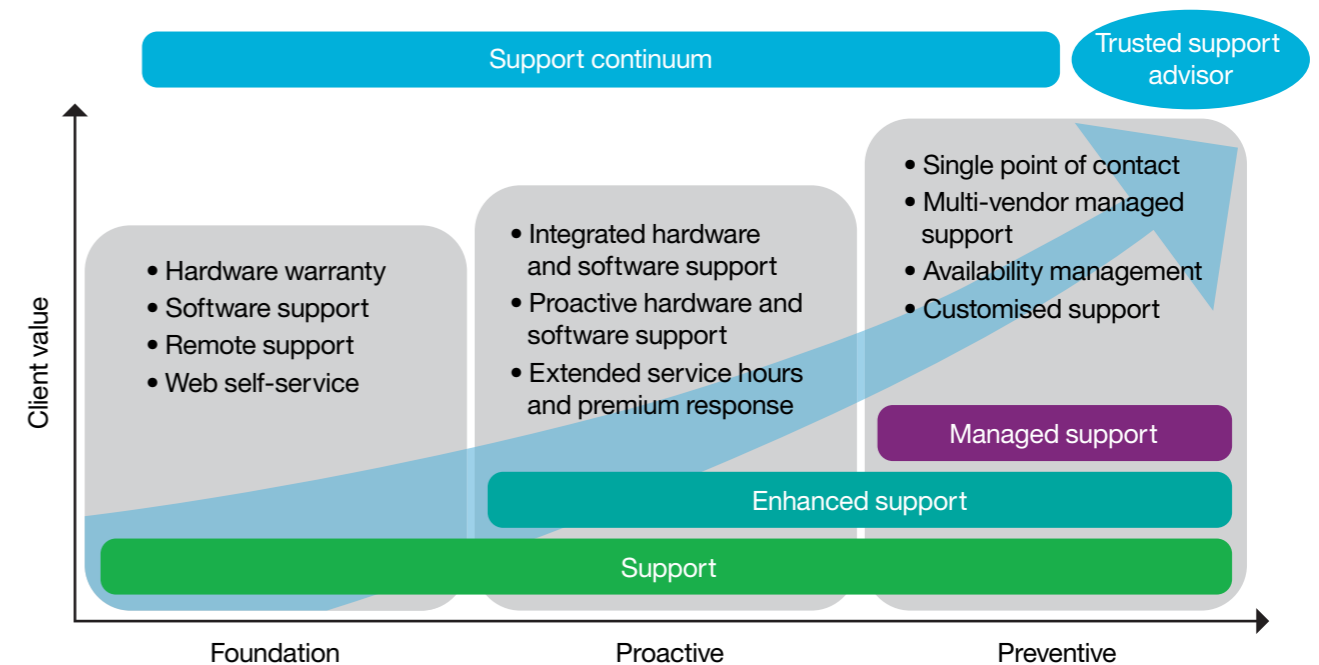
Fortunately, that is where quality technical support services come in. But what exactly does quality technical support look like? It can mean a system that identifies a potential problem and applies a fix remotely so you may never even know you have a problem. Quality technical support can also mean the identification of a potential problem and engagement of the technician on your behalf to proactively schedule time to apply a fix. Ideally you do not ever want to need a service call. However, when you do need onsite support, you want technicians who can respond fast, identify and repair the problem quickly and reduce the chance that the problem will happen again. You also want services to be delivered according to your unique needs and budgetary requirements.

Achieving this level of support can be challenging especially as you strive to balance high IT availability with support costs. Relying on in-house resources to manage your technical support needs can involve significant time, resources and expense and can ultimately divert attention away from core business. And managing multiple service providers can expose your business to increased risks that can stem from difficulty in accessing support, managing multiple contracts and bills, and receiving inconsistent service quality. A technical support provider that focuses on quality and adding value to your organisation, as opposed to just reducing costs, can help you overcome these challenges.

