

Tame Your HCM Tech Stack With Application Management Services

Introduction

Today, HR is no longer just a back-office function. Your teams manage applications and processes critical to business operations.

Some are so mission-critical that you will have severe problems if one goes awry.

The need to manage your technology is a never-ending commitment that can't wait on a backlogged list of process improvements.

The result is that many HR teams get so mired in day-to-day operations they can't optimize or innovate.



There is a solution

An application management service (AMS) can manage the maintenance, updates, and optimization of your software for you, so you can focus on value and innovation.

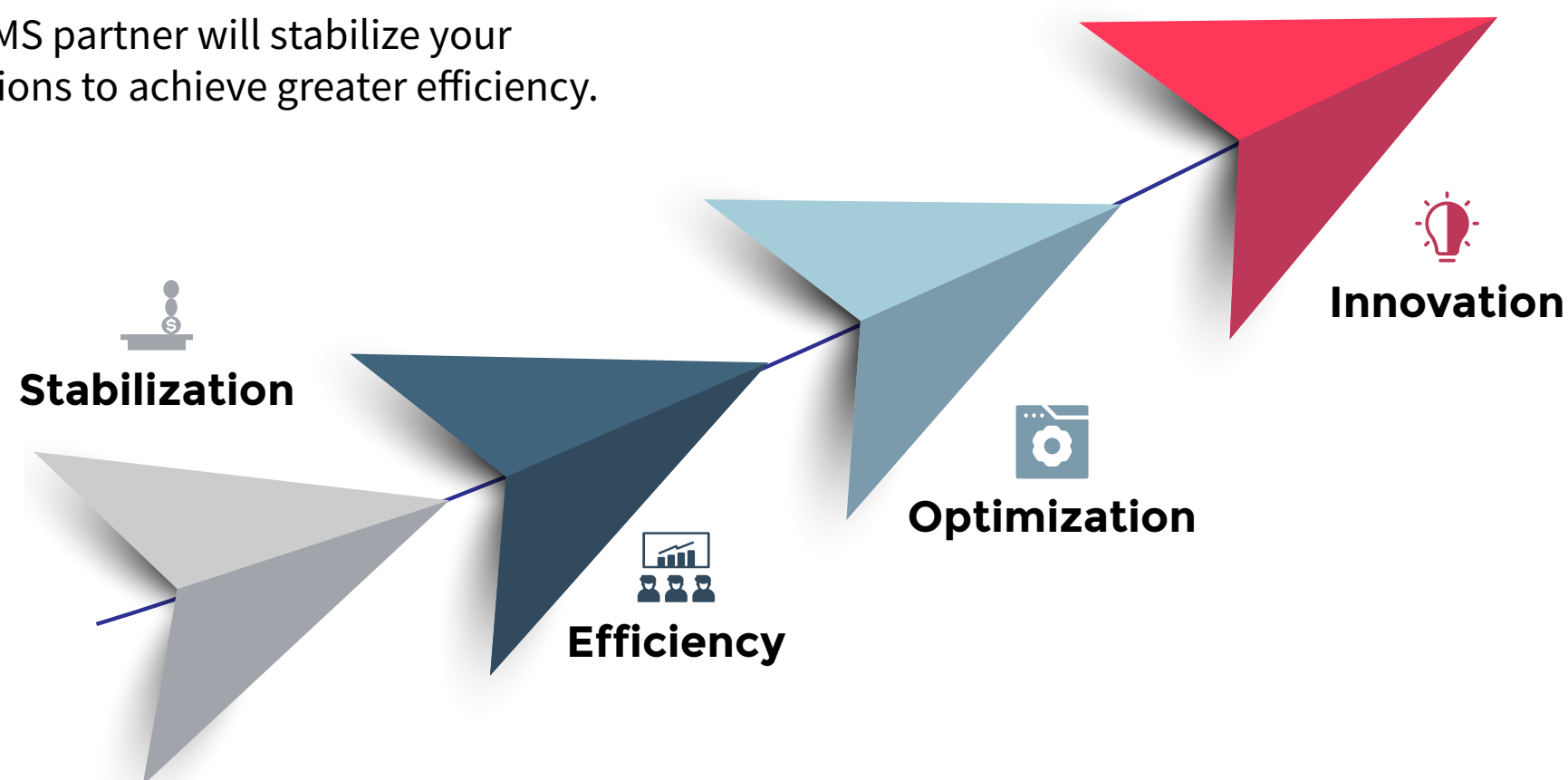
With AMS, you engage a skilled, dedicated team to manage your software's day-to-day operation and maintenance.

Your AMS partner will stabilize your operations to achieve greater efficiency.

They will work with you to optimize your processes and workflow...

... which allows you to innovate...

.... so you can enable your people to deliver more value to your business, your customers, and each other.



What is Application Management?

The simple definition of application management is the operation, maintenance, updating, and optimization of applications and platforms.

You can outsource your tasks to a skilled, dedicated team whose mission is to keep your applications operating at peak efficiency.

Your AMS partner will work with you to craft a service level agreement (SLA) that gives you worry-free maintenance and optimization accountable to you.

Your partner will have insights into workflows, activities, and data flows that help you make decisions to improve performance.

A high-performing AMS partner will have the expertise and resources to help you align your tech to your business goals and plan for future needs.¹

Using application management services and cloud technology gives you scalability, so you have greater agility when you need it most.

You can outsource the monitoring and maintenance of your technology to a capable, experienced, and specialized team.

In addition, that team will have access to the specific skills you need to make the most of your technology.



¹ [“A Buying Guide for Managed Services.”](#) CompTIA. Accessed November 24, 2021.

Why You May Need AMS

Digital transformation has created a wealth of new technologies that deliver an engaging, easy-to-use experience.

Behind that experience is massive complexity that can be difficult to manage.

Is the burden of day-to-day maintenance holding you back?



How long do your people have to wait for a response from support? What goes undone while they are waiting?

What happens when you need to integrate new technology into your tech stack? Does it end up on IT's list to do next year?

Is your learning technology tightly integrated with your talent applications? Does it take a huge effort to make them work together?

Are you missing out on new features and capabilities of your software because you can't find the time to roll them out?

Are you missing out on new capabilities because you don't have the expertise to roll them out?

Why Should You Outsource?

We recommend conducting an internal assessment to explore the needs and gaps holding you back.

Do you need to control costs?

AMS gives you a stable, predictable cost for your tech stack maintenance. You can offload the worry of fluctuating demands and unpredictable workloads.

Do you lack a particular set of skills or expertise for managing your tech stack?

An AMS partner will have the skills on tap.

Are the skills to manage your tech stack hard to find?

Recruiting specialized skills can be difficult and expensive. When you partner with an AMS, they will have those skills on their team.

Do you need to simplify the management of outsourced services like app development, learning and learning content, and skill libraries?

The right provider will manage those multiple resources for you.

Do you need to clean up your dirty data?

Data problems can be a roadblock to effective integration. Let your AMS provider help you get your data streams in shape.

How long does it take you to get an ad hoc report?

Choose a provider that can give you what you need when you need it.

While you're at it, choose one that can provide you with KPI dashboards, too.

What Services Can You Get?

Specific services vary, but these are the most commonly offered:

- Resource monitoring and optimization
- Day-to-day administration
- Tier 1 technical support
- Software release management
- Productivity and process management
- Data fixes and data conditioning
- Ad hoc data queries
- Enterprise integration
- Business process optimization
- Troubleshooting and break/fix
- Content management
- Governance
- Risk management
- Compliance

Most providers will be flexible in how they provide services to customers. Generally, there are three ways they offer their support.

Tiers of Bundled Packages

Most providers offer packages of services. A good provider will offer flexibility if certain services are unnecessary or too costly.

À la carte Services

If you recently purchased new technology, you may not have the resources to afford bundled services. Your provider will allow you to choose what you can afford.

This structure enables you to get help for the most critical services while adjusting to your platform's costs and capabilities.

Combination

AMS providers may offer a middle ground—a product and services menu—with both à la carte and bundled packages. That gives you the ability to select the services that meet your needs.

How to Choose an AMS Provider

Your needs are unique to your business. You will want to ensure the service is in line with your business and workforce strategies.

A good AMS provider will understand your business model and your strategy.

In addition, they will understand your technology, administration, and analytics needs.

Don't let a provider cram you into a package. Of course, if the package fits, consider it, but you should still explore how they will focus on helping you meet your goals.

With that in mind, conduct an internal assessment to figure out your strengths and where you need help.

What do you need to accomplish?

Being clear about your goals is essential from the outset of the relationship.

Work with your provider to develop goals and performance metrics. The metrics should be in your service level agreement (SLA) for ongoing services, such as administration.

What specific services do you need?

Each candidate will have different strengths and challenges.

Explore your candidates' specific competencies and experience just as you would a member of your team.

If you want them to take on a specific project, have your project manager collaborate with them on goals, timelines, and milestones.

How broad is your service need?

Do you need services for one function or the entire organization?

Is it a short-term need, or do you want to set up a long-term partnership?

Do you need a full-scale needs analysis?

The best services will be glad to help.

Build an Agile HR Organization

Application Management Services can make your team more flexible and productive.

It will help you focus on what you need to build an agile, responsive organization...

... but you need the right partner, and you must manage the relationship well.

We've provided two tools to help you on your way:

 **Criteria for Selecting the Right Application Management Partner**

 **How to Manage the Services Relationship**

You can print the next two pages of this eBook and share them with your team.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE RIGHT MANAGED LEARNING SERVICES PARTNER

<p>1. Experience and Skills. Do they have the skills, or do they try to control costs with inexperienced staff?</p>	<p>6. Consistent Global Service Delivery with Localization. Can they scale into new locations with standardized services?</p>
<p>2. Proactive Approach. Will they wait for you to ask for help or anticipate your needs? Do they monitor your user experience?</p>	<p>7. Performance-Based SLAs. Are their metrics outcome-based, or do they measure only processes?</p>
<p>3. Alignment with Standards and Best Practices. Are their people certified in the technology you use? Are they certified in industry standards?</p>	<p>8. Broad Portfolio of Learning Development and Delivery Services. Other services aligned with your needs?</p>
<p>4. Consistent A, Knowledge Management, and Visibility into Services. Do they have well-documented policies and processes? A customer knowledge base? Customer dashboards?</p>	<p>9. Innovative Approach to Technology. Do they stay on top of new technology and trends?</p>
<p>5. Support for Multi-Vendor Management with Strong Relationships. Can they manage your complete stable of developers and resources?</p>	<p>10. Financial Stability and Reputation. Do they have an excellent track record? Can they withstand the fallout from a data breach?</p>

Adapted from [“Top 10 criteria for selecting a managed services provider.”](#) White Paper. IBM Global Technology Services. January 5, 2021.

HOW TO MANAGE THE MANAGED LEARNING SERVICES RELATIONSHIP

Know your strengths and needs	<p>Frequently review your capabilities to get the help you need. Conversely, make sure you don't incur extra costs for the things you can do well.</p> <p>Analyze your workflow to get the most efficient services you can.</p>
Know what and why you want to outsource	<p>Be specific and deliberate about the services you need.</p> <p>Review your operations often to understand what you should offload to your partner.</p>
Partner with your CIO	<p>Understand your organization's data protection requirements.</p> <p>Build safeguards into your contract.</p>
Select the right provider	<p>Look for an understanding of your unique requirements. Evaluate how well your provider will respond to change.</p> <p>Evaluate understanding of how your team operates.</p> <p>Assess how they stay ahead of innovation.</p> <p>Look for an initiative-taking stance toward service.</p>
Make your expectations clear	<p>Define expected response times and procedures with proactive monitoring and alerts.</p> <p>Let your vendor know you wish to optimize your services continuously.</p> <p>Expect notification of any changes that could affect your service.</p>
Treat your provider as a member of your team	<p>Provide feedback regularly.</p> <p>Conduct periodic reviews just as you would any other member of your team.</p> <p>Celebrate your successes together, acknowledging your partner's contributions.</p>
Plan your exit strategy	<p>Build your exit into the contract.</p> <p>Define exit requirement for data transfer and other requirements.</p>

AMS is the First Step On Your Road to Optimization

Visit our Optimization Services Page to:



Integrate Your Apps

Organize Your Workflow

Make Better Decisions

Deliver Visual Insights

Pixentia Optimization

\$ Value

**Continuous
Optimization**

Operational Stability with Application Management Services

Integrated Data through Governance

Better Decisions with Analytics

Innovation thru Visual Insights



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