11 Advantages of Managed Services in the Maritime Industry

White Paper
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In these uncertain times of a global pandemic (COVID-19), so many industries are being disrupted, with the maritime industry being one of the most widely affected. All maritime businesses are now looking to ensure stable operations in the current market through managing & reducing their risks & costs while monitoring & improving their performance.

Part of achieving these objectives requires the deployment of digital solutions built to adapt alongside the market to drive commercial, technical, and financial efficiencies and to support stable operations. As a CEO, CFO, or I.T Manager, how you decide to manage your solutions as a business is hugely influential in achieving these objectives & business continuity.

Opting to manage commercial, technical, and financial solutions internally requires extensive planning, time, resource, and expertise to ensure ideal performance levels. In many cases, this places added pressure on your I.T. department, already overloaded with multiple systems & infrastructures to manage for your vessels and staff. While also, considering the adoption of remote-working for shore-based teams to combat the spread of COVID-19 has led many shipping businesses to reconsider their I.T. Strategies.

Should this be the case, it is time to consider a Managed Service Provider (MSP) for your commercial, technical, and financial solutions. Partnering with a certified MSP who has the resources and expertise can bring a wealth of advantages to your business. We outline those advantages for you in this whitepaper.
Remote-working for shore-based staff is quickly becoming the new normal and the number one priority in these challenging times, putting pressure on I.T. Managers to review their I.T. strategies to ensure business continuity.

While I.T. Managers can deploy Remote Desktop Services (RDS) and Virtual Private Networks (VPN) to facilitate this, it can come at the expense of your solution's performance, negatively impacting connected workflows.

By partnering with an MSP to manage and host your solutions not only provides you and your team with the required remote access at any time, but it also ensures solution performance remains optimal. Meaning your remote commercial, technical, and financial teams can work from anywhere uninterrupted.
Focus Solely On Your Business Objectives

By outsourcing the management of commercial, technical, and financial systems to an MSP will free up your internal I.T. resources, enabling you to focus solely on the business objectives that matter most to your company. Whether that is focusing on internal infrastructure, data security, or overall improvements to business processes and systems, you can allocate the required time and resources to achieve those objectives, leaving your chosen MSP to focus on technical issues and solution performance levels.
Your business is continuously scaling to meet market demands. Opting for a managed service allows you to scale your I.T. infrastructure and adapt to business requirements accordingly.

A dedicated MSP will support you and adapt to your demands in real-time so that you never have to worry about potential downtime.

Additionally, your chosen MSP should have dedicated consultants who are specialized in managing your commercial, technical, and financial solutions and can work with you to bring further insights to help realize real value and scalability from the partnership.
Minimized & Predictable Costs

Partnering with an MSP to host and manage your solutions can actively minimize your costs in various ways.

For starters, your MSP will provide all database/environments on an on-demand basis removing the need to deploy in-house servers 24/7, helping reduce those costly energy bills, and freeing up space while you are at it.

Secondly, having an outsourced specialist team means you can reduce in-house recruitment and training costs required to internally manage your solutions. While knowing that you will receive high levels of uninterrupted service provides peace of mind.

Thirdly, as part of a managed service level agreement, all service updates and solution upgrades are performed by your MSP when your solutions become out of date, helping you swerve those expensive upgrade costs.

Finally, you put your business in the best position to predict I.T. costs. Again, agreeing to a tailored service-level agreement with an MSP means you work to a fixed budget helping you avoid any unexpected service costs or uncertainties. What’s more, aligning with an MSP who has an invested stake in your commercial and technical solutions means they will proactively escalate and advocate on your behalf, helping you achieve additional cost savings.

05 Maintenance and Automatic Updates & Upgrades

A forward-thinking MSP will always utilize the latest technologies to deliver high-quality services and ensure their solutions don’t become outdated, completed by them managing solution maintenance, updates, and upgrades for you, giving you absolute peace of mind and a stress-free I.T experience.

MSP’s take away the scheduling effort for maintenance, updates, and upgrades from your internal teams. They provide a hosted test environment using your data and the latest version of the solution for you to try before going live. They provide the added benefit of minimizing downtime through continuous monitoring of your solution for faults, ensuring your solutions are always performing at the optimal level.

