

WHY LAW FIRMS ARE PARTNERING WITH MANAGED IT SERVICES PROVIDERS

Discover how IT partnerships can transform
your firm's efficiency, security,
and client satisfaction



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The state of technology in the legal sector

Technology has become indispensable for modern legal practices, powering everything from document management to client communications. However, it has also introduced a level of complexity that many firms are ill-equipped to handle.

In-house IT teams, where they exist, often lack the bandwidth or expertise to address the evolving demands of cybersecurity and system optimization. On the other hand, smaller firms may not even have a dedicated IT professional, leaving them to rely on non-IT staff who are already stretched thin.

Furthermore, the legal sector's reliance on sensitive client data and the need to meet stringent regulatory standards make these challenges even more pressing. A data breach or prolonged system downtime can have catastrophic consequences, including financial losses and reputational harm.

Despite their outward appearance of technological sophistication, many law firms find themselves struggling to keep pace with advancements, manage costs, and protect their critical assets. This growing gap between technological needs and in-house capabilities is driving law firms to seek external support. But it can't just be any run-of-the-mill computer repair company — the legal sector requires specialized expertise that is tailored to the unique challenges and compliance requirements of the industry.

The biggest IT challenges law firms face

Law firms have unique needs and challenges that require specialized IT support.

Managing sensitive information

Law firms handle vast amounts of confidential information, including client records, case files, and financial documents. Protecting this data is therefore critical, especially since law firms are subject to stringent regulations such as those set by the [American Bar Association](#), the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#), and the [Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act \(GLBA\)](#).

Although each of these data privacy and security regulations have different requirements, they all emphasize the importance of strong access controls, security measures, and data management policies to safeguard sensitive information. The problem is that implementing these measures can be challenging, as law firms often have complex systems and workflows that involve multiple parties accessing and sharing data.

Failure to properly secure data — that is, if unauthorized individuals access, compromise, or steal sensitive information — can result in severe consequences for both the law firm and their clients. Oftentimes, that means hefty fines, legal repercussions, and irreparable damage to the firm's reputation.

Sophisticated and persistent cyberthreats

If the pressure of strict data compliance regulations isn't enough, law firms also face the ever-growing threat of cyberattacks. Cybercriminals often target law firms due to the wealth of information they possess. The compromised data are typically used for identity theft, financial fraud, or even blackmail, but they also fetch a high price on the dark web.

Unfortunately, law firms are often seen as easy targets because of their outdated security measures and lack of cyber awareness training. This makes them vulnerable to various types of cyberattacks such as phishing scams, malware attacks, and network intrusions (e.g., distributed denial-of-service attacks). Ransomware, in particular, has become a major concern for law firms as it can quickly encrypt and render all their data inaccessible, crippling their operations and potentially exposing sensitive client information.

What's worse is that cyberthreats are only becoming more sophisticated, with some using AI to mimic human behavior, identify network vulnerabilities in real time, and evade detection. Cyberthreats are also showing no signs of slowing down. In fact, reports suggest that up to 30% of law firms in the United States have experienced a data breach in the past few years.

Outdated IT infrastructure

Many law firms still have outdated hardware and software that can no longer keep up with the demands of modern workflows. These legacy systems are often more prone to errors, which can disrupt legal services. Integration with newer technologies, such as cloud-based platforms or advanced legal software, also becomes increasingly difficult with outdated infrastructure, further hindering a firm's ability to remain competitive. Additionally, older systems are at a higher risk of cyberattacks due to a lack of up-to-date security features.

Upgrading and modernizing legacy systems is therefore essential, but law firms often don't know which technology to invest in. Plus, without thorough planning and implementation, the cost and complexity of such upgrades can feel overwhelming.

Frequent downtime

Downtime occurs when a system or website is not available for use. In the legal industry, this can have serious consequences, as it may prevent lawyers from accessing crucial documents, communicating with clients, and providing legal services.

There are many reasons for why downtime may occur, such as accidental user errors, hardware failures, power outages, cyberattacks, and natural disasters. Without a contingency plan for any of these events, law firms risk losing valuable time and money trying to get their systems back up and running.

Limited in-house expertise

Law firms, particularly small and medium-sized practices, often lack the resources to hire and retain skilled IT professionals. Managing complex IT systems requires specialized knowledge, and without it, firms may face inefficiencies or even critical system failures. For example, staff may struggle to resolve recurring issues, leading to unnecessary downtime that disrupts daily operations.

Partnering with a managed IT services provider (MSP) solves all these problems in one fell swoop. With a team of IT professionals managing the cybersecurity, maintenance, and support of their systems, law firms can focus on their core business without worrying about the technical aspects.

