



Managed Hosting: The Stress Free
Way to Manage Your Client Sites
and Grow Your Business

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At Liquid Web, providing our customers with the best possible service is our top priority. To help determine if we meet the standards we set for ourselves, we recently surveyed around 1,000 of our current clients about their hosting experiences. Many of the responses came from design agencies and digital marketing firms who told us they relied on Liquid Web for not only their own businesses, but also to host sites for their clients. We reached out to interview about a hundred of these agencies, to learn more about their specific needs and how we could help them.

“Managed hosting means I don’t have to know how to do it.”

Getting to know the owners and developers behind these companies was a fascinating – and in a few cases, hilarious – experience. They recounted horror stories of previous hosts who left them high and dry and compared hold times on support lines to medieval torture. In most cases, they had high praise for their service now but the question that yielded the most surprising answers was this one:

“What does managed hosting mean to you?”

Answers ranged from technical explanations with varying levels of detail about software monitoring, performance, and security, to the decidedly straight-shooting response of, “Managed hosting means I don’t have to know how to do it.” A few people suggested that managed hosting was differentiated from unmanaged hosting by the level of support, while many flat out admitted they didn’t know exactly what qualified as managed hosting, despite the fact that they paid for the service; they were getting what they needed, and that was all that mattered.

To Find Managed Hosting, Look for the Benefits

Whether or not you can get what you need from a hosting provider—managed or not—is the heart of the issue. Meeting your business performance needs is more important than how the hosting provider chooses to label their services. What if your agency could benefit from managed hosting, but you don't know what it is? The professionals we spoke to had all come to purchase managed hosting services—whether through meticulous research, trial and error, or the luck of the draw—and were now reaping the benefits.

You, your agency and your team stand to benefit from partnering with a managed hosting provider – no matter how large or small you may be. Our time spent chatting with our marketing and design clients revealed to us how many of you are wearing multiple hats and balancing the responsibilities of a variety of positions – and we want to support you by providing more than just a space to launch client sites.

There are a plethora of technical, financial, and emotional benefits to be gained by partnering with a trusted managed hosting provider. In that spirit, we'd like to tell you what we think managed hosting means.



Defining Managed Hosting Services

Managed Hosting Means POWER and PERFORMANCE (AKA, the Technical Benefits of Managed Hosting)

Whether you're on a dedicated server or VPS, you can be sure you'll get the best possible performance for your sites and applications with managed hosting. A team of technical experts and engineers monitoring your server 24/7 for outages, downtime, performance, traffic, and security issues can take a significant pile of work off your plate. Whether you're a plucky startup without any in-house IT resources, or the system administrator at an established marketing firm, managed hosting can give you the power and performance your business needs.

How do managed hosting providers deliver power and performance?



Server Monitoring

You can't pay attention to your server at all times. After all, that's not the business you're in. A managed hosting team, on the other hand? Their business depends on it. You'll get proactive monitoring for irregularities and weak points so that potential problems can be handled before they turn into major disasters. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, as the saying goes. Server monitoring is like an ongoing physical to keep your sites and applications healthy and high performing.



Security

68% of business leaders stated their cybersecurity risks are increasing, and 80% are innovating faster than their ability to secure against attacks, according to a study by [Accenture](#). It's no wonder that security breaches have increased by 11% since 2018 and 67% since 2014. On top of that, 53% said they struggle to fill qualified cybersecurity professional positions in less than 6 months, and 42% had limited faith in their own ability to detect or address cyber threats.

Site and server security is no longer about if you are attacked—it's about when you are attacked. A managed hosting provider can constantly scan for viruses or threats, regularly audit your security system, configure firewalls, and update software to mitigate the risk you face from cyber criminals and careless clients or employees.

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Storage and Database Management

Your storage and database needs can change as time goes on. Technology evolves, design and marketing trends ebb and flow, and your business grows. Of course, you want to be prepared for expansion—whether gradual or sudden—but you don't want to pay for more resources than necessary.