Having access to automatic updates & upgrades means that your commercial, technical, and financial departments can benefit faster from the latest features and developments within a solution.

It could be about having the latest functionality to plan and estimate voyages even faster and more efficiently for your Charters. Helping centralize their vessel and cargo data alongside their distance calculations and port overviews while receiving notifications from connected vessel reporting systems.

From an operations perspective, it would be your Operators having access to the latest enhanced voyage management capabilities, making it easier to manage and track ongoing voyages.

Finally, for your Fleet Managers, providing access to enhanced workflow support can increase planned maintenance efficiencies. Also, deploying new communication and certificate tools can further promote a compliant and robust safety culture while using advanced supplier searches to gain deeper insights into supplier bases to reduce supply chain costs.

Furthermore, ensuring you are operating on the latest platform available from your MSP helps realize more value, with many modern platforms emphasizing data analysis to improve decision making to achieve enhanced levels of efficiencies and cost reductions. For example, enabling your Operators to analyze their bunker fuel & port costs and overall sailing performance by visualizing historical data and supporting decision-making to ensure current and future voyages are conducted cost-effectively.
Increase Efficiencies & Improve Response Times

By working with an MSP will ensure you have the right dedicated resources assigned to you, who not only understand your commercial, technical, and financial solutions but your business processes as well.

An MSP can translate business processes into product requirements & change requests to increase efficiencies for your business swiftly while proactively acting upon issues that arise within the systems, helping improve response times.

Businesses become freed from performing these types of I.T. services in-house, which typically increase research, development, and implementation times and costs.
A professional Managed Service Provider will have the internal resources to start new projects and developments for your business quickly. Again, this frees up your internal resources, which would likely have involved considerable time and costs to recruit, train, and support the right personnel. An established MSP already has the skills and expertise that can save you time and money.

You put your business in a position where they are supported for the long term by an MSP and can directly impact and shape the product roadmap and future innovations alongside the vendor’s product management team.
Backups and Disaster Recoveries

Continued service is pivotal to any partnership with an MSP. Any MSP’s direct value is to ensure business continuity, supported by implementing robust backup and disaster recovery measures for your data and solutions. You can take advantage of the investment that the MSP makes into technology, networks, and data centers, safe in the knowledge that your data is protected, and your services will continue even if disaster should strike.

Data Security, Compliance, and Risk Management

Data Security, Compliance, and Risk Management are of ever-increasing priority to businesses within the maritime industry. An industry-specific MSP can manage these areas for you, utilizing their expertise to mitigate any issues around security, compliance, and risk. MSP’s provide their services through industry-standard technology, such as Microsoft Azure, for example, where your data is encrypted in line with GDPR, while implementing data security best practices, helping you become more robust against attacks and achieving compliance.

Go Green

The added benefits of centralizing your commercial and technical solutions within a virtual platform are that you contribute to businesses’ global aim of reducing their carbon footprint to “Go Green” and impact climate change.
What to look for in an MSP for a Maritime Business?

Throughout this whitepaper, we have highlighted the essential qualities to look for in an MSP when considering outsourcing the management of your commercial, technical, and financial solutions; below, we summarise those qualities:

- Should be industry-specific (Maritime).
- Should have extensive expertise and an invested stake in your deployed commercial and technical solutions.
- Be able to offer Remote Access to your solutions 24/7 from anywhere.
- Be able to provide a team of dedicated consultants & support representatives.
- Provide continuous monitoring and management of your solutions, supporting a proactive maintenance approach.
- Offer an evolving product roadmap through continuous solution updates and upgrades with your input.
- Provide a robust backup and disaster recovery strategy
- Provide strict data security, compliance, and risk management measures.

If your chosen MSP meets the above criteria, rest assured, you have made the right decision.

Why should you consider ShipNet as your MSP?

As your current provider of commercial, technical, and financial solutions, no one is better placed to manage your solutions than ShipNet. We can offer a full and efficient managed service to host your ShipNet solution, tailored to achieve the ideal performance levels while providing remote access 24/7. This service is coupled with fully managed upgrades, comprehensive monitoring, and collaborative testing of new solution versions, allowing you to focus solely on what matters most, your business.

Contact us via the website or at info@shipnet.no for more information.