

Top 4 Microsoft Support Renewal Traps

Enterprises must acknowledge the risks of MS Unified Support renewal, navigate them appropriately, or avoid them altogether with a viable third-party Microsoft support provider like US Cloud. This white paper will give you an overview of those traps, the business officer impacted, and your options.

For a personal walkthrough, please feel free to contact our sales team at



uscloud.com

or



(800)-200-8440

Trap #1

PRICING PREDICTABILITY – Don't make any assumptions!

Who is impacted: Chief Technology Officer (CTO)

Pricing Predictability of Microsoft Unified Support is a risk to enterprise technology budgets. CTOs must be able to accurately forecast Microsoft cloud consumption while avoiding significant future Unified cost increases. Unified Support's unlimited Microsoft product support initially looks attractive but often results in significant cost increases for enterprises over time. Unified Support is forecasted to cost 2-5x more than Premier over the next 5 years and a 6-8 % increase in most Enterprise Agreements (EA) at renewal.

Pricing Trap Risk Mitigation Recommendations:

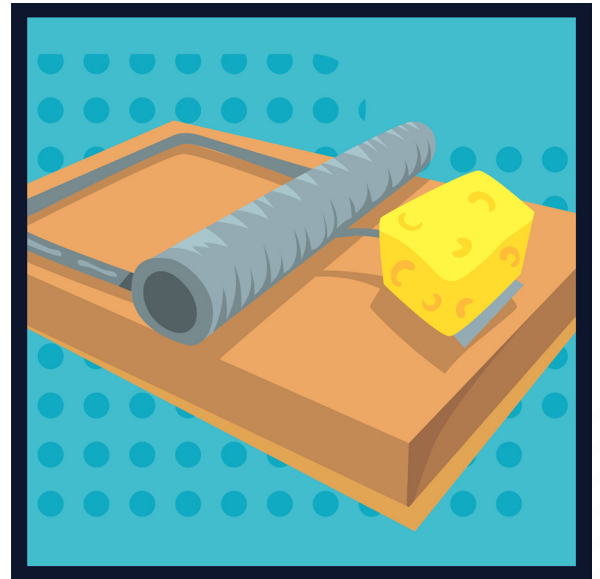
At least 3 months prior to your Unified renewal in 2023, CTOs should conduct an audit on the renewal proposal in order to fully understand how the price is calculated. Your audit rights allow you to see and fully understand the look-back over a 3-5 year timespan.

Ask for the information as spreadsheet, not a PDF. The information should include:

- Contract number and type (Enterprise Agreement, MPSA, etc...)
- Detailed list of every product in the contract
- Annual costs, per product and type.

Once you have a handle on what Microsoft products and services you need and how they drive your cost structure, put them in a spreadsheet and apply anticipated growth across the various products for 5 years into the future.

In addition, remember to remove SAB credits and SA discounts from forecasts since they are technical retired as of February 1, 2023. This analysis will allow you to arrive at an effective Unified Support cost forecast for your enterprise.



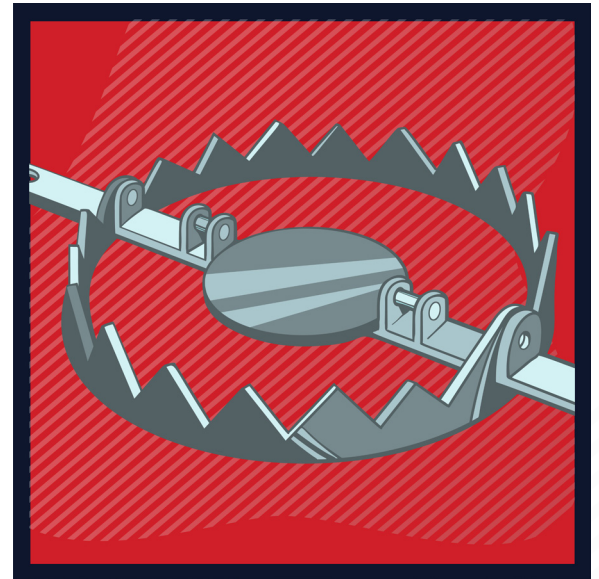
Trap #2

QUALITY DEGRADATION – Assume it will get worse, before it gets better!

Who is impacted: Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Service Delivery – As more Unified clients take advantage of opening tickets “as needed” across their entire organization (the Unified mantra), Microsoft service delivery is struggling to keep up. Even with a good portion of Unified Support outsourced overseas and requiring CSPs to handle level 1 and 2 support for their customers, the Microsoft support experience continues to deteriorate.

- **CSAM** – Customer Success Account Managers are the new primary customer facing role responsible for customer success. The business priority is the customer’s successful adoption and productive use of additional Microsoft cloud technologies. CSAMs have replaced TAMs and typically have about half the experience of a TAM.
 - **TAM** – Technical Account Managers plan, manage, and review the delivery of support services that drive client outcomes. The TAM is also an escalation point, ensuring the client receives world class support experience. TAMs are no longer available from Microsoft but are available from US Cloud.
 - **SLA** – Service Level Agreements are no longer offered by Microsoft. Unified does offer a 30-minute response time “target” for critical issues (Azure only. All other products 60 minutes). Microsoft and its outsourced support partners have no contractual obligation around response times, ticket escalation, or time to resolution. If you feel financially-backed SLAs are integral to delivering timely support, you will need to look elsewhere.
 - **CSP** – Microsoft Cloud Solution Providers and their customers are seeing support degradation in 2023. While CSPs are required by Microsoft to offer support to their customers, many are ill equipped to offer tier 3 and 4 support for all Microsoft products. In addition, CSPs are starting to see tickets escalated to Microsoft waiting weeks for responses.
- Build out your own enterprise’s helpdesk and core Microsoft technology support teams so you can resolve more issues yourself and send fewer tickets to Unified.
 - Use your CSP, LSP or local MSP to take on more of the Microsoft support workload such as L2-L3. Most enterprise helpdesks can handle L1 sufficiently. MSPs operate well up to L2 in Microsoft technology capabilities. Speciality CSP or LSP may be able to handle L3 in their particular domain of expertise.
 - **OR:** Replace Microsoft Unified with a proven third party support provider with SLAs that are financially backed. Test the third party provider with a proof-of-concept trial before making a long-term commitment to verify that resolution times are indeed better than Microsoft.



Quality Degradation Trap Risk Mitigation Recommendations:

Trap #3

SUPPORT SOVEREIGNTY – Know where your data is exposed!

Who is impacted: Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

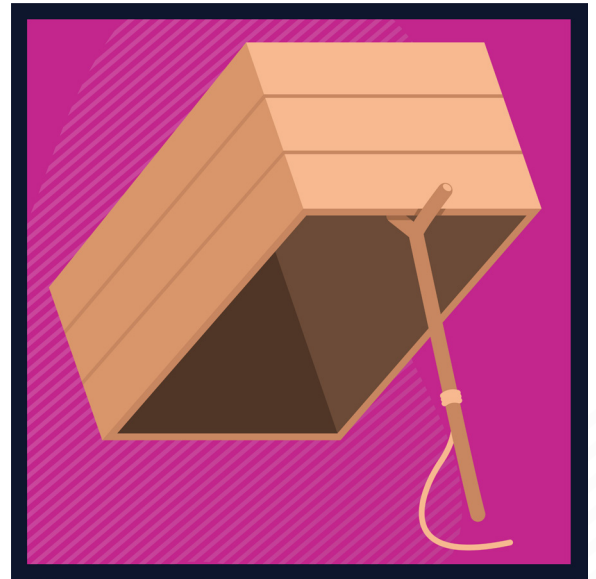
A large portion of Microsoft's Unified support is outsourced and delivered by foreign nationals. For many companies, federal agencies, and defense contractors this introduces unnecessary risk of data exfiltration, ransomware, and espionage.

Microsoft does have a limited pool of active security clearance Designated Support Engineers (DSE) available at ultra-premium rates for their Federal customers' IT projects. However, MSFT will not contractually commit that all Unified support tickets will be handled by US citizens, putting many agencies and contractors out of compliance.

Support Sovereignty Trap Risk Mitigation Recommendations:

Unfortunately, if data security/support sovereignty is a KPI for your organization, there is not much that Microsoft can do to ensure your data is not outsourced to foreign nationals. US Cloud, however, can. It's the backbone upon which we were founded:

- US Cloud contractually guarantees US Citizen Microsoft support for federal, state, local government, DoD and aerospace compliance. Support sovereignty at US Cloud avoids risk from foreign national access to your secure IT systems while supporting all MSFT technologies.
- US Cloud contractually guarantees that all encrypted support logs and tickets remain in the US and all support personnel working tickets are US citizens, while delivering 2x faster ticket resolution than MSFT
- All Federal, state and local government clients are able to regain compliance while optimizing budget with US Cloud.



**The US State
Department saved 38%.**

**The US Department of
Labor saved 42%.**

**The Environmental
Protection Agency saved
53% and \$7.5M over
the next five years with
sovereign support from
US Cloud.**

Trap #4

MONOPOLY ABUSE – Arm yourself with a position to negotiate from.

Who is impacted: CIO, CTO, IT Sourcing & Procurement

Many organizations feel that Microsoft abuses their position in the market as the only option for Microsoft support. In the old Premier support model, enterprises had no choice, but they did have the flexibility of buying JUST the hours they needed for the MSFT technologies they used.

With the new Unified support model, most organizations agree they are paying more and getting less in 2023. To make matters worse, few are aware of any alternatives to Microsoft for support. This puts procurement at a huge disadvantage during the negotiation process. Many procurement teams are reporting aggressive Unified sales tactics, exorbitant price increases, and a “take it or leave it” attitude from Microsoft sales teams in 2023.

With no apparent competition, Microsoft sales teams are free to dictate terms of Unified Support and literally drive vendor lock in. Procurement’s options include: Unified multi-year contracts, self-support all MSFT technologies, MSP for limited MSFT technologies, and no support.

Monopoly Abuse Trap Risk Mitigation Recommendations:

- Understand that there are substitutes for MS Unified Support. Third-party Microsoft support gives IT leaders the option they need to stop the renewal cycle of abuse.
- Complete a full checklist to understand the extent to which you need support. (We can provide one to you, free of charge.)
- Get a quote from one or two other vendors for services. In the past, Microsoft has frequently adjusted their quote when enterprises bring a competitive quote to the table. If the procurement team doesn’t have enough time before the Unified renewal to fully vet the 3rd party, at the very least that competitive quote will offer a higher ground for negotiation.

For hundreds of years, consumers have voted with their pocketbooks. If there’s something better or more economical, they switch. Microsoft enterprise support clients are no different and they now have a choice in 2023.