Managed hosting offers you the flexibility and scalability your business needs. Rather than running out to purchase new hardware, or transitioning all your sites to a new system when you outgrow your capacity, increasing space with a managed hosting provider is literally just a matter of telling them you need more.



Backups and Disaster Recovery

No one wants to believe that the worst will happen to them. Major disasters are for action movies, not day-to-day business. Unfortunately, sometimes the worst does happen. But in the action movie that is your business, your managed hosting provider can be the hero who saves the day with protected off-site backups and a full disaster recovery plan. Whether it's a national catastrophe or an internal calamity that brings your sites down, when you have a managed hosting provider looking out for you, you can be confident that you'll have everything back online A.S.A.P.



Network and Site Performance

If you have any experience with unmanaged hosting, you might be familiar with the phenomenon where your sites are humming along smoothly and loading lightning-fast one moment, then grind to a halt the next. The reasons for the shift aren't really relevant—at the end of the day, your end users are getting a 404 message or a page that takes ages to load.

With unmanaged hosting, you can only call support and hope the fault is at their end. A managed hosting provider, however, will help you determine whether the slowdown comes from their network or some inefficient code in one of your applications. (That's assuming that the monitoring service we talked about earlier hasn't already picked up on and rectified the situation before you even called!)

There's a lot to be said for the technical benefits of managed hosting, but power and performance are just the beginning.

Managed Hosting Means SAVINGS and SECURITY

(Or, the Financial Benefits of Managed Hosting)

You already know that price does not always equal value. Sure, there's cheaper hosting out there. Scratch that—there is hosting out there with a lower price tag. But does it offer you the time and cost savings or the agility and security your business needs to grow and meet the needs of your clients? Like the old adage says, you get what you pay for. And in the case of an excellent managed hosting provider, you might get even more than what you pay for.



Lowered Operating Costs

Have you ever estimated the cost of all the hardware and software you'd need in order to give your clients the same level of hosting you get from a hosting provider? Maybe you have. Maybe you have even hosted client sites on your own server at one point or another. But technology is changing more rapidly than ever before, and staying current means one thing: upgrades - and lots of 'em.

While the [sticker price on your managed hosting plan](#) may seem a little lofty at first glance, it's positively bargain basement when you compare the cost of all the equipment you'd need to purchase, deploy, and maintain; the software you'd need licensing for; and the hours and electricity you'd need to run the whole operation. Especially when you consider you'd probably have to buy replacements every two to three years. Ouch.



More Time to Focus on Your Business

No matter how tech savvy you may be, deploying and maintaining servers is not what you got into business to do. If you work for a smaller marketing or web agency, you already wear a lot of hats. Why not hand this particular hat to a pro you can trust, and give yourself a little more time to juggle all those other responsibilities? Studies have shown that [task switching can actually cost you 40%](#) of your productivity. One less task on your plate (assuming you view what your managed hosting provider does as just one task) means you can switch tasks less often - and gain productivity.

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Compliance With Industry or Government Regulations

The marketing industry may not be the primary target of compliance regulations, but that doesn't mean you get to skip this paragraph. What about the sites you create for your clients? Are they handling sensitive medical information? Personal records? Accepting credit card payments? If so, it's time to break out the regulatory guidebooks and start learning what you need to do to keep clients [compliant with HIPAA or PCI rules](#).

If you're already groaning at the time that it's going to cost you, you don't even want to think about what happens if you or your client faces a compliance audit. Of course, your trusted managed hosting provider can help audit client sites for you to ensure compliance, saving you time and the hefty non-compliance fines you'll face if you're ever audited.



Customization and Scalability

Ever bought an all-in-one kit because it was a better deal than buying individual components, even though it contained items you didn't want or need? Wouldn't it be great if you could get that kit for even less by removing unwanted items, or swapping in something you'd rather have?

Most quality managed hosting plans will allow customization of services: pay for what you need, not the bits you don't. But what happens when a new client needs new services, or the growing success of an existing client places heavier loads on your service? Voilà, your managed hosting plan can be scaled up or down to suit your needs. You'll never need to over-purchase, or be caught under-purchasing, ever again.



