

## 12 Reasons Why Your Lab Needs Managed IT Services



When it comes to IT, labs have requirements that are unique. In most labs, there are also legacy issues to consider. As a result, the information you often find outlining the benefits of managed IT services is not nuanced or specific enough to be relevant to laboratories.

This blog brings the focus on labs that you have been looking for, highlighting 12 reasons why it is beneficial to have managed IT services.

### 1. Lab IT Systems and Requirements are Becoming Increasingly Complex

IT systems and requirements across all industries are becoming increasingly complex with the push towards digitalisation. Lab IT systems are not immune from these growing levels of complexity. An MSP (managed services provider) will bring the expertise and knowledge your lab requires.

### 2. Your LIMS Environment is Mission Critical

The importance of LIMS (lab information management systems) in modern laboratories has risen to the level of mission critical. Therefore, it's essential that you don't leave anything to chance. A suitably qualified and experienced MSP will offer you a range of [LIMS services](#), including 24/7 monitoring, comprehensive support, proactive and reactive problem resolution, and ongoing optimisation.

### 3. Enables a Re-Focusing of Resources

In many laboratories, members of the lab team take responsibility for managing and supporting IT systems and related equipment. However, this is not the most productive or advantageous use of time for your lab technicians and scientists.

Having the support of an MSP will allow the resources in your lab to focus their efforts on areas that will bring the biggest benefits to your operations.

#### **4. Automate Systems and Processes and Optimise Workflows**

Taking the responsibility for managing and optimising IT is only one way an MSP will help you optimise the use of lab resources. An MSP will also help you automate systems and processes, with the biggest advantages coming from the automation of repetitive and time-consuming processes.

An MSP will also help you optimise workflows with new technologies and existing systems, further freeing up the time of your lab's resources to focus on value-adding tasks.

#### **5. Consolidate Services to Reduce Costs and Complexity**

Many lab environments have IT support and service structures that evolve over time. Therefore, you might have one company looking after data backups and another providing support for LIMS and another providing you with hardware – the list goes on.

By consolidating these services with a single MSP, you can reduce both costs and complexity, while also raising the overall standard of service you receive.

#### **6. Future Proof Operations**

From improving how you use data in your lab to replacing hardware with virtualised solutions to taking advantage of the opportunities that exist with technologies like machine learning and AI, the concept of the Lab of the Future (LoTF) continues to evolve.

Achieving the standard of the LoTF today or even tomorrow is not only impossible in the vast majority of labs, but it is not a recommended approach. Achieving the LoTF is a marathon, not a sprint.

However, it is essential to always maintain a focus on the future to ensure your lab remains competitive and continues to deliver on your KPIs. An MSP will ensure there is sufficient focus on the optimisation of IT in your lab today, while also developing and implementing a realistic and customised roadmap for the future.

#### **7. Full Lifecycle Support for Laboratory Informatics**

Each system in your lab has its own lifecycle and specific requirements. This includes operating systems, configurations (hardware and software), data formats, and more. An MSP will help you avoid risks, overcome challenges, and take advantage of opportunities with full lifecycle support for [laboratory informatics](#).

#### **8. Enhancing Integration**

From LIMS to CDS ([chromatography data system](#)) to ELN (electronic lab notebooks) to SDMS (scientific data management system) and more, the need for integration between the different systems in your lab is becoming increasingly important. There is also a growing need to integrate scientific instruments.

An MSP with experience in [managed IT services for labs](#) will help you prioritise your integration requirements, as well as completing the implementation work and providing ongoing support.

## **9. Optimising Data Storage, Access, and Master Data Management**

Data has never been more important in labs than it is today, so how you capture, support, and use data is an essential consideration. An MSP can help with all areas of data in your lab, including:

- Data storage, whether through a specialised SDMS or another solution, as well as distinguishing between data storage and archiving to ensure optimal results
- Ensuring it is easy for technicians and scientists to access and use data
- Standardising data formats, taxonomies, and ontologies

## **10. Rapid Resolution When Issues Occur**

In many labs, internal lab staff must spend time investigating IT problems before identifying the cause and implementing a solution. It is also common for further obstacles to appear, particularly when there is a lack of clarity on who owns the problem and is therefore responsible for the solution.

These issues result in a number of negative impacts, including downtime, employee frustration, missed targets, lack of confidence, compliance risks, and more.

Hiring an MSP provides your lab with a single point of contact when issues occur. Plus, with the high levels of knowledge and experience that an MSP will bring to your lab, issues will be resolved quicker, minimising downtime and the other negative impacts of IT problems.

## **11. Reduced Levels of Risk**

IT-related risks in laboratories are becoming more and more prominent with the increasing reliance on IT systems and technologies, increased connectivity, and the growing complexity of IT infrastructures. Those IT risks include:

- Technology – ensuring your IT systems, equipment, and overall infrastructure are meeting the needs of your lab while also ensuring sufficient attention is being focused on future requirements.
- Cybersecurity – protecting lab data, systems, and equipment from cyberattacks.
- Compliance – ensuring IT systems are keeping up with the changing requirements of regulators.

- Staffing – ensuring you have the technical resources your lab needs to maintain day-to-day operations and help you plan for the future.

An MSP will help mitigate all the above IT-related risks that your lab is currently facing.

## **12. Reduced Costs that Are Also Predictable**

This point is relevant to all sectors and industries, but it is important to also highlight it in relation to managed IT services for laboratories. Hiring an MSP is less costly than using internal IT resources, while the costs are also predictable, helping with planning and budgeting.

An MSP can also help you reduce costs in other areas, such as ensuring you are only paying for the services that you need.

### **Working With the Right MSP**

There is one caveat to all the points above – you need to work with the right MSP. There are many, many companies that provide managed IT services, including managed IT services to enterprise clients. However, labs are a unique environment with specialist software applications, equipment, needs, objectives, challenges, and requirements.

Therefore, the best approach is to hire an MSP with direct knowledge, experience, and expertise in providing managed IT services to labs.

Even that's not enough, however, as the best managed IT services are proactive rather than reactive. In other words, you need an MSP with relevant expertise and experience who will become your lab's IT partner.

This is where we can help at Westbourne IT – and where we stand out from other MSPs. Contact us today to learn more about our experience providing managed IT services in labs and how we can help you.