



The changing world of Support Services - why it is time to future proof your IT operations

The world is changing. It is becoming increasingly software-defined, but why? Because it is a proven path to greater agility, scalability and competitive advantage. Software-defined technologies enable enterprises to focus on what is essential – applications and business outcomes.

But, that doesn't mean your existing hardware is being replaced overnight. Whatever the timeline for the introduction of new technologies, your support services still need to ensure maximum uptime across your legacy hardware. The achievement of consistent service levels from the core to the edge of your infrastructure requires an integrated service model – ensuring risk is mitigated and performance optimized regardless of the type of technology deployed.

The move to software-defined comes with new support challenges

A significant benefit of SDI is that it reduces infrastructure maintenance, enabling enterprises to exploit software components that allow for centralized policy enforcement, for example. But the introduction of SDI presents new operational challenges.

Manual methods to onboard devices, configure ports, set-up and implement access control lists are no longer feasible. 70% of policy violation are due to human error. Policy violation introduces security risk and creates service issues.

Gartner has reported that 80% of all service incidents are caused by planned and unplanned changes. Network management simply can't keep up with the volume of change by continuing to add additional networking staff. Legacy centralized change management processes can't adequately respond to maintain the quality of service and respond to new users and network additions.

Some enterprises are being pushed to SDI due to vendor initiatives and end-of-life assets but haven't the expertise to ensure their operations are ready for an increasingly software-defined environment. Others are finding the necessary automation and orchestration capabilities to be hard to implement and as a result are not getting the maximum benefits from their SDI investment.

With this in mind, we will look at key points to consider when building a support strategy designed for transforming infrastructures.

Keep it simple

It is claimed that the move to software-defined enables enterprises to optimize their IT operations, increasing productivity and infrastructure availability while better controlling overall costs. But the move is not as easy as it sounds and requires a re-think of the operating model for support services.

At a physical level, SDI includes hardware resources such as networking devices, and endpoint terminals. In a hardware support model it can be essential to be able to get an engineer to site in a two hour window and start replacing the broken asset. But, you also need to be able to do that for software now – and ideally from a centralized point. This software centric technology evolution is complex and requires new end-to-end skills and expertise. Attracting and retaining multiskilled employees can be a challenge as software-defined technologies are increasingly deployed alongside legacy infrastructure.

As a result, many enterprises are looking for an enhanced support model to help them optimize and simplify their IT operations and get to grips with the complexity of a multi-technology infrastructure.

Build flexibility into your Support Services Strategy

A well-thought-out support services strategy should evolve as your infrastructure becomes increasingly software-defined. This strategy would ensure you gain the benefit of your new investments while maximizing the value of your existing assets and ensuring consistency from the core to the edge of your infrastructure regardless of technology.

Look at your current and future business needs

Identify precisely what you are trying to achieve and what technologies you are going to need. Where do you have software, where do plan to introduce it and how long will retain your existing assets.

What will business need mean for your IT operations

At this point its key to understand if service levels can meet existing and future business demands, key to this will be the modernization of your infrastructure. Do you need to speed up deployment of SDI or can you rely on legacy hardware – do you have the skills, tools and processes needed? Also, you need to ensure your IT operations are scalable, not over complex and provide the responsiveness and security you need to control any service impacting incidents.

For software we believe it is vital to have a blueprint for optimized license lifecycle management if you want to gain the full value of Enterprise Agreements and other software investments.

Increase visibility and control

A single client portal providing real time business intelligence is a real advantage and simplifies management operations. The ability to access insight into the health and performance of both hardware and software assets provides the data you need to make informed decisions.

For hardware you need to keep track of your assets and have insight into end of life and support to ensure you have time to take necessary action. For software-defined technologies governance is simplified with the ability to ensure software version compliance – and mitigate the risk of potential financial penalties. You can also keep track of license utilization avoiding duplication and waste.

We are saving clients up to **34%** by increasing the efficiency of software lifecycle management

Enable business agility

The recent global health crisis has highlighted the importance of being able to adapt to rapid change and opportunity. The ability to support applications and ensure connectivity to all employees wherever they are and on whatever device is essential to gain and retain competitive edge. With software-defined technology orchestration, standardization and automation need to be leveraged to achieve higher levels of adoption and assurance and benefit from centralized policy deployment.

Ensure business resilience

Its essential to have the ability to maintain service levels when met with unexpected challenges and threats. Again, digital insight and automation is key to ensuring consistent service levels and the identification and resolution of potential vulnerabilities. Proactive identification and remediation of vulnerabilities requires in-depth business intelligence and fast accurate remediation across your entire estate.

While high levels of automation are essential across all technologies there is still a need for human expertise with the multi-vendor skills to support troubleshooting and provide the 24/7 confidence you need.

‘NTT’s innovation and commitment to lifecycle services helps our customers respond to complex business challenges **by delivering even more value on their Cisco software investments.**”

Oliver Tuszik, Senior Vice President, Global Partner Sales

We have services designed for the infrastructure you have today and the infrastructure you will need tomorrow... Our well recognized support services capability – Uptime and Proactive Support Services is enhanced with the

integration of our SDI Lifecycle Services. This new way of thinking about support leverages business intelligence and platform capabilities to align services with business demands and outcomes.

Every business is unique and is evolving in its own timescales. We can help you build a dynamic support **services strategy designed to mitigate risk, reduce operational complexity and accelerate your journey to a software-defined future.**

Consistent service level agreement (SLA) assurance and availability for transforming infrastructures