A Dedicated Team of IT Experts

We talked earlier about the savings your team can realize when you don't have to purchase and maintain all the software and hardware needed to host your clients' sites. What we didn't take into account was the cost of hiring and training an in-house staff of IT experts ready to deal with server issues and other technical problems that may arise as you launch or migrate your clients' websites. (Not to mention retraining staff for every new tech development that comes along.)

Good managed hosting comes with solid web hosting support, which includes experts in all manner of network, server, application, and coding issues, at no extra cost to you. It's like hiring an in-house IT team and convincing them to work pro bono.

The technical and financial benefits of managed hosting combined already make it an attractive option, but we're not finished yet. You're not a robot, you're a human being, and human beings also make decisions based on how a product or service makes them feel.

Managed Hosting Means CALM and CONFIDENCE

(AKA, the Oft-Overlooked Emotional Benefits of Managed Hosting)

Some purchase decisions may be as simple as a cost-benefit analysis, but for the really big stuff, we want our gut to tell us it's the right choice. Choosing a provider can come down to a leap of faith: after all, you're putting your clients' sites and your business in the hands of another company. The right provider will make you really feel confident in your choice.



Predictable Price and Performance

The world of business isn't always smooth sailing; accidents happen, unexpected costs are incurred, you run over budget or past deadlines on projects, and sometimes there's just no other option. Full disclosure: While managed hosting is pretty darned great, it cannot prevent project scope creep or budget overages. What it can do is provide a reliable service at a predictable price.

With managed hosting, you pay a set monthly fee that you can plan for without worrying that a sudden hardware failure will upset your carefully balanced budget. And you'll get stable, consistent service without unexpected tech support fees to face if there's a hiccup in your system.



Reduced Pressure to Keep Up With Rapidly Changing Tech

Technology changes fast. You may focus intently on mastering one skill, only to look up and realize that demand for 10 new skills has popped up while you weren't looking. Providing all the services that your web design or marketing clients require is like running a marathon, and trying to keep up with constantly accelerating tech can feel like covering the same ground over and over without making progress. Your fully managed hosting provider can help take that load off your shoulders, while ensuring that your client sites are current with all the latest trends.

Managed Hosting Means CALM and CONFIDENCE

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Confidence That You've Got This Under Control

The world of hosting can be a confusing place to navigate alone. Your clients may have a wide range of requirements for their various sites, and it's not always easy to cut through the [technical jargon](#) to determine which services will best suit your needs. Do you need VPN access? What's the importance of SSDs? Is a VPS going to meet your demands? What the heck is bare metal? All the decisions you need to make about where your clients' valuable content will be hosted can be overwhelming—unless you have a knowledgeable guide.

A good managed hosting provider will take it upon themselves to understand everything your business needs to support its online goals, and match those needs to the best solutions. And because fully managed hosting doesn't stop where your network ends, you'll always have a support team you can count on for advice and assistance with any other technical issues your business may face.



Stellar Support

We've touched on the technical and financial benefits that fully managed hosting support teams can offer, but an expert support team is more valuable than dollars and cents or hours of uptime. They give you the assurance that comes from knowing you're not on your own; that help is always available, and only a phone call, email or livechat away.

Whether your client has a buggy application, you're struggling with network performance, or a catastrophe has wiped out critical data and you need help with recovery, a managed hosting support team is there for you in times of crisis.



Freedom and Peace of Mind

Want to take a vacation? Want to get away from the constant client calls and hectic hum of your office and curl up with a good book? Okay, maybe managed hosting doesn't actually include time off or an all-expenses-paid getaway, but it does make it just a little easier for you to slip out of the office for a while.

With an expert support staff and monitoring team diligently making sure your clients' sites are performing exactly as they should, you don't have to feel bad about setting your email to auto-response and checking out for a few days. Your clients—and with them, your livelihood—are in the reliable, capable hands of your trusted managed hosting provider.