How MSPs support law firms

MSPs are essential partners for law firms, but not many know what they are and what services they offer.

What are managed IT services providers (MSPs)?

MSPs are companies that deliver a broad spectrum of IT services, such as system administration, network monitoring, cybersecurity, technical support, and more. They're different from traditional break-fix IT companies that only intervene when something goes wrong and typically charge by the hour. What distinguishes MSPs from any other tech company is their subscription-based pricing structures and unique approach to IT management.

Proactive maintenance is at the heart of what MSPs do. Instead of merely reacting to IT issues, they work proactively to prevent these from happening in the first place. That means they implement critical updates, optimize network performance, back up data, and monitor systems on a consistent schedule. If they detect a small glitch, they address it immediately before it escalates into a larger problem that can disrupt business operations and cost more money to fix.

What's more, since they offer all these services at a fixed monthly rate, businesses no longer have to worry about unpredictable repair costs. With an MSP, businesses essentially gain access to a full IT department without having to hire and manage a team of in-house IT professionals.

How do MSPs assist law firms?

While the core responsibilities of MSPs are largely the same across businesses, the services they offer can differ depending on the specific needs and goals of each client. For law firms, MSPs typically offer the following services:

- **Network monitoring:** MSPs monitor a law firm's network around the clock to identify and address any potential issues before they cause disruptions. Early signs of a problem may include slow loading times, error messages, and connectivity issues.
- **System administration:** Depending on the service agreement, MSPs may handle routine tasks such as software updates, hardware maintenance, and data backups to ensure that a law firm's systems are running smoothly and securely. An MSP may also establish access privileges, allocate computing resources to devices on the network, install new software, and set up user accounts.
- **Remote and on-site support:** If a technical issue does occur, MSPs can step in and troubleshoot the issue remotely or send a technician on site for more complex problems. This can save law firms time and resources, as they do not have to hire and train their own in-house IT staff or call an expensive computer repair service for every issue.
- **Managed cybersecurity:** MSPs can provide security assessments to assess law firms' cyber risk exposure and implement comprehensive security measures, such as firewalls, anti-malware software, data encryption, strict access controls, and email and content filtering systems. Top MSPs will even provide security training to help employees develop good security awareness and adopt safe online practices.



- **Cloud services:** Many law firms are making the switch to cloud-based solutions for their data storage and applications. MSPs can help with this transition by providing guidance on selecting the right cloud service provider, setting up secure access and backup protocols, and managing the overall operation of these services.
- **Business continuity services:** In the event of a natural disaster or cyberattack, it is crucial for law firms to have a plan in place for recovering important data and maintaining business continuity. MSPs can create and implement fully tested data backups and disaster recovery plans to minimize data loss and operational disruptions.
- **Strategic IT consulting:** Law firms often have unique technology needs and requirements but don't know where to start in terms of selecting and implementing the right solutions. MSPs can provide strategic IT consulting services to help these firms assess their current technology landscape, identify areas for improvement, and develop a plan for implementing new solutions that align with their business goals.



Why law firms should partner with an MSP

MSPs offer a host of benefits to any organization looking to enhance its IT capabilities and operations. Some of the most compelling reasons for law firms to partner with an MSP include:

Enhanced security and compliance

MSPs that specialize in serving law firms have a deep understanding of the unique compliance requirements and security concerns of the legal industry. Their security services typically start with a thorough assessment of a firm's current security practices and systems to identify any vulnerabilities. From there, they recommend and implement the necessary measures to safeguard data according to regulations and recommendations from governing bodies such as the American Bar Association.

Depending on the firm's specific risk profile, MSPs may implement AI-driven threat detection systems, provide employee training on cybersecurity best practices, and offer ongoing monitoring and maintenance to safeguard information. They may even conduct regular audits to determine if the firm's security practices stay on par with industry standards.

With MSPs, the entire data privacy and compliance process is essentially streamlined and professionally managed so firms can avoid costly fines and maintain client trust.

24/7 support

Legal work doesn't follow a 9-to-5 schedule, and neither do IT issues. Imagine preparing for a high-stakes case only to encounter a server crash the night before a critical deadline. MSPs provide continuous monitoring and support to resolve issues as they arise to minimize disruption to legal operations. Such availability allows legal teams to work with confidence, knowing help is always a call away.

Cost efficiency and predictability

Compared to hiring an in-house IT team, outsourcing to an MSP is significantly more cost-effective. MSPs charge a fixed subscription fee for their services. There's no need to pay for salaries, benefits, and training of full-time employees, which can go upwards of six figures per year. Instead, firms get access to fully qualified and experienced IT professionals for a fraction of the cost.

The monthly fee also offers predictability in budgeting and planning. Rather than charging per IT issue or system upgrade, MSPs provide all-inclusive support and maintenance services at a fixed cost per month, making it easier for businesses to manage expenses and avoid unexpected costs.

On-demand scalability

As law firms grow, so do their IT demands. Adding new employees, opening branch offices, or taking on larger caseloads all require scalable IT solutions. MSPs' flexible pricing structure makes scaling up or down seamless. Most MSPs go with a per-user or per-device pricing model, allowing firms to add or remove users and devices upon request.

MSP packages are also incredibly customizable, allowing law firms to choose the services and level of support that best fit their needs. For instance, a small firm may only require basic monitoring and maintenance services, while a larger firm may need more advanced security and compliance features. With an MSP, law firms have the freedom to tailor their IT support to their specific needs.

Diverse and in-depth IT expertise

The limitations of a one-person IT department often stem from their inability to cover the wide range of skills required to meet all of a law firm's technology needs. MSPs, however, bridge this gap by employing teams of experts with specialized knowledge in key areas such as network security, data backup and recovery, and cloud computing. This ensures that no matter the issue — whether it's a complex cybersecurity challenge or a routine system upgrade — MSPs have professionals equipped to resolve it swiftly and effectively.

In addition to providing technical support, MSPs serve as trusted IT consultants. Their expertise and up-to-date knowledge of the latest technology trends enable them to evaluate a firm's existing IT infrastructure and suggest tailored improvements.

For MSP clients in the legal sector, this often includes identifying and integrating industry-specific tools and software that enhance productivity and compliance, such as case and document management systems, billing software, and eDiscovery platforms. By leveraging an MSP's broad expertise, law firms can stay ahead of technological challenges and stay competitive.



Focus on core competencies

Ultimately, law firms exist to practice law, not to manage IT systems. By outsourcing IT responsibilities to MSPs, firms can redirect their energy toward client advocacy, legal strategy, and business development. This division of labor fosters greater efficiency and productivity, allowing lawyers to do what they do best without being bogged down by technical distractions.



How to choose the right MSP for your law firm

MSPs are undoubtedly beneficial for law firms, but they're not all created equal. When choosing an MSP for your firm, consider the following:

Needs and goals

Before evaluating MSPs, take time to assess your firm's specific IT requirements and long-term objectives. You may find that certain mission-critical systems require constant uptime or that your compliance obligations demand additional security measures. Having a clear understanding of your needs and goals will help you narrow down the list of potential MSPs.

Legal industry expertise

Not every MSP understands the unique demands of law firms. Seek out providers with experience working with legal clients, as they will have a better understanding of the technology and compliance requirements in this industry. You can check for reviews and industry partnerships to gauge their level of expertise.



Service offerings

Choose an MSP that offers a wide range of services, including network monitoring, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data backup, and disaster recovery. A full-service provider ensures all aspects of your IT infrastructure are handled by one team, streamlining operations and reducing the complexity of managing multiple vendors.

Transparent contracts

Service level agreements (SLAs) outline the guarantees and responsibilities of the MSP. At the very least, look for an MSP that offers a 24/7 help desk, regular maintenance and updates, and guaranteed response times for critical issues. Additionally, the contract should also clearly state the cost of services and any additional fees for out-of-scope work.

Make sure to review the contract carefully and ask for clarification on any terms or conditions that are ambiguous to avoid getting caught off guard by unexpected charges and hidden fees.

References and reputation

Top MSPs have a proven track record of success, which they can demonstrate through client testimonials, case studies, or industry accolades. When evaluating a provider, ask for references from other law firms they've worked with to get insights into their reliability, expertise, and responsiveness. You should also look for MSPs with certifications or partnerships with reputable tech companies, as these credentials indicate a commitment to excellence and adherence to industry standards.



Embracing the future with MSPs

As the legal industry continues to evolve, technology will play an increasingly critical role in shaping the success of law firms. Partnering with an MSP offers law firms the expertise, tools, and support needed to stay competitive and operate at peak efficiency.

Whether it's safeguarding sensitive data, ensuring compliance, or optimizing operations, MSPs provide a comprehensive solution to the IT challenges modern law practices face. If you're considering partnering with an MSP, we'd love to help. Contact us today to discover how our managed IT services can transform your law firm.

**Do you want to experience
reliable, secure, and efficient IT?
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