

What are Unified Support Services and How Do They Improve IT Outcomes?

Executive Summary

Enterprise applications are changing at a more rapid pace than ever. The result is that many enterprises have hybrid-driven, multivendor IT environments. This creates a challenge for the IT organization — how to effectively operate, manage, and support an increasingly complex technology portfolio. CIOs need a technology support model that is agile and responsive, yet simple, scalable, and strategic. For most, this means modernizing how IT supports and serves the business.

The answer is a unified support services model that more nimbly responds to changing technology and business needs. This model helps improve business outcomes while improving technology service quality, scalability, and delivery speed.



It's Time to Change how IT Support Services are Managed and Delivered

According to Gartner®, “Boards have set digital acceleration as a top priority to ensure their enterprises emerge stronger from the pandemic.”¹ Yet, moving technology to the cloud (e.g., as SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, etc.) isn't an all or nothing move that happens overnight. Most enterprises will opt to keep some existing noncloud systems, and the journey to a cloud-first environment takes time. The result for the foreseeable future is a multivendor, multiplatform, hybrid-driven IT environment. The downside of this is additional complexity and risk in IT support services. The added complexity creates added risk that increases with each addition to or change in the hybrid IT environment.

Most enterprises still organize support around products and vendors. As the IT environment becomes more complex, enterprises are at risk of overwhelming their existing support model's ability to deliver services at scale. For example, an increased number of vendors in the applications portfolio has the potential to hinder support services and make it difficult to be agile when the business demands more frequent change at a faster pace.

At the same time, new cloud solutions create opportunity and risk from a business process perspective. The business has more options for improving business outcomes, but multiple vendors increase the risk that individual business-driven technology decisions will create unexpected downstream solution management and support issues. The business needs IT to be a strategic partner able to provide a unified view of incumbent and candidate vendors and products in order to ensure that new services and products fit into the hybrid IT portfolio.

A unified view of support enables solution choices that are compatible with the existing ecosystem and technology roadmap.



Unifying Operations, Application Management, and Support Services

Unified support is a new way to handle a multivendor, multiplatform, hybrid-driven world. It provides a single experience for software support by eliminating traditional software support silos. By bringing operations, application management, and support activities together under a single umbrella, IT leaders can improve business outcomes.

Where software models once worked in isolation, they are now unified and integrated under a single support provider. With unified support, the proven software that enterprises trust for everyday needs is supported alongside new, advanced software that drives digital acceleration. And when problems arise, instead of having to call multiple vendors for resolution, there's only one call to make to the unified support provider (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Traditional Versus Unified Support Model

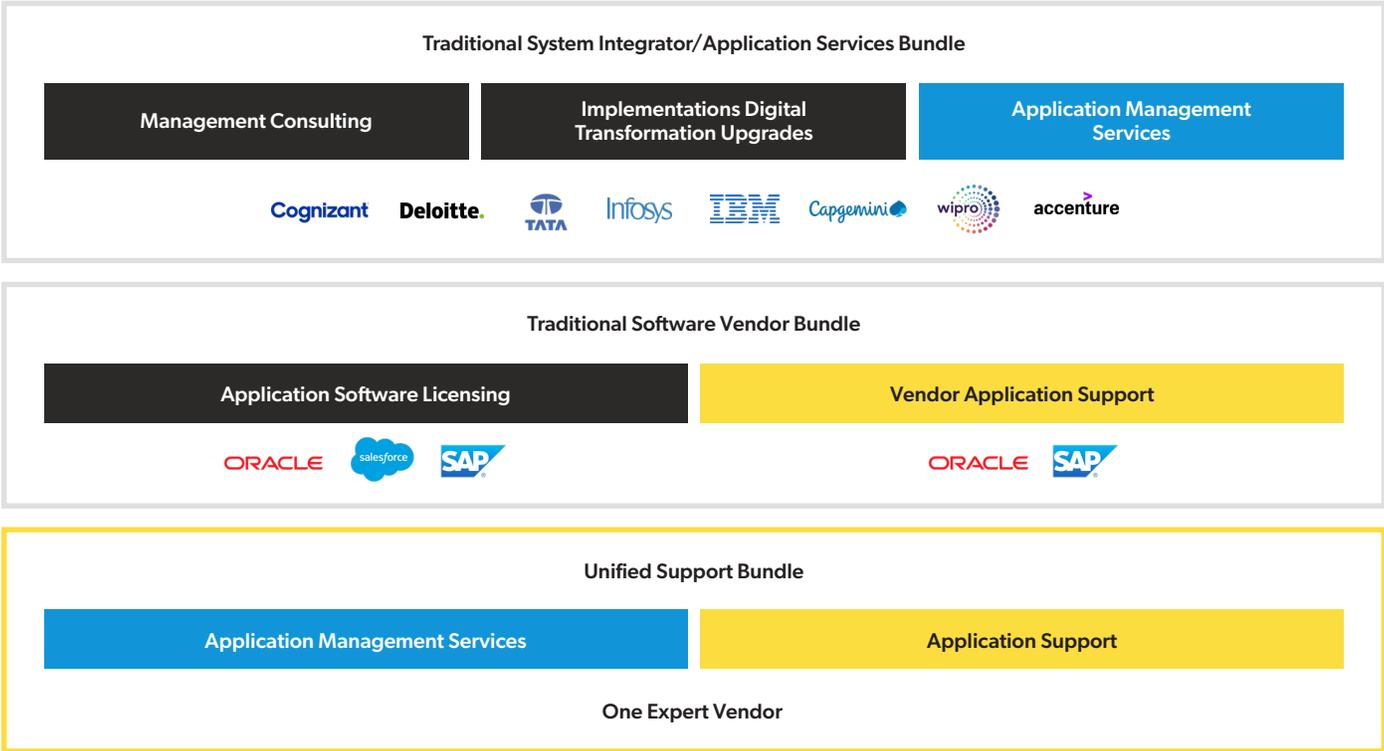


Image Source: Rimini Street

What are Unified Support Services?

The unified support model provides the following benefits to IT teams:

Unified support simplifies supporting complex IT environments

To successfully operate, manage, and support the IT portfolio, leaders need to reduce the complexity of multivendor, multiplatform, hybrid IT environments. A unified support model for system operations, application management, and support provides simplicity by organizing the multiple vendors and service layers in the support workstream into a single oversight mechanism. This results in fewer hand-offs and a more seamless support effort.

Unified support enables a more scalable support services model

In this era of relentless digital evolution, there has been an explosion of application solutions — from legacy enterprise software such as ERP to innovative open-source software. As the application portfolio expands and contracts with changes to individual solutions, support also needs to scale.

It's not like in the old days when a vendor-specific suite was implemented and then a post-implementation support team was constructed to support it. Today, multiple vendors' products and services are placed into a solution portfolio. This hybrid IT environment is often complicated by licensing, support, and integration challenges. A unified support model allows IT to more easily scale through a single organizational structure that is able to absorb digital projects as they happen rather than waiting to set up support as individual projects are completed.

Unified support helps IT keep pace with the business

With more vendors in the technology portfolio, it becomes even more critical to understand the operations, application management, and support risks of a technology choice. A unified support model positions IT to be more strategic when managing the technology portfolio. A single provider with knowledge of the technology portfolio helps the business make better solution choices as it takes advantage of new, innovative opportunities. As the business makes technology decisions, unified support allows IT to provide insight into how well options will fit into the hybrid IT environment, not only from an operational perspective, but also from a support and a roadmap perspective.

Unified support services combine the following features:

- 1** Simplified with a technology support model that eliminates software support silos
- 2** Scalable and built on a flexible, trusted, AI-enabled support platform
- 3** Strategic using efficient proven processes that unlock new innovative opportunities



Smart IT Modernization Starts with a Unified Support Model

A unified support model that integrates operations, application management, and support services increases IT agility as the business innovates and grows. By consolidating IT services and reducing the complexity that can accompany coordinating multiple vendors across multiple support layers, the unified support model offers a more cohesive support experience. This allows IT to be more strategic when helping the business manage technology changes.

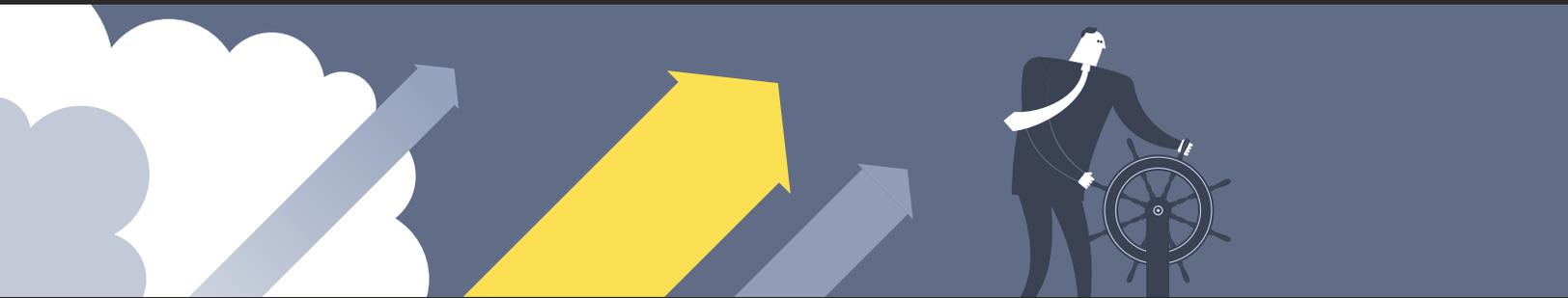
On a practical level, an IT modernization strategy that leverages unified support provides simplicity to help improve support quality and delivery speed. With this model, IT can bring experts to the table quickly and scale rapidly while keeping the hybrid IT portfolio running smoothly as it grows. As teams spend less time figuring out the complexities of hybrid IT, they can focus on accelerating business transformation and devote more time and resources to innovation and growth activities instead of maintenance and upkeep.

References

¹ Gartner, "Survey Analysis: Executive Leaders Should Align to Board Priorities for 2021", Partha Iyengar, David Furlonger, Jorge Lopez, 8 February 2021

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To learn more about how to modernize IT support with enhanced services, read the "Modern IT Support for the Modern Enterprise" white paper. And find out how real businesses are using hybrid IT and why it matters in, "Leveraging Hybrid IT Now to Power Digital Transformation."



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