Market Guide for Independent Third-Party Software Support of Megavendors

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By: Rob Schafer, Wendy Morin, Adam DeJoy, Jo Ann Rosenberger, Ciaran Hudson, Allison Adams

Initiatives: Technologies and Markets

> IT procurement leaders can harvest significant software budget cost savings within their risk tolerance from independent third-party support providers. Use this guide to cut your IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware by Broadcom software support costs by 50% or more.

Overview

Key Findings

- IT procurement leaders who research and analyze all viable support options for their IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware software are best positioned to recommend achievable cost optimization alternatives within the risk tolerance of their stakeholders.
- Critical success prerequisites to engaging third-party software support (TPSS) are a thorough evaluation and comparison of the TPSS offerings and contract terms with those governing the software vendor's products, and a TPSS risk-benefit analysis and proof of concept (POC) engagement.
- SaaS is continuing to grow its share of the IT budget, which comes at the expense of traditional on-premises software. This is a potentially ominous trend for TPSS vendors, as SaaS offers little market opportunity for their software support services.

Recommendations

Heads of IT procurement evaluating TPSS providers to optimize costs at an acceptable risk tolerance for independent IT software support services for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware should:

- Leverage the five evaluation steps and the services described in this guide to evaluate TPSS as a potentially viable, cost-effective option to significantly reduce software vendor support costs across these five vendors' portfolios.
- Carefully compare TPSS offerings with the maintenance and support policies and contract terms governing their organizations' current use of IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware software as a key component of the required TPSS risk-benefit analysis.
- Send RFPs to all viable TPSS providers reviewed in this guide to obtain vital information on their services and pricing. Request that TPSS vendors provide at least three customer-applicable references and agree to POC engagement(s) to ensure their capabilities and services meet current and long-term support needs.

Market Definition

Gartner defines independent third-party software support (TPSS) of the megavendor market as a lower-cost alternative to the maintenance, support and consulting service fees charged by IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware by Broadcom. Independent TPSS service providers are not authorized channel partners. They offer independent support. The independent TPSS providers have no relationship with the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) or independent software vendor (ISV). As a result, they cannot access intellectual property, software updates, firmware updates or security advisories, or obtain OEM/ISV Level 3 or backline support. TPSS is typically delivered via cloud-based professional services.

Organizations face rising operational expenses due to the high cost of software maintenance and support from megavendors such as IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware by Broadcom. TPSS services can address this business challenge by offering comparable support plus value-added services at significantly lower costs. By leveraging TPSS, organizations can achieve substantial reductions in software operating expenses — typically an average annual savings of 50% compared with traditional vendor support. Tangible outputs include lower maintenance costs, improved budget flexibility and access to additional support services.

The bottom-line issue when evaluating the TPSS market and its vendors is not whether your organization will save money, as the annual savings is typically 50% of the megavendor's annual support cost. Rather, you must do a thorough feasibility study — including relevant, specific customer reference checks — to assess operational risks and ensure the selected TPSS provider can deliver the required capabilities and risk tolerance of your specific environment.

Mandatory Capabilities

- **Significant cost savings:** TPSS services typically save 50% versus direct OEM or partner software support.
- **Customer-entitled updates and new versions:** Know the currently installed version and the version you will be entitled to use when vendor maintenance and support are canceled.
- **24/7 help desk and remote support:** The TPSS provider's support services should match the typical types of help desk and service desk incident tickets that your organization has submitted over the past 12 to 24 months.

Optional Capabilities

- **Customized contracts for increased flexibility:** Organizations look to third-party providers to increase flexibility in their software maintenance and support contracts, allowing them to opt out of new and future versions and release upgrades when they deem them unnecessary and costly for the business.
- **Specialized services:** TPSS providers typically support customized code, modifications and unique product-specific requirements — and, in some instances, improved SLAs.
- **Customized agreements for shorter-duration terms:** Megavendor maintenance contracts typically require an annual commitment. TPSS providers are often willing to offer short-term and month-to-month support for special product-specific needs under customized service arrangements and contracts.
- **Leverage of lower-priced TPSS proposals:** TPSS services continue to threaten the software vendors' maintenance and support revenue stream. This enables procurement to use these lower-priced proposals for bargaining power when negotiating with some of these megavendors.

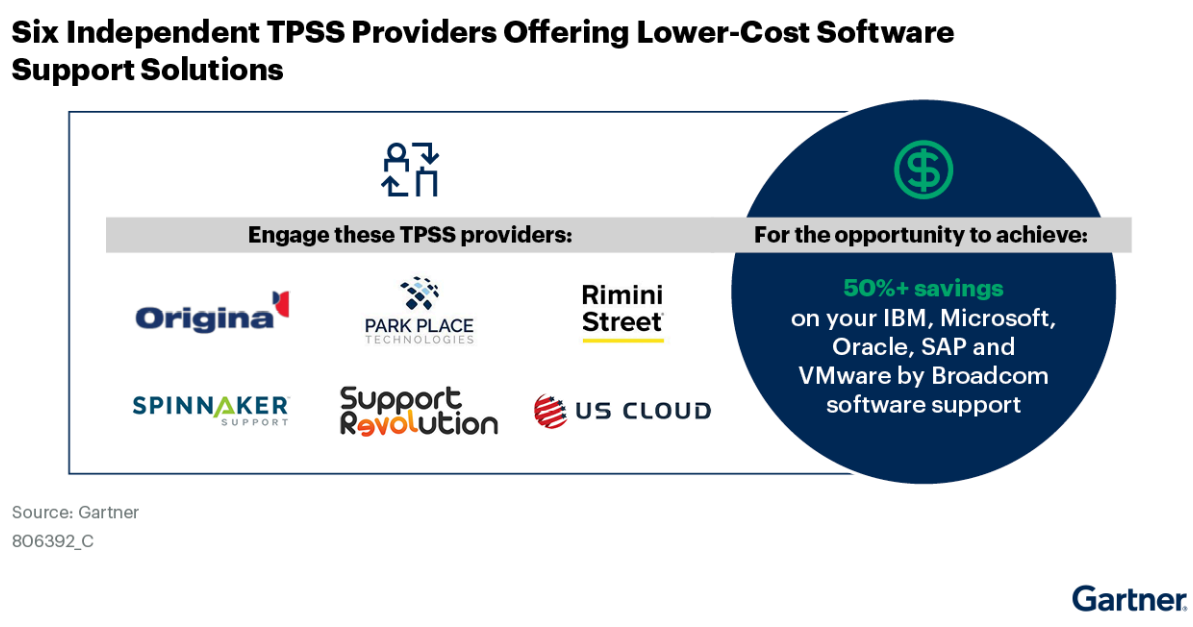
- **Service add-ons:** TPSS providers often deliver additional services such as product installations, bug finds and fixes, security patches and vulnerability protection, and performance tuning.

Market Description

This market covers six *independent* TPSS providers that offer technical support services to replace maintenance and support programs from IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware by Broadcom (see Figure 1). While providers that maintain relationships with the software vendor are outside the scope of this Market Guide, they also should be evaluated because their vendor access, escalation options and ability to replace the incumbent support program often differ from those of independent providers (see Market Guide for Microsoft Product Support Services).

Independent TPSS providers can offer lower-cost support, longer support for older software versions and greater flexibility over upgrade and migration timelines. However, because they have no relationship with the software vendor, they cannot directly access the vendor's intellectual property, software and firmware updates, security advisory services, or top tier and backline support. Vendor-related providers may retain access to vendor escalation paths and resources, but their capabilities vary, and some offerings may supplement rather than fully replace the software vendor's support program.

Figure 1: Six Independent TPSS Providers Offering Lower-Cost Software Support Solutions



Independent TPSS alternatives offer opportunities for organizations to reduce current- and future-year operating expenditure (opex) and budget. Figure 2 illustrates examples of the key offerings and capabilities of the six independent TPSS service providers discussed in this guide. These often contain a valuable superset of the standard software vendor support services. This is especially true for back-leveled versions, the useful life of which the software vendor typically has very little interest in extending. As part of your feasibility study, these added-value TPSS capabilities that are detailed in each TPSS vendor's Profile should be carefully evaluated. Doing so will identify cost-saving opportunities to reduce rising megavendor maintenance and support fees.

Figure 2: Examples of TPSS Providers' Service Offerings and Capabilities

Examples of TPSS Providers' Service Offerings and Capabilities



Source: Gartner
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Gartner

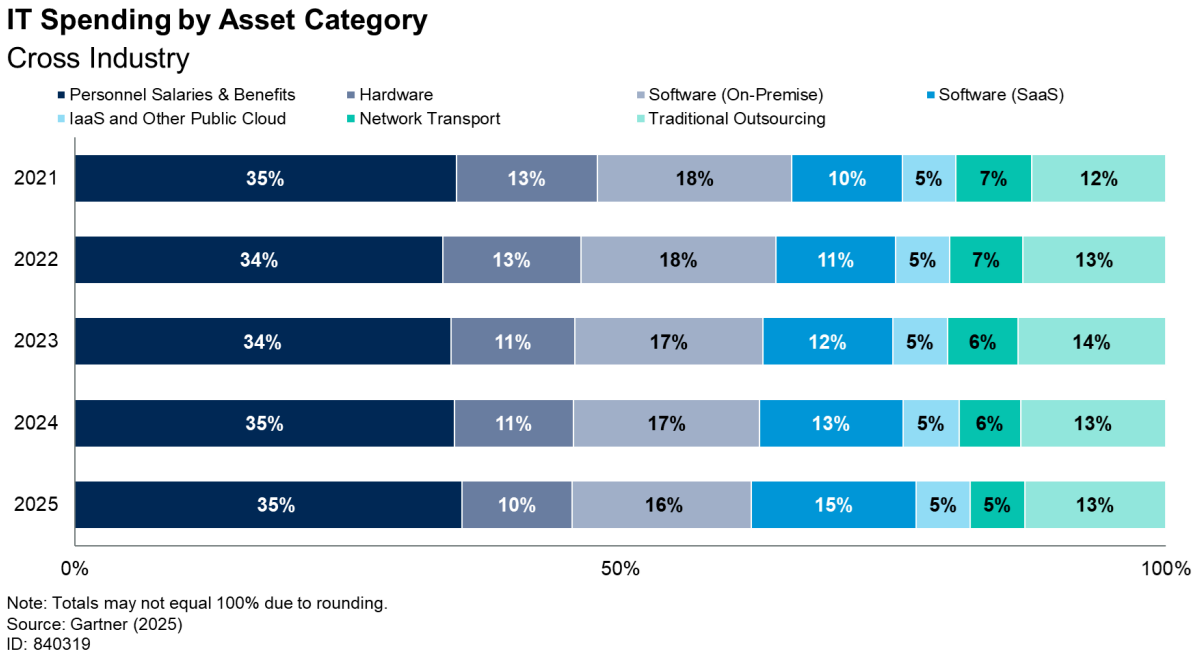
Market Direction

As the steady shift from on-premises software to SaaS challenges TPSS vendors, Gartner predicts that this market will continue to see the emergence of new vendor coverage and expanded service and support offerings from existing TPSS providers. The independent TPSS market continues to expand, as exemplified by the plethora of entrants into the independent TPSS market for VMware by Broadcom support — see the five vendors profiled in this Market Guide who offer VMware TPSS.

Market Analysis

Gartner's 2026 IT Key Metrics data continues to show that software is second only to IT personnel spend over the five-year period ending in 2025 (see Figure 3 below). As an organization increases or decreases the level of third-party/outsourced services, it often finds an inverse effect in its associated personnel, hardware and/or software expenditures, depending on the scope of third-party services retained and on business requirements (see IT Key Metrics Data 2026: Industry Measures — Executive Summary).

Figure 3: IT Spending by Asset Category



Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: Gartner (2025)
ID: 840319

Gartner

The most dramatic change we have seen in the past years here is the shift in percentage of spending for SaaS. Relative to the rest of IT spending, SaaS moved from 10% in 2021 to 15% in 2025. The increase has come at the expense of traditional on-premises software — the core market for TPSS vendors — which has moved from 18% of IT spending in 2021 to 16% in 2025.

With SaaS delivering the required software maintenance, upgrades, security patches, bug fixes, etc., which have been the traditional mainstay of on-premises software support, the TPSS market is at risk as that market continues to shrink. Indeed, we believe this is a main driver of continued expansion by TPSS vendors into additional software vendor coverage and tangential services (see the growing lists of additional vendor coverage, features and services in the TPSS vendor profiles below).

That said, in organizations with significant megavendor on-premises software portfolios, lower-priced TPSS can offset a significant percentage of the year-over-year annual maintenance and support increases (e.g., 6% to 10% and higher) typically imposed by these software vendors.

When third-party support is determined to be a feasible alternative, the significant software maintenance and support cost reduction opportunity (typically considered an opex) can be a quick and effective budget win. It can help limit budget inflation by minimizing the ongoing year-over-year software vendor maintenance and support increases that threaten organizations' cost-saving goals and initiatives.

Scenarios and Factors That Will Drive Continued TPSS Market Growth

The credible independent TPSS provider market remains relatively small. Although the number of providers is limited, most services offered are mature and continue to be enhanced and expanded to offer additional service categories (see the Provider Profiles section for details on each provider's service offerings).

Several scenarios will contribute to continued growth in the TPSS market.

Scenario 1: Cloud Migrations

During a migration to cloud that entails phasing out some or all of the megavendor software portfolio, perpetual software licenses can continue to be used. This can occur when the customer-entitled version of the software can support the organization's needs until the cloud migration cutover date. The customer-entitled version is the last version that was announced and made generally available by the vendor when the end user terminated maintenance and support.

However, end users should make sure to access and review vendor website policies and read their contracts and support policy handbooks to verify there are no terms that contradict this standard support policy. When version upgrades are no longer needed during these cloud migrations, the TPSS providers can offer technical support for the customer-entitled version so organizations can realize the average 50% cost reduction noted above. This analysis should be part of the cloud migration planning checklist and total cost of ownership (TCO) analysis.

Scenario 2: Migration to Alternative Vendors or Solutions

When IT procurement leaders select new vendors or alternate solutions to replace on-premises software products, they can analyze third-party support. From this analysis, they can determine if it's viable to use software with perpetual licenses under the customer-entitled version until (and past) the migration cutover date, as necessary. This TPSS option should be part of the organization's product replacement migration analysis and planning checklist.

Scenario 3: Low-Value Maintenance Evidenced by Low-Frequency Technical Support Tickets/Incidents

Often, one of the more significant cost-saving opportunities for the IT budget is found to be "hiding in plain sight." With proper due diligence and analysis, IT procurement leaders can identify low-value, low-incident software support costs that are often ideal candidates for TPSS services as a cost-effective alternative that can drive material savings.

Gartner recommends the historical analysis of all help desk and service desk technical support and incident tickets be conducted every six months. This analysis helps to determine the ROI of the value received versus the annual cost paid for the vendor maintenance and support service. It should include the frequency of support calls, type of support, severity level, resolution time and results, as well as incident ticket close data for each of the software products in your megavendor portfolios.

Scenario 4: End-of-Support Announcements or Notifications by Software Vendors

Older-version software may still be used to support certain applications but will no longer be supported by the megavendors without a customized support agreement and an additional fee. Evaluate TPSS services to support these older-version products, which is a standard service performed by most TPSS providers. Engaging a TPSS vendor in this scenario can result in an average 50% cost reduction from the current software vendor's standard maintenance and support fees. Doing this also avoids the high customized professional service rates that software vendors typically charge after the end-of-support date. TPSS providers will typically commit to supporting older legacy software versions for 15 years — and in some cases, even longer.

Scenario 5: Absent or Expiring Maintenance Increase Caps for Price Protection in Contracts

At times, no price protection exists for ongoing maintenance and support in vendor contracts. In such cases, particularly with multiyear commitment contracts with three- to five-year terms (e.g., enterprise license agreements [ELAs], enterprise agreements [EAs] and unlimited license agreements [ULAs]), there is high risk of escalating maintenance and support costs or end-of-support announcements during the term. If there is no price protection language in your contract, or if the price increase cap is higher than the current consumer price index (CPI) rate, evaluate TPSS services to compare the pricing to that of the vendor renewal proposals. This should be done at least six to nine months before the multiyear contract expiration to ensure there is sufficient time to evaluate the TPSS services and pricing, and to give adequate notice to the incumbent provider.

Representative Vendors

The vendors listed in this Market Guide do not imply an exhaustive list. This section is intended to provide more understanding of the market and its offerings.

Vendor Selection

Six Independent Third-Party Support Providers for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP or VMware by Broadcom

The six TPSS providers selected for this Market Guide that offer credible independent TPSS for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP, or Broadcom/VMware products are Origina, Park Place Technologies, Rimini Street, Spinnaker Support, Support Revolution and US Cloud (see Note 1).

Software and Regions These TPSS Providers Support

Table 1 provides detailed information on each third-party software support provider. Use this table in conjunction with the vendor profiles that follow to compare and contrast providers' offerings by the software vendors' products they support.

Table 1: Representative Vendors in Independent Third-Party Support for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware Software

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

TPSS provider	Software supported	Regions supported
Origina	IBM HCL Technologies VMware SAP (Launched June 2026)	Asia/Pacific EMEA North America
Park Place Technologies	IBM AIX Microsoft VMware Oracle: Solaris O/S, Ent. Linux (OEL)	Asia/Pacific EMEA Latin America North America
Rimini Street	IBM Microsoft SQL Server Oracle SAP VMware	Asia/Pacific EMEA Latin America North America
Spinnaker Support	Oracle SAP VMware PostgreSQL	Asia/Pacific EMEA Latin America North America
Support Revolution	Oracle SAP VMware	Asia/Pacific EMEA North America Latin America
US Cloud	Microsoft	Asia/Pacific EMEA North America

Source: Gartner (October 2026)

Note: This guide focuses on IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware software.

Vendor Profiles

Origina

Corporate information and customer base:

- Company website: www.origina.com
- Headquarters: Dublin
- Fiscal year-end: 31 October
- Number of current customers: More than 200 active customers
- Certifications to international standards: ISO/IEC 27001:2022, Cyber Essentials Plus. EcoVadis ESG rated Silver Medal (2026, Top 15%).

Overview: Origina is a global independent software maintenance provider offering an alternative to

vendor software support for IBM, HCL, VMware and SAP enterprise software.

- Supports distributed and mainframe environments.
- Full support for all covered versions enables organizations to maintain critical systems as long as required.
- The model combines product experts with independent engineering, security and licensing expertise.
- Takes end-to-end ownership of technical issues, identifies root causes and resolves problems.
- Can develop configuration, interoperability and compatibility solutions, integrations, utilities and product enhancements.

- Security capabilities include:
  - Vulnerability, intelligence and hardening
  - Origina's Proactive Threat Assurance Service (OPTAS)
  - Combination of predictive threat modeling and expert validation
  - Prediction, prioritization and mitigation of threats specific to an organization's environment.
- Origina's independent expertise, engineering, security and licensing capabilities are targeted at:
  - Reducing risk and keeping critical software stable, secure and supportable.
- The independent model gives organizations greater control over their software roadmaps, including when and why to upgrade, migrate or modernize.

Services include:

- Full support for all supported versions
- Named product experts and end-to-end problem ownership
- Product hardening guides and vulnerability advisory portal
- OPTAS proactive and predictive threat modeling and analysis
- Interoperability validation
- Solution architecture optimization and product health checks
- Product enhancements
- Vulnerability shielding and independent solutions

Park Place Technologies

Corporate information and customer base:

- Company website: www.parkplacetechnologies.com

- Headquarters: Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.
- Fiscal year-end: 31 December
- Number of current customers: 25,000 overall, 1,000+ software supported
- Certification to international standards: ISO 27001/NIST 800-53 CSF 2.0/CMMC Compliance

Overview: Park Place Technologies is a global IT infrastructure services firm founded in 1991.

Its offerings include:

- **VMware**: vSphere — ESXi and vCenter, NSX, vSAN, Omnissa Horizon, Site Recovery Manager, Aria, as well as VMware vulnerability assessments
- **Microsoft**: Full Microsoft product portfolio (SQL Server, Hyper-V, Windows Server, Azure, Microsoft 365, Dynamics 365, Power Platform, Copilot, etc.), Microsoft Proactive and Enhanced Engineering Services
- **Oracle**: Solaris OS and Enterprise Linux (OEL)
- **IBM**: AIX and IBM iSeries

Services include:

- Software technical support: For internal administration teams to review, advise and resolve software issues and compatibility problems on supported hardware.
- Review configuration and log files related to software issues
- Software compatibility validation following hardware replacement activities
- Troubleshooting of aggregates and file system-related issues
- Issues involving full internal file systems
- Assistance with full or capacity-constrained internal file systems
- Guidance on firmware and software compatibility

- Identifying and troubleshooting of:
  - Network connectivity issues
  - Host connectivity issues
- Reactive OS-level break-fix support

Rimini Street

Corporate information and customer base:

- Company website: www.riministreet.com
- Headquarters: Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.
- Fiscal year-end: 31 December
- Current customers: 3,100+ active
- Certifications to international standards: ISO 27001:2022, ISO 9001:2015, GDPR Compliance, IRS software developer, Agile, Privacy Shield and Cyber Essentials Certified, Crown Commercial Services Approved (RM3804 and G-Cloud), APEC Cross-Border Privacy Rules Certified

Overview: Rimini Street offers support, managed and innovation services for:

- **SAP**: Applications, databases, middleware and industry solutions
- **Oracle**: Applications — excluding PeopleSoft — databases, middleware and industry solutions
- **VMware**: Virtualization, hypervisor, management and infrastructure solutions
- **IBM**: Applications, databases and middleware
- **Microsoft**: Select product support (Azure, Dynamics, Windows and SQL Server, Power Platform)

Services include:

- 1,800+ global engineers operate 24/7 across 150+ countries and territories

- Global tax and regulatory compliance monitoring across 5,300 government sites, 3,500 sources and 26,000 jurisdictions
- Built-in security services to help reduce risk
- Break-fix, customization and archiving support
- P1 cases, 10-minute SLA; P1/P2 cases average response time under two minutes
- Assigned primary support engineer from team averaging more than 20 years' experience
- Proprietary AI reduces resolution times.
- Agentic AI ERP solutions: AI capabilities layered on top of existing ERP systems
- Rimini Agentic UX: Agent and AI-powered automation with human-in-the-loop
- Rimini Govern for AI: Enterprise-scale AI agent governance
- Rimini Manage: Managed application, database and technology services with unlimited ticket requests
- Rimini Protect: Solutions, managed services, assessments and implementations delivered by 80+ global security experts; multiple certifications and exclusive VMware and database solutions
- Rimini Connect: Patented interoperability solutions for browsers, OS, Java and email
- Rimini Watch: Observability, monitoring and health check solutions
- Rimini Change: Change management that accelerates delivery, reduces operational risk
- Rimini Consult: Implementation, configuration, migration and staffing
- Rimini Custom: Expanded support to a broader portfolio of software

Spinnaker Support

Corporate information and customer base:

- Company website: www.spinnakersupport.com
- Headquarters: Greenwood Village, Colorado, U.S.

- Fiscal year-end: 31 December
- Number of current customers: 1,300+
- Certifications: ISO/IEC 27001:2022, ISO 9001:2015, Cyber Essentials
- Data privacy: EU-U.S. DPF, U.K. Extension, Swiss-U.S. DPF

Overview: Founded in 2008, Spinnaker Support provides independent third-party support, managed, and modernization services across 104 countries. Assigned teams provide 24/7 support through eight global operations centers. Spinnaker provides technical support across the following range of enterprise applications and technologies:

- **Oracle**: Database, Fusion Middleware, E-Business Suite, JD Edwards World through EnterpriseOne, PeopleSoft, Siebel, Agile PLM, ATG, Endeca, Demantra, Hyperion and industry solutions. Services include GTRC and application and technology management, including JDE CNC and iSeries
- **SAP**: ECC, S/4HANA, Business Suite, HANA DB, MaxDB, SAP ASE/Sybase, Oracle and other databases, and BI. Services include Basis, GTRC and managed services
- **VMware**: vSphere, vCenter, vSAN, vRealize and Aria Suite, SRM, NSX-T and vCD.
- **PostgreSQL**: Standard PostgreSQL and vetted open-source components. Services include advisory, security, migration consulting, enterprise support and managed services

Services include: Break-fix and custom code support; security, vulnerability and advisory services; AI-assisted support; interoperability; global tax and regulatory updates; managed services; and proactive monitoring.

Support Revolution

Corporate information and customer base:

- Company website: www.supportrevolution.com
- Headquarters: U.K.
- Fiscal year-end: 31 May
- Number of current customers: 420+

- Certifications to international standards: ISO 27001:2022, ISO 9001:2015, Cyber Essentials, Crown Commercial Services Approved (G-Cloud), GDPR Compliance

Overview: A former Oracle and SAP implementation and consultancy partner, Support Revolution delivers independent third-party software support services for Oracle, SAP, and VMware across a range of enterprise databases and applications:

- **Oracle**: Oracle Database, Oracle Middleware, Oracle Fusion Middleware, Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle PeopleSoft, Oracle Siebel CRM, Oracle Hyperion, Oracle Retail and other industry-specific solutions
- **SAP**: ECC, S/4HANA, SAP HANA database, Sybase/ASE, SAP Business Warehouse, SAP R3, SAP Global Trade Services, and SAP BusinessObjects Business Intelligence suite and other industry-specific solutions
- **VMware**: vSphere, ESX, ESXi, vCenter, VMware Workstation, vRealize, NSX, VMware Site Recovery Manager, vSAN, VMware Horizon, VMware Workspace ONE, VMware Tanzu

Services include:

- **Revolutionary SLAs**: Guaranteed response, client update and resolution times.
- **Revolutionary security**: Security vulnerability protection, hardening, advice and tooling.
- **Revolutionary support**: Named primary support engineer, and assigned support team for every client.
- **Revolutionary portal agent**: AI-powered support portal that instantly suggests knowledge base articles.
- **Revolutionary interoperability**: Browser, email, Java, integration, and operating systems.
- **Revolutionary TLR**: In-house global tax, legal, and regulatory updates, patching and compliance services.

- **Enhancement days**: Project delivery, application development, enhancements and technical advisory support.
- **Managed security services**: Ongoing security management, monitoring and specialist tooling.
- **Cloud hosting services:** Hosting and managed infrastructure options across AWS, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud.
- **Revolutionary tooling**: Service management and application-support tooling.
- **SAP and Oracle managed services**: Proactive, end-to-end management of SAP and Oracle environments, covering monitoring, administration, performance optimization, day-to-day operational support.

US Cloud

Corporate information and customer base:

- Company website: www.uscloud.com
- Headquarters: St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.
- Fiscal year-end: 31 December
- Current customers: 660+ overall; 452 have fully replaced Microsoft Unified Support
- Certifications and compliance: ISO 27001:2022; ISO 27701:2025; ISO 9001:2026, NIST CSF 2.0; GDPR; EU-U.S. Data Privacy Framework

Overview: Founded in 2017, US Cloud focuses exclusively on Microsoft enterprise support across cloud, hybrid and on-premises environments.

- It provides 24/7 support for all severities across:
  - Azure, Microsoft 365, Windows Server, SQL Server, Exchange, Dynamics 365, Power Platform, Copilot, security, identity and developer technologies.
- US Cloud's L2/L3/L4 engineers average more than 14 years of Microsoft experience.

- During the 12 months ended 22 September 2026, US Cloud:
  - Handled 16,659 cases, including 506 Severity 1 incidents
  - Achieved a 4.55-minute average initial response
  - Achieved 98.84% compliance with its financially backed 15-minute response SLA
  - Resolved 80.79% of cases without Microsoft intervention.
- US Cloud prices support according to required scope, complexity and case volume rather than license count, user count or Azure consumption.
- It indicates that customers typically save 30% (SMB), 50% (Enterprise), or 70% (Large Enterprise) compared with Unified Support.

Services include:

- **Complete Microsoft coverage**: One engagement supports the customer's cloud, hybrid and on-premises Microsoft estate.
- **Proven enterprise delivery**: US Cloud has replaced Unified for 452 organizations, including 53 Fortune 500 companies, for large, complex and business-critical Microsoft environments.
- **Managed Microsoft escalation**: When tenant-, platform- or source-code-level intervention is required, US Cloud retains case ownership and manages escalation through the customer's applicable Microsoft entitlements or US Cloud's authorized partner channel.
- **Transition risk reduction**: Controlled pilots, historical ticket analysis, workload validation, enterprise references, contractual SLA credits and documented security controls reduce replacement risk.
- **Channel delivery**: US Cloud also provides white-label Microsoft support to other technology service providers, extending its enterprise delivery platform through indirect channels.

Market Recommendations

Five Steps to Evaluate TPSS Provider Offerings and Capabilities

Those looking to evaluate TPSS offerings and engage with these providers should take the following steps to identify the viability of third-party support as well as conduct a risk-benefit assessment.

Step 1 — Assess TPSS Feasibility

Use the five scenarios described in the Market Analysis section as a guide to determine whether TPSS is a viable alternative for your organization.

Step 2 — Use RFPs for Detailed Services and Pricing Proposals

Send RFPs to the TPSS providers referenced in this Market Guide to request their list of services and pricing. The RFP should request the specific support requirements (and their costs) that align with your organization's solution needs for each software product in your megavendor software portfolio(s).

Step 3 — Conduct a TPSS Risk-Benefit Assessment With IT and Key Stakeholders

Evaluate the TPSS services and pricing for a risk-benefit assessment to determine whether:

- TPSS aligns with your short- and long-term technology strategy. Also, determine the role these five megavendors' software products play in your technology roadmap.
- Your software security requirements are aligned with what the TPSS provider can deliver.
- The three- to five-year plan for your software can be supported with the versions you are entitled to download. Download these before you cancel the megavendors' maintenance and support. Map the upgrade path and needs for each product that is a TPSS candidate. Know the version you have installed today and the version you will be entitled to use when you cancel vendor maintenance and support. Use this data in your risk-benefit analysis.
- The TPSS provider's support services meet your requirements compared to those you are entitled to receive as detailed in your software vendor support policies, handbooks and contracts. Thoroughly review each software vendor's maintenance and support terms and website policies to ensure you understand special entitlements or use of tools that are contingent upon renewing annual maintenance such as SAP Solution Manager. [1] Assess any risk if you no longer have access to or use rights for these entitlements or tools.

- The TPSS provider's support services match the typical types of help desk and service desk incident tickets that have been submitted over the past 12 to 24 months in your organization.
- You are at risk if you plan to cancel a portion of your support quantities while you evaluate the TPSS services. A "trial" period to determine the TPSS provider's capabilities is recommended. However, it is important to engage your legal counsel to review governing agreement and transaction documents to understand the vendor maintenance cancellation terms and policies. For example, IBM's International Passport Advantage Agreement stipulates an "all or none" subscription and support requirement, which would create noncompliance for a partial quantity cancellation of support. [2] Note that Microsoft, Oracle and SAP have similar requirements, though SAP now allows partial termination under specific circumstances (see SAP EU Support Ruling Opens the Door to New Cost-Saving Opportunities).
- Whether the TPSS provider has documented policies and procedures in the event unexpected events or situations occur, resulting in the need to return to the OEM and reinstate support. This should also be negotiated and included as a term in your MSA with the TPSS provider.
- Your compliance and audit-readiness position is strong, as canceling the software vendor maintenance and support can heighten the audit risk and, with some vendors, can trigger a software audit when the long-term maintenance and support revenue stream is threatened.

Step 4 — Request and Contact Relevant References

Request at least three relevant references (similar-size enterprise and environment) from the TPSS providers that you are considering, and contact them to discuss their experiences and satisfaction with the specific TPSS provider(s). Ask the reference what, if anything, they would have done differently if they had to evaluate and select a TPSS provider again. This will help you gain additional insights and/or context to move forward. Use Gartner's Peer Connect service to identify other Gartner clients that have inquired about TPSS as an alternative to either one or all five megavendor software products.

Step 5 — Arrange No-Charge Pilot Programs to Evaluate and Test TPSS Capabilities

Select three to five key products to arrange a 60- to 90-day no-charge pilot program to evaluate and trial the TPSS service as a proof-of-concept engagement. To determine a successful POC, take the following actions to help you make your TPSS "go/no-go" decision:

- Evaluate technical support expertise and capabilities across different products.
- Measure response time and problem resolution rate.
- Demonstrate that the TPSS provider's capabilities can meet special or unique support requirements for a particular product or application.

Evidence

For this research, Gartner conducted briefings with TPSS providers and reviewed customer inquiries and interviews conducted with reference customers. These consistently reveal that the typical selling price for services that include software break-fix and scheduled regulatory updates is about 50% of what the software publisher is currently charging the customer for product maintenance and support services. This selling price may be discounted on some occasions.

[1] SAP Enterprise Support, SAP. Refer to Section 2.4.6 of the agreement, which states: "In the event Licensee terminates SAP Enterprise Support, Licensee's use of SAP Solution Manager Enterprise Edition under SAP Enterprise Support shall cease."

[2] Passport Advantage Agreements, IBM. See Section 3.8, IBM Software Subscription and Support, which states:

"If Client elects to continue IBM Software Subscription and Support for an IBM Program at a designated Client Site, Client must maintain IBM Software Subscription and Support for all uses and installations of the IBM Program at that Site."

"If Client requests to renew expiring IBM Software Subscription and Support at a lesser quantity of IBM

Program uses and installations than the expiring quantity, Client must provide a report that verifies current

IBM Program usage and installation, and may be required to provide other compliance verification

information."

Note 1: Representative Vendor Selection

The six vendors in this guide offer independent TPSS for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware by Broadcom. An independent TPSS provider is one that offers commercialized independent support with no relationship with the OEM/ISV. The provider is not an authorized channel partner. The provider has no relationship with the OEM/ISV and, as a result, cannot access intellectual property, software updates, firmware updates and security advisories, or obtain OEM/ISV Level 3 or backline support.

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Market Guide for Independent Third-Party Support for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle and SAP Software - 21 August 2020

Market Guide for Independent Third-Party Maintenance for IBM, Oracle and SAP Software - 10 September 2019

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Table 1: Representative Vendors in Independent Third-Party Support for IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP and VMware Software

TPSS provider	Software supported	Regions supported
Origina	IBM HCL Technologies VMware SAP (Launched June 2026)	Asia/Pacific EMEA North America
Park Place Technologies	IBM AIX Microsoft VMware Oracle: Solaris O/S, Ent. Linux (OEL)	Asia/Pacific EMEA Latin America North America
Rimini Street	IBM Microsoft SQL Server Oracle SAP VMware	Asia/Pacific EMEA Latin America North America
Spinnaker Support	Oracle SAP VMware PostgreSQL	Asia/Pacific EMEA Latin America North America
Support Revolution	Oracle SAP VMware	Asia/Pacific EMEA North America Latin America

US Cloud	Microsoft	Asia/Pacific EMEA North America

Source: Gartner (October 2026)