



# **THE CSP'S DILEMMA:** **Building an infrastructure** **management platform** **or outsourcing it**

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**Y**ou and your talented and skillful tech staff work hard to keep your business as a CSP at the top of its class, and none of you should be spending the majority of your managing the complex details of your customer's IT infrastructure (you do have a business to run, after all). Besides being time-consuming for your personnel, the IT infrastructure of many businesses often include legacy and outdated technologies that are hard to manage and difficult to integrate with the newer computing technologies that you offer.

To keep your customer base happy, you might be considering how to improve management of their infrastructure by building out a platform internally for that purpose. However, there may be another option available to you: outsourcing the management and maintenance of your customer's infrastructure to a vendor that already offers a fully established and proven platform.



## KEEPING CLIENTS HAPPY

In today's hyper-competitive market, it is critical to maintain a stable customer base, but it's often not a viable option to simply add their IT management workload to the staff and servers that are already providing excellent IT products and services. Instead, CSPs today must weigh the costs incurred in building out a new infrastructure management portal/platform versus the cost of outsourcing that capacity to a third party vendor who may already have an IT infrastructure management portal established and operational.

Both options cost money and will take time to implement; each offers different benefits than the other. Ergo, as the business owner, you should thoroughly evaluate the merits and challenges of both options before making a final decision.

# Benefits of building an in-house infrastructure management platform

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## CONTROL

You know the importance of having control over your proprietary products and services. Building out a platform dedicated to your customers' IT environments keeps the organization of all its aspects in-house, too. Plus, it allows your team to develop a unique and affordable response to the challenge. Adding the in-house infrastructure management platform won't affect your customers, either; all they will experience is their normal level of excellent service.



## ECONOMY

Your CSP business may have started small, but you've been building technical capacities as it's grown. You know how to establish an IT budget for a project, and then meet that budget while gaining a cutting-edge technological advantage over your competitors. Building the platform in-house is just another investment opportunity that allows you to continue providing the service to your client base while streamlining your cost of performing the function.



## SECURITY

An entirely on-premise environment limits the number of portals through which nefarious hackers can enter. By adding the custom platform to your existing in-house security systems, you retain control over who can access which aspects of the system and when. This also allows you to easily track all the computing activities on your in-house servers.



# Downsides of building an in-house infrastructure management platform



## EXPENSE

- **Technological** - Growing your organization's IT capacity to support any new software development (and everything that goes with it) usually involves a significant capital expense budget.
- **Physical** - The additional service may also call for a larger facility or increased utility costs. It may also require a dedicated IT specialist to keep it current and running smoothly, which would be tacked onto the operating budget.



## DUPLICATION AND BACKUP

As with the rest of your product and service offerings, the infrastructure management platform should also have reliable backup systems in the case of a power failure or other problem. This is just another thing to worry about if you were to build your own portal. Automating a backup function will ensure that your company and the customers it supports won't lose any data in the event of a crash.



## REDIRECTION OF YOUR IT PROFESSIONALS

With an internally-developed management portal to optimize and maintain, your staff will be redirected to tasks they previously didn't have to worry about. This means your employees may not be providing their best work, which may require you to hire additional help (and train them on your custom platform) to maximize the value of your human resource capital.



# Benefits of outsourcing an infrastructure management platform

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There are current, innovative platforms that have been designed specifically to address client infrastructure management duties so you and your employees don't have to. Such platforms streamline and simplify complex public cloud providers like Microsoft's Azure, making it extremely easy for CSPs to access, maintain, and manage their customers' IT environments seamlessly.



## LOW OR NO UP-FRONT COSTS

Like your cloud-based services, an existing infrastructure management platform comes as a service, not an investment. Pricing is flexible; you sign up only for the usage and access you need. Plus, you'll also get the included technical staff who are fully trained and prepared to deal with any bugs or glitches the platform experiences, if any. All of which will free up you, your staff, and your resources to do what you do best.



## GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY

Instead of spending months - if not years - on building an in-house platform, finding a vendor or partner that has already perfected one is a much more realistic option, especially if you need to get started right away. Not only can you avoid the development process as a whole, but you can also steer clear of post-production bug issues since these will already be worked out.



## FEATURE-RICH, INCLUDING INTELLIGENT AUTOSCALING

An established platform will have lots of bells and whistles that you either may not afford to develop, or hadn't yet thought of yet. For example, using an outsourced platform may allow to apply 'autoscaling' to your customers' environments. You'll be able to enter the infrastructure needs on behalf of customers and adjust their virtual desktop environments to conform to customer usage – all with a few clicks of a mouse. By doing so, you'll be saving your customers money. They won't see where the cost savings are coming from, but they'll know you've lowered the bill – which they'll love.



## AUTOMATION

Perhaps the biggest benefit to outsourcing an infrastructure management portal is the ability to automate provisioning. You can add brand new IT environments for your customers quickly, easily, and without the services of an engineer. Instead of spending days or weeks creating a new environment, you'll have it completed within mere minutes.

Additionally, such processes allow for standardization of IT environments, ensuring that each new environment is the same every single time. Automation will guarantee consistency while avoiding support headaches and additional costs.



## RELIABLE AND AVAILABLE

With an established platform, you also benefit from their backup procedures. Since their platform is required to have constant uptime, the vendor will have strict policies in place to ensure that you'll always be covered.

# Drawbacks of outsourcing an infrastructure management platform

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## INTERNET DEPENDENCE

Yes, you must have a reliable internet connection to ensure your client's IT infrastructures can be properly managed through the third-party vendor. While cloud crashes are rare (Apple's iCloud app stores and streaming services crashed hard in 2016), they can sometimes happen and are one of the few risks taken when accessing cloud services.



## SECURITY

As recent data breach cases demonstrate, even the best funded and prepared entities can be susceptible to criminal activity. Cloud-computing configurations sometimes come with higher risks because more people have access to those servers. Going with an industry leader, such as Microsoft Azure, will reduce that risk, however.



## COST

There is usually only a small (if any at all) upfront cost, but monthly rates may also include upgrades, some of which your company may not use or need. Talk with your vendor to understand all the expected costs.





## IT'S A COMPLICATED DECISION

The decision to build or buy an infrastructure management platform often comes down to developing a deep understanding of what your company is trying to accomplish by making that investment. Yes, keeping your customers happy is a priority, but so are maximizing your current assets and finding ways to cut costs while not sacrificing productivity.

Additionally, the investment required for building a platform may be better spent on proprietary services that are unique to your enterprise, not on the everyday needs of customer IT management and maintenance. Consider moving this aspect of your business to Nerdio for Azure, where you'll get to experience the Nerdio Admin Portal and the benefits that come along with it.



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