Managed Hosting is the Service You Need, When You Need It

It can be difficult to quantify the benefits of a service when the provider is so effective that you don't even notice them. Managed hosting may not be all things to all people, but it is a valuable tool for business owners, and for web agencies and digital marketing teams in particular.

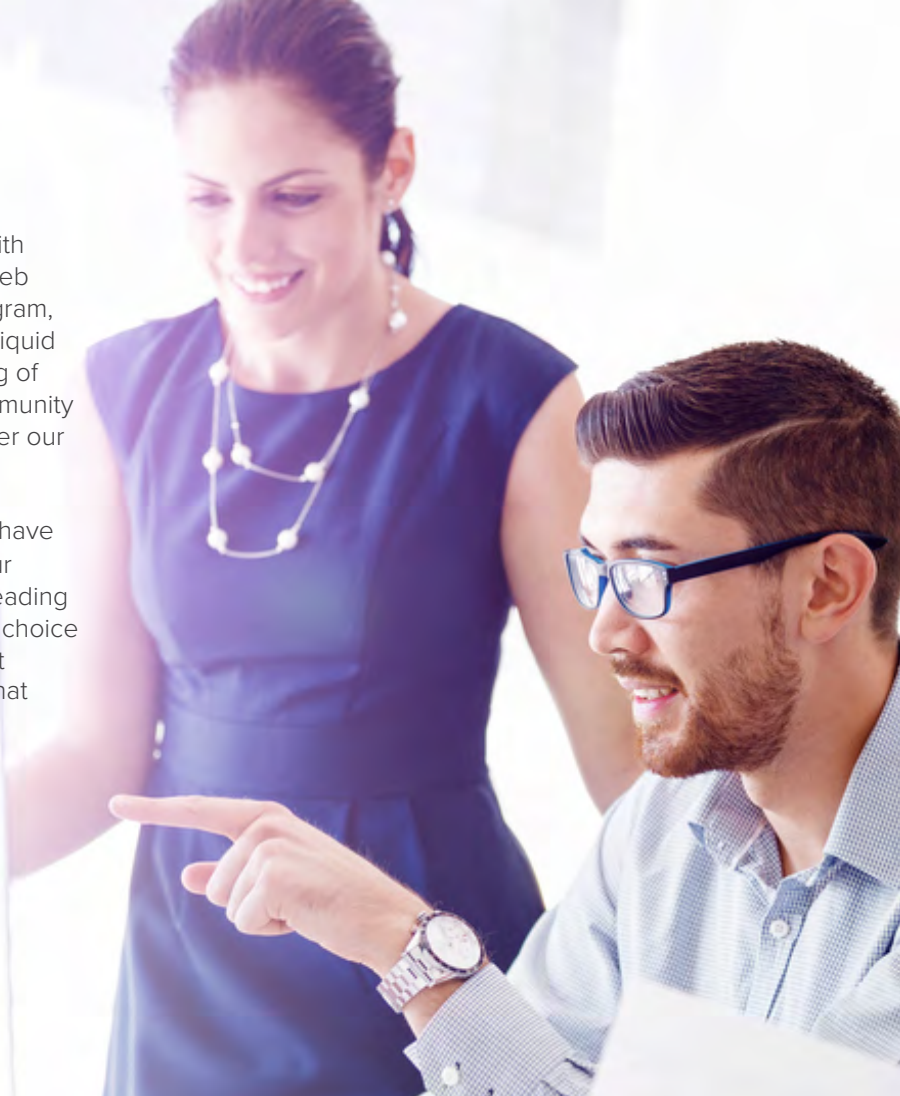
If you'd like to learn more about how you can realize the technical, financial, and emotional benefits of fully managed hosting, our team would love to hear from you. Get in touch with Liquid Web today.

Be Our Partner!

Open revenue opportunities and grow your business with Liquid Web, a leader in managed hosting. The Liquid Web Partner Community includes our Affiