



CONSOLIDATE IT VENDORS TO REGAIN CONTROL

HOW TO REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR IT
OPERATIONS AND ESTABLISH STRONG
PROCESSES IN A CONSTANTLY
CHANGING GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

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When industry fluctuations occur, your company needs to have robust processes and established protocols in place to help you stay on top of your IT operations.

Harder still is dealing with the natural ramifications of employee turnover and the added complexities of M&As—combining disparate IT teams or bringing in new hires to fill skills gaps and experience voids. Over time, your operations team may find that they have too much to manage with too little information available to them:

- Lack of knowledge transfer (after employee turnover)
- Confusion within employee hierarchy and chain of command
- No data identifying what is running where in your environments
- Lost access to global partners data, asset records, maintenance contracts, etc.
- P&L confusion between branches

Amid this chronic change, you may have fallen out of pace with the global marketplace. You need to reestablish a robust, scalable steady-state.

Here's how to regain—and firmly maintain—IT operation control according to industry best practices.

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**ASSESSMENT:
IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM(S)**

The way that you conduct your assessment procedure is critical to the overall success of your “Control Overhaul.” You shouldn’t attempt this diagnostic and identification process alone.

Initially, schedule meetings with your Facilities Manager and your data center team to get their input, shared frustrations, and troubleshooting recommendations. But, in addition to meeting with your in-house expertise, take your compiled concerns and strategies to an external authority. In some cases, upper management can become too entrenched—too close to the problem—to see where their company’s operational hurdles exist and, as a result, will struggle to architect a comprehensive mitigation strategy.

Before making a move, seek out a second opinion from a trusted, industry-level consultant. Transparency matters. Invite them into your physical operations and let them see first-hand the inefficiencies and pitfalls you are experiencing. In so doing, this consultant will gain the traction he or she needs to help you assess the current situation more objectively.



CONTROL OF PROCUREMENT: HOW VENDOR CONSOLIDATION MAKES YOU MORE NIMBLE

These are the questions you should expect when you talk to an industry expert about whether vendor consolidation is right for your organization:

- What do you hope to achieve by consolidating?
- How do you cover for various regions and locations?
- Is there any known redundancy or unnecessary overlap?
- Which areas don't work well right now? And which do?

Relying on a multitude of vendors is counterintuitive to efficient workflow, communication, OPEX, and site-to-site standardization¹. Not only might you have separate vendors for various aspects of your ops requirements, you might even have separate providers for your different lines of hardware. Between employee turnover, M&As, and an overwhelming amount of documentation, your IT team might not immediately know which vendor to contact when your x86 servers start throwing ambers.

In addition to potential overlap and redundancy, having too many vendors works against your budgeting initiatives. When each vendor takes its own profit margin in addition to standard billing and fees, these redundant percentages (across multi-locations) add up at an alarming rate.

CONSOLIDATION IN PRACTICE

One of the most effective ways to regain control of IT operations is by creating transparency with vendor contracts and expenditures. The first step is to sort out the current state of the contracts, determine what services and goods are necessary for the future, and then cut out the dross through vendor consolidation solutions. This is not a downsizing; it is a streamlining and conserving of resources for the greatest output.

To accomplish this with our clients, CentricsIT maintains an extensive global network of strategic partners and hardware resellers, allowing us to deploy the products and services your company needs anywhere at any time. As a result, we can step in and provide end-to-end IT lifecycle management solutions for our clients, from procurement to maintenance, from software to security, to ITAD and beyond.

See how this works in practice for our client, an eyewear retailer.

SEEING CLEARLY THROUGH VENDOR DISPARITY

In 2013, an international glasses retailer began moving its operations from purely online platforms to establishing over 60 physical locations around the world. This heightened expansion necessitated a robust, secure networking infrastructure that could support ongoing sales (both online and in-store) while fully standardizing each of their locations, both current and those yet to be launched. With disparate vendors throughout America and Canada, the organization realized that it needed a single vendor solution that could keep pace with its rate of deployment in real-time and enable it to continue serving customers with the same dedication and excellence. The company approached CentricsIT with its needs.

We refreshed the client's core network in New York City and designed a robust system built on Cisco switching and routing, providing Check Point firewall installs and configuration as well. To streamline

the client's tech rollouts at each new retail location, CentricsIT data center experts established a custom-built delivery protocol that provided the company with standardized hardware and network stacks with synchronous delivery and installation teams. In the end, the international company was able to operate on the assurance that it could have a fully functional network backbone available within 24 hours of its newest location opening. To round out the solution, CentricsIT provided support for all procured hardware, allowing the retailer to customize its SLAs to best suit each location.

No longer did the client have to juggle the complexities or lose budgetary resources to the redundancy of numerous vendors; the eyeglass company now had one dedicated point of contact for all their IT operational needs.

What some companies would have needed 100+ vendors to sustain, the client reduced to single digits with CentricsIT, while adding efficiency and lowering OPEX.

CONTROL OF FACILITIES: HOW SMARTHANDS ENABLES CHANGE AT A GLOBAL SCALE

In addition to consolidating your vendors down to a more manageable (and economical) number, CentricsIT also enables our clients to easily augment their existing workforce to cover:



Gaps in turnover



PTO backfills



**Increases in
bandwidth demand**

For seamless deployment and operational efficiency, companies need the same level of engineering knowledge and experience to be available at each of their locations to ensure site-to-site standardizations; **but paying full-time engineers (who are only needed for part-time jobs) doesn't make sense. And flying experts around to each location is expensive, scope-limiting, and exhausting for your employees.**

CentricsIT has the global infrastructure to provide the broad spectrum of IT solutions listed in the scenario above. But what enables us to deliver these solutions with speed, professionalism, and excellence is our international workforce of certified engineering talent, SmartHands². Through rigorous vetting processes and partner recommendations, we have established a world-wide force of L1-L2 level engineers and technicians who, at any time, deploy directly to our clients' data center doors. We guarantee that, no matter where our clients operate, only the most qualified SmartHands technician within that region will respond.

See how this scalable workforce can be applied to large-scale, multi-location companies.

ASSET MANAGEMENT MANAGED

Since the 1920's, this investment company has made a market on property management and corporate commercial investments. Employing over 70,000 people to date, the company has launched operations across the world. But the asset management giant often invests in and acquires out-of-favor sectors and regions where capital and engineering talent is scarce. When CentricsIT came onto the scene, the organization had incredibly large and intricate IT needs at each of its locations that needed to be standardized.

With a widespread, growing ecosystem of international locations, the firm had accumulated its fair share of vendors, and, as new locations were established, it needed timely hardware rollouts and installation teams to keep everything on schedule. However, the company's top priority was generating cost savings in its data centers while improving its maintenance services. CentricsIT consolidated the client's vendors down to single digits and deployed our SmartHands services for its every IT need—no matter how remote the location.

First, we established a Level 1 call center and global onsite engineer dispatchers for hardware troubleshooting and repairs (including scheduled maintenance services, real-time troubleshooting, and responsive SLAs). When the client planned for a new hardware rollout,

CentricsIT provided the necessary after-hours SmartHands team to deploy onsite and install the necessary equipment and software overnight so as not to interrupt day-to-day operations. Moreover, with its vast numbers of high employee count, the company needed a more reliable solution for PTO backfill (sick leave, maternity leave, extended vacations, turnover interims etc.). SmartHands engineers were leveraged to fill in and augment lean IT teams during times of absences or turnover.³

With our global pool of SmartHands experts, we customized and quickly provided a solution for each of the client's international requirements. Because of this added efficiency and streamlining, the company can do more with less, now enjoying a 40% cost savings on its data center maintenance expenditures.

Rather than bankrolling specialized engineers for each location, the global investment company was able to leverage the scalable expertise of CentricsIT SmartHands to strategically deploy talent only when and where it was needed.

CONTROL OF COSTS: STREAMLINED PROCESSES EQUALS MORE OPEX

A natural benefit of streamlining your vendors and unifying your support expertise is the added control of costs and the mitigation of wasted resources.

When you have a single vendor managing your IT lifecycle management needs, you and that vendor have a much better overview of and insight into the current state of your operations. It's much harder to forget about idling equipment; you are better able to scale your resource purchasing; and you can more efficiently assign people to the right jobs (even during operational fluctuations or crises).

By having access to the bigger picture, our experts can provide solutions holistically and proactively. Through providing extensive IT infrastructure audits, comprehensive Third-Party Maintenance support, and strategic IT Asset Disposition services, we have helped companies save 40-80%⁴ on their overall data center maintenance costs.



IT INFRASTRUCTURE AUDITS

Knowing a client's environment is half the battle.⁵ Through a meticulous auditing process, our experts can determine what hardware is still functioning and what needs to be decommissioned in a client's data center. We then determine what equipment still has secondary market value and what needs to be recycled for scrap. In so doing, we enable our clients to take full advantage of their purchased equipment and reduce the number of idling or unnecessary units.

THIRD-PARTY MAINTENANCE

Buying directly from the OEM has its perks—at least for the first 2-3 years of your hardware's lifecycle. After this window has passed, your OEM support costs increase dramatically; you must either pay the premium or upgrade to altogether new hardware. To counteract this inflation cycle, CentricsIT established a third-party maintenance solution⁶ that respects the laws of hardware supply and demand. Because hardware prices trend downward over time, the cost to support older hardware should decrease. We hold to this billing philosophy. As we save in the secondary markets on refurbished equipment, we ensure our clients benefit from the cost savings as well. Having this economical and strategic access to global markets in addition to our international infrastructure of partners and engineering talent, CentricsIT offers OEM-quality maintenance support at a fraction of the cost.

SECONDARY MARKET VALUATION AND RESALE

For a subset of decommissioned units that still have resale value⁷, our IT Remarketing experts will help the client recoup some of the initial hardware costs through resale on secondary markets. Because of our extensive experience within these secondary markets, we sell the hardware at the most competitive prices. Moreover, because of the extensive auditing process, we also gain a much more thorough understanding of each unit's value. Our experts will take the time to disassemble the unit to determine the hidden, exponential value of its components.

CentricsIT studies the whole of our clients' operational IT processes so that no area is left unnoticed or un-optimized. We do this to provide, in real-time, what is needed for our clients' continued success.

CONTROL OF PROJECTS: DEDICATED PROJECT MANAGERS

When selecting an industry expert to help you reorganize your IT operations and consolidate processes, choose one with dedicated project management in its service offerings. If you choose a partner that does not offer additional project management, a great deal of the operational and project-related burden falls to your team. Not only do these additional project logistics distract your team from their core tasks, it also creates more room for error, miscommunication, and delays during the deployment period of the project. This also decreases accountability and transparency between the vendor and client.

We dedicate a Project Manager to each service or project we accept. Our PM works with the client's chosen point-of-contact to ensure both sides understand the scope, protocols, and resources necessary to complete each task seamlessly. In addition, we welcome our clients directly into the work space, allowing them to check in at any time to oversee our processes. If clients want to check in remotely, they have the option to monitor everything through access to a [Smartsheet](#) hub that tracks, in real-time, across multiple locations, every detail of the project and its subtasks.⁸

Transparency is a crucial element to project success and client-vendor partnerships.





TAKE BACK CONTROL OF YOUR IT OPS

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL OUT OF CONTROL ANYMORE.

When you partner with CentricsIT, you are given the answers to all these questions as well as solutions to resolve them—we help you establish scalable protocols and monitoring tools that grant you a more effective and comprehensive overview of your infrastructure.

[CONTACT US](#)



NOTES AND SOURCES

¹ (2018). “Consolidate Vendors for Your Global Procurement Team.” CentricsIT. <https://www.centricsit.com/consolidate-vendors-for-your-global-procurement-team/>

² Marzilli, Ted (2013). “Target Perception Falls After Data Breach.” YouGov BrandIndex. www.brandindex.com/article/target-perception-plummets-after-data-breach.

³ If an absence is pre-scheduled, we deploy our SmartHands technicians onsite a week or two before the employee’s planned PTO. During that time, we learn the company’s processes and employee culture for an even more seamless transition in and out.

⁴ (2017). “CentricsIT Cited in 2017 Gartner Research on Third-Party Maintenance.” CentricsIT. <https://www.centricsit.com/centricsit-named-in-gartner-third-party-maintenance-competitive-landscape-report/>

⁵ (2017). “Conducting an IT Infrastructure Audit for 2018 Project Planning.” CentricsIT. <https://www.centricsit.com/conducting-an-it-infrastructure-audit-for-2018-project-planning/>

⁶ (2018) “Pure Play TPM vs. Full Spectrum Life Cycle Management.” CentricsIT. <https://www.centricsit.com/pure-play-tpm-full-life-cycle-management/>

⁷ If any hardware remains that cannot be used on-premise or sold in secondary markets, CentricsIT goes through the proper ISO and R2 certified channels to dispose of and recycle the hardware (ensuring client compliance).

⁸ At any time, clients can login to the Smartsheet hub and see which engineer is working on a specific aspect of the infrastructure at a particular location, whether subtasks have been complete, and if the project is on or off schedule.

