

How to Buy Support Services for Your Company





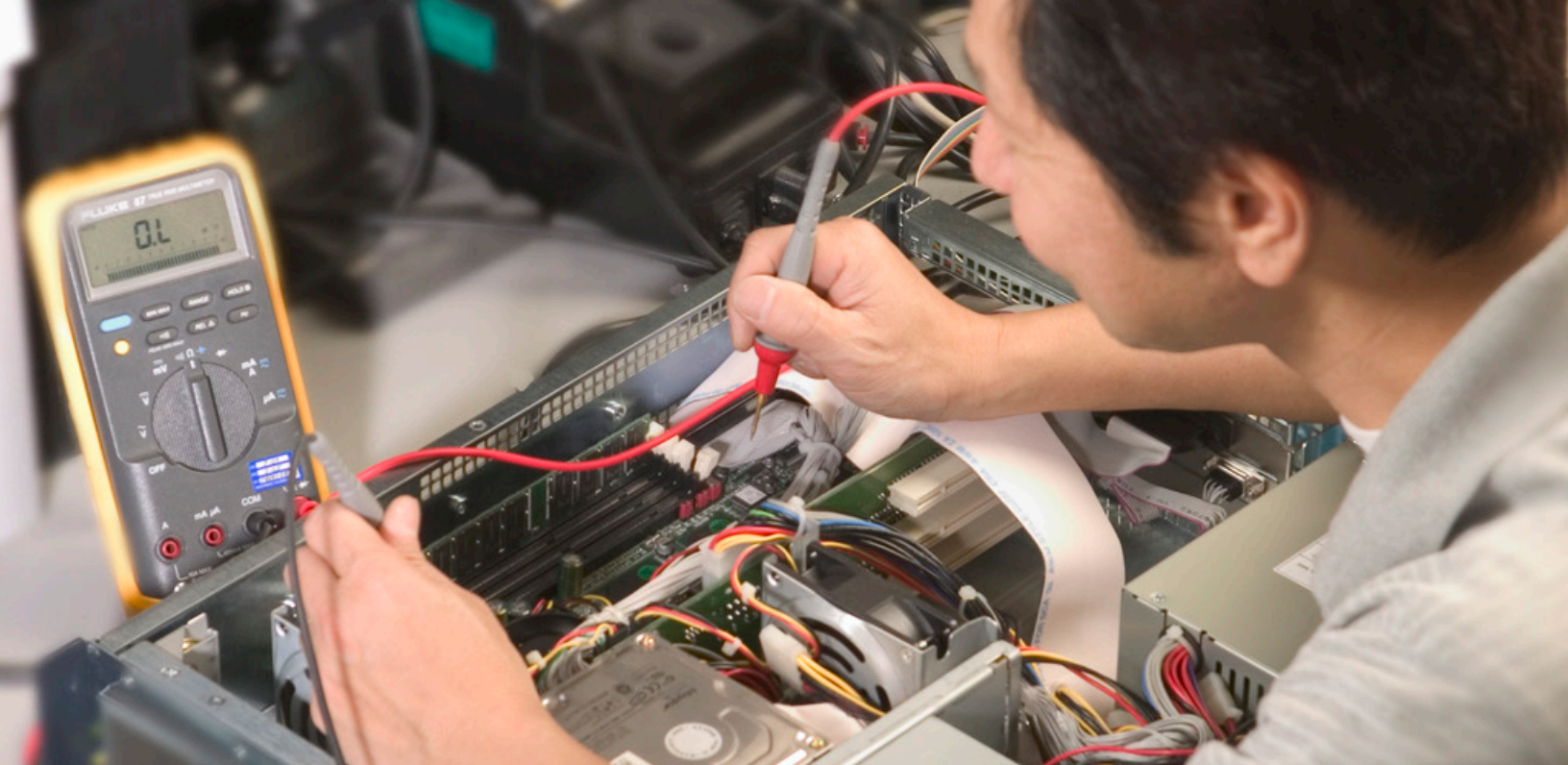
Sustaining Mobility

Mobile data collection solutions represent a significant investment in terms of hardware, software, and implementation services, but these solutions aren't static; once in place, they need to be properly managed and maintained in order to ensure that they continue to generate a return on investment (ROI). Purchasing support services is a critical step for mobility implementation, and it is important to work with your vendor/integrator to ensure you have the right level of support for your application.

Different enterprises require different levels of service. While some companies simply need an extended warranty or depot repair services, others may want their vendor to handle all aspects of repair, application updates and maintenance, and even remote device management.

For example, Lowry Solutions offers a full suite of mobility and support services that are designed to optimize solution performance and provide enhanced ROI. These tiered solutions can be tailored to a specific enterprise's needs and capabilities.





Depot Repair

The most basic type of service contract is a depot repair service, which typically extends the standard manufacturer's warranty for a pre-defined contract length. The customer contacts the service provider when equipment is not working and then ships the device(s) to the repair depot. Once the equipment is fixed, it is returned to the customer. The vendor may also offer add-on contract options that can extend coverage for accidental damage.

Depot repair contracts provide a sense of security for companies and provide a go-to method of having their mobile hardware repaired. These contracts also allow customers to pre-budget for service costs. If you can afford to be without the unit for several days while it is repaired, this option is highly cost-effective.

Companies choosing this option also have the peace of mind of knowing their hardware is being repaired by a service provider that has extensive experience with the hardware, and at a depot repair facility with readily available, certified spare parts.