One of the leading technical support provider should be able to offer you:

- A thorough understanding of your business needs and the ability to respond accordingly
- Flexible service options designed to support your needs and budget
- A single point of contact for globally consistent services, from simple break-fix to end-to-end (E2E) support capabilities, so that every location can access almost immediate expertise to help resolve events
- Global leadership in technical expertise, designed to include broad infrastructure competence and deep, multiplatform and multivendor technology skills
- Support that is quick, accessible and reliable
- Remote support and automated web-based options that can help speed problem resolution and control the labour costs of IT infrastructure support and maintenance
- Proactive monitoring and event notifications to help reduce business disruptions
- Parts replacement capabilities, on time and at the right locations
- Time-tested methods and support processes
- Responsiveness to your unanticipated business challenges, whether due to availability issues or major change management challenges
- Proof of potential cost savings via out-tasked support that may include remote support tools and staff, as well as management of contracts, warranties and asset inventories.

### IBM's modular support services are designed to optimise your support today and tomorrow



IBM Technical Support Services are designed to provide you with the support you need, when you need it.

### Helping to mitigate business risks with a forward-thinking industry innovator

As one of the industry leaders, we are committed to far more than just fixing your systems when they break. IBM is constantly researching and inventing new ways to help you reduce downtime through our 12 global research laboratories and 114 hardware and software development laboratories.

*IBM stands out among our industry peers and in business at large as distinctively able to keep moving to the future, and to keep generating differentiating value for our clients...and the citizens of the world.*

—Virginia M. (Ginni) Rometty, President and CEO

But when it comes to technical support, a forward-thinking approach in addition to extensive experience can make all the difference in helping you manage change and resolve problems. Our clients rely on our expertise to support both their IBM and multivendor systems. In fact, on any given day, we help manage 15,000 hardware problem transactions and 3,500 software problem transactions. With more than a century's experience, we have seen nearly every kind of IT issue. That is why we have invested in the skills, tools, infrastructure and processes to help provide world-class support.

### Harnessing cognitive IT support to solve client problems

Technical support is all about answering questions: 'Why is this happening? How can I fix it?' With the help of IBM Watson, IBM Technical Support Services agents can skip the complex process of determining the problem and deciding where to look for the solution in IBM's knowledge bases.

Now, instead of using traditional search tools, they can simply type a question in plain English and receive a set of answers, ranked by how confident Watson is that those answers are correct. With Watson on their side, our agents can determine problems 37 percent faster and provide more effective solutions.

"It's not just call-centre productivity that goes up," says Kevin Wahlmeier, Information & Analytics Leader, IBM Technical Support Services. "Instead of sending out an engineer to replace a part, we're able to find microcode or firmware fixes that can be deployed remotely—so we save on parts, labour and travel time. More importantly, if we can solve a customer's problem on the phone, we get them up and running again quicker, which gives a boost to customer satisfaction."

As well, our dynamic automation responds and adapts to changing circumstances in the IT environment. For example, we are able to address 64 percent of incidents that happen with our 'virtual engineer,' which reduces the time it takes by an average of 80 minutes per situation.



*Watson is an efficient cognitive engine that pulls many sources of data together in near-real-time, discovers an insight and deciphers a degree of confidence—learning as it goes along.*

*There are definitely lots of benefits to vendor consolidation. IBM provides scalability and mass coverage that is hard to match.*

—Joseph Salamon, Senior Director, Global Support Logistics, NetApp

### Enhancing IT availability with a world-class global infrastructure

What business can afford to deal with failing equipment these days? Not yours or ours. That is why we take a proactive approach to technical support and maintenance that is designed to reduce and even eliminate many incidents before they occur and to ultimately help save you time and money over the long term. This proactive approach is the reason why we are able to resolve 75 percent of software problems remotely and have first-call hardware success rates of 94 percent. We are able to realise these levels of precision and efficiency through the following key features of our support infrastructure:

- **Advanced monitoring, diagnostic and call-home tools to help reduce IT issues:** We use advanced and special IBM-patented tools to proactively monitor, diagnose and repair problems around-the-clock. One of the tools is IBM Electronic Service Agent (ESA), which we install on all IBM servers with IBM maintenance contracts, for no additional charge.<sup>3</sup> It provides around-the-clock monitoring of machine problems, such as failing parts, and automatically calls 'home' to the IBM Support Centre to more securely upload error logs. You can think of this tool as your hardware's 'check engine' light. And in many cases, problems are resolved before you are

even aware there was an issue. This is because fixes are remotely transmitted to your equipment. But if a remote fix is not available, ESA provides IBM technicians with the insight they need into a problem before they arrive at your location

- **Robust parts inventories and logistics:** When your systems are down, the last thing you want to do is wait days or weeks for replacement parts. By choosing IBM, you can tap into an almost unmatched repository of both IBM and multivendor machine parts across 585 parts stock locations helping to expedite problem resolution. In fact, on any given day, we move approximately 27,000 parts to customer locations all over the world

IBM technicians have access to our vast warehoused parts infrastructure to support IBM customers. Using automatic tracking by location, software currency level, microcode level and mapping to IBM-maintained machines, we make every effort to deliver our parts to you when and where you need them. We also offer many service levels for hardware, including onsite, advanced exchange and depot repair services with same-day repair or part-shipment options. Plus, IBM, not the shipping vendor, can maintain control over how and when your parts arrive. That means you can count on our high standards for service reliability and delivery

- **World-class skills:** When you have a problem or need assistance with change management, you need a technician to get it right the first time. An IBM technical support contract can increase the chance of this happening. You will have access to thousands of highly skilled and certified technicians. And IBM's ongoing technician-education requirements help you consistently receive industry-leading support.



## Addressing your unique needs with customisable service options

Whether you need base warranty support for IBM products or more robust services for both IBM and non-IBM products, we can deliver specialised support for your hardware and software and so much more. We provide a vast array of feature-rich solutions for hardware, software, solution support and managed maintenance.

*Service has always been the hallmark of our company.*

—Thomas J. Watson, Sr., Chief Executive Officer (CEO), IBM, 1914-1956

IBM can offer around-the-clock coverage with shorter response times and the ability to customise support terms, billing options and practically any other aspect of service delivery according to your needs and budget requirements. We can even develop solutions that are almost entirely tailored to your unique needs, preferences and budgetary requirements. Our process is designed to begin with an understanding of your business requirements, develop a customised service plan to support your needs and adjust our plans accordingly as your needs change and as unexpected events arise.

## Simplifying access to the support you need

Technical support services are of little value if the provider cannot get to your business location in a timely manner. Our global footprint, call-home tools and diverse ways to access support help us to respond to your needs more quickly and efficiently almost regardless of where you are located. IBM can provide:

- **Extensive global reach:** Unlike many other companies that may only provide services in major metropolitan areas, IBM can be almost everywhere you are. We provide support in 181 countries covering more than 165 different languages. Plus, we can deliver robust services both onsite and through advanced means such as near-real-time electronic monitoring, diagnostics and remote repair
- **Multiple ways to access support:** In addition to numerous remote support features like ESA, we have invested in an array of advanced tools that can allow you to report problems at almost any time, day or night. You can use these resources to check your call status and history for one business location or for your entire enterprise.