Advanced Exchange Program

An advance exchange program is similar to depot repair, but allows the company to continue operating in the field with a working device. There is minimal downtime because the vendor maintains a pool of spare devices that can quickly be shipped to end users.

In a typical scenario, a customer calls the service desk and places a service call. Lowry's Help Desk, in this case, would determine that the device is defective, and then ships a pre-configured replacement device to the customer with guaranteed overnight delivery.

The customer is able to put the replacement device into service in place of the defective unit. They can then put the defective unit into the same box in which the replacement

unit was shipped and send the defective one back to Lowry. The defective device would be repaired and returned to the pool of spares.

An advanced exchange service results in increased uptime, heightened business productivity, and an improved return on investment for the data collection solution. Businesses that rely heavily on technology should consider an advance exchange program, or production could be shut down when repairs need to be made to their data collection hardware.

Mobile Device Management

Mobile device management (MDM) software secures, monitors, manages and supports mobile devices deployed across mobile operators, service providers and enterprises. MDM functionality typically includes over-the-air distribution of applications as well as data and configuration settings for all types of mobile devices, including mobile phones, smartphones, tablet computers, ruggedized mobile computers, mobile printers and mobile POS devices.

MDM software from vendors like SOTI and WaveLink is typically deployed in conjunction with mobile applications. Many IT departments are typically not as familiar with purpose-made mobile devices and, as a result, may not be properly equipped to support them. Mobile device management offers businesses a streamlined process for mobile device support. Use of the MDM solution can even be outsourced to the service provider as part of the service contract, further streamlining support and maintenance activities for companies with limited internal IT resources.

With an MDM solution, the vendor can provide remote control and help desk services that reduce support costs and increase device availability via remote diagnosis and troubleshooting from the field. Software can be automatically deployed and updated over any network.

In addition, MDM solutions can help you locate and track any lost or stolen devices and even remotely wipe corporate data. Companies can improve physical control by establishing virtual geo-fences that provide alerts when a mobile device is moved from a pre-approved operating area. Viruses and malware threats can be quickly quarantined in real-time across the device fleet, and enterprise apps can be easily deployed and managed by the IT department.

In addition to faster and easier device provisioning, and remote end user support/help desk services, MDM solutions can also improve device utilization by providing a snapshot of how and when employees are using their devices.



On-Site Maintenance

For some companies, mobile devices and automatic data collection equipment are so mission-critical that they can't wait to ship damaged devices and spares back and forth from the depot. In those instances, on-site maintenance can provide fast responses and improved uptime.



On-site maintenance involves sending technicians to the customer's site when there are problems with equipment. Instead of having to send in broken devices, or temporarily trading a broken device for a working one, the technician visits the company, diagnoses the problem, and repairs the device in the shortest time possible.

With a same-day or next-day response option, service technicians can be on-site within hours of receiving a service request, depending on the time of the request and the service level agreement (SLA) purchased. On-site maintenance also includes regularly scheduled preventative maintenance that is designed to catch small problems before they evolve into downtime-causing issues.

This service option is best suited for operations where the devices are critical and downtime is costly. Packing up devices or machines and sending them to get fixed takes up time, even if the service provider sends a temporary replacement. With on-site maintenance, efficiency is never lost and machines are kept performing at the highest possible level. This service option is ideal for barcode printers in mission-critical applications, where any downtime would disrupt production/operations.

On-site service provides customers faster and more reliable response times and offers a more predictable way to budget for maintenance. On-site service also results in increased uptime, increased business productivity, and an improved return on investment for the data collection solution.

Managed Print Services

Barcode printers have unique support and maintenance requirements that can tax an already busy IT department. In fact, at many locations, the regular maintenance of these printers is handled by production employees, not IT, and their ability to consistently and correctly carry out those maintenance tasks can vary wildly.

A better option would be to outsource these operations to the vendor via managed print services. A managed print services contract enables the vendor to monitor, track, and have the ability to connect remotely to networked devices. Troubleshooting and firmware updates can be handled remotely, and information can be gathered before the technician visits for on-site maintenance. Printing problems can be diagnosed ahead of time, so the proper tools and parts can be brought on-site.

By providing remote access to the vendor, companies can avoid costly service technician visits that might be unnecessary,

while also increasing the uptime and productivity of the printers. The vendor can also monitor stocks of printing supplies and consumables and automatically ship additional supplies when stocks fall to a pre-determined level. In order to save time on the shop floor, certified technicians can be pre-scheduled to carry out regular maintenance and cleaning activities. The ability to proactively monitor, track, and remotely connect to networked devices can provide valuable insight for printer repair. In addition, keeping firmware up to date and supplies in stock creates a much more efficient workplace.



Summary

Mobile data collection and barcode printing solutions can generate a significant return on investment and make your business more efficient and productive—but only if those solutions are properly maintained and the hardware is operational. Selecting the right service and support contract will help ensure the reliability of your data collection equipment. With a range of service packages available—everything from basic depot repair services to a fully managed services offering—you can easily match a support contract to your specific needs.

About Lowry Solutions

Since 1974, Lowry Solutions has been implementing technology innovations nationwide, and with over 10,000 customers, it has established itself as a premier Enterprise Mobility Systems Integrator focused on wireless networks, tablets and mobile devices, barcode, RFID, biometrics and asset management solutions. Lowry understands that each enterprise has its own specific issues and requirements and that, in order to provide best-in-class solutions to address these issues, a deep understanding of our clients' unique business processes is a necessity.



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