## Providing a single point of contact for nearly all your IT needs

Using outside technical support services should make your job easier not more difficult. But the time and expense of managing multiple support vendors and contracts can easily defeat the purpose of contracted help. An IBM maintenance contract can provide a single point of accountability for all IBM and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) product technical support. We can help you simplify support and focus on core business by offering not just end-to-end (E2E) support capabilities, but also a solution focused on your unique IT support needs. Through IBM, you can access:

- **Advanced multivendor expertise:** The IBM difference is our significant experience in supporting multivendor environments. We work with leading IT vendors to develop proactive leading practices for managing and maintaining hardware and software across industries and geographies. Our alliances with 11 industry leaders<sup>4</sup> can provide special access to manufacturer resources, such as parts and microcode, via the vendor. And through our extensive industry relationships, we can consolidate your existing multivendor support contracts into a single IBM contract that covers both IBM and non-IBM support and maintenance services

- **Premium support for IBM systems:** As the manufacturer of IBM systems, who would know them better than IBM? IBM trains only IBM employees in the support and maintenance of IBM systems, while providing access to our global research, hardware and software development labs. And only IBM employees can tap into IBM's patented monitoring and diagnostic tools, solution databases, research and development labs, certified parts and more
- **Capacity to support almost all your IT needs:** As one of the largest IT services companies in the world, we provide an almost unmatched portfolio of solutions across hundreds of industries. From engineering innovative servers and data centres, to designing networking and cloud computing environments, to providing consulting for business resiliency—you can rely on IBM to be your single source provider for practically all of your IT needs.

## Facilitating a positive return on investment (ROI) and performance results

Amid a business environment of budgetary uncertainty and an ongoing push to do more with less, the balance between high IT availability and support costs can seem almost unattainable. That is why it is critical to choose a technical support provider that is not only capable of demonstrating opportunities for cost savings via services provided, but also one that can provide performance results and overall value for your company. IBM can provide proof of potential cost savings of between 5 and 40 percent, depending on the current state of the support environment and how much support is out-tasked.<sup>5</sup> But our business model is focused on far more than reducing costs. We are dedicated to enhancing your equipment longevity, business resiliency, innovation and long-term growth.

## Case study: NetApp achieves award-winning results with IBM support

### The need

With an average of 1,500 service calls per month, NetApp needed a highly proficient, responsive third-party maintenance provider to support its products and customers located throughout North America. Vice President of Global Support Operations Bruce Shadmehri described the challenges: “It was obvious that we had to make a drastic change in this part of the business. Our customers were unhappy about support, our costs were too high, and internally we were hemorrhaging, trying to manage too many vendors.”

### The solution

Within four months, IBM Technical Support Services identified and trained 1,100 technicians whose performance exceeded the 95 percent service-level agreement. During this time, IBM successfully transitioned the multivendor support environment to an IBM shared services environment—a remarkably brief transition period. The flawless transition was recognised by the IBM National Competency Center, earning the team a coveted award for superb handling of the complex service transition.

### The benefit

IBM delivered the feature-rich, high-quality support demanded by customers while achieving a 40 percent savings for NetApp when compared to the costs of a multivendor service team. NetApp was able to maintain service levels at 99.2 percent or more, while conducting 18,000 dispatches with approximately 1,100 field technicians (in North America) per year.

## Why IBM?

By choosing IBM, you are choosing a global, one of the trusted industry leaders with a forward-thinking approach and more than 100 years of experience supporting clients' business systems. You are also choosing to support your IT needs with IBM's robust support infrastructure behind you a global infrastructure that provides nearly unparalleled access to parts, skills, outstanding support and excellent vendor alliances. Through this infrastructure and our time-tested methods, we can help prepare you for today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities with cost-efficient support how you need it, where you need it and when you need it.

## For more information

To learn more about IBM Technical Support Services, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

[ibm.com/services/techsupport](http://ibm.com/services/techsupport)



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<sup>1</sup> IDC, "High-Availability Angst in the 3rd Platform Era," March, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> A full list of all platforms ESA supports: <http://www-01.ibm.com/support/esa/platforms.htm>

<sup>4</sup> For more information about IBM Alliance solutions, please visit: <http://www.ibm.com/solutions/alliance/us/en/?lnk=mbso>

<sup>5</sup> Savings based on IBM Technical Support Services customer implementations.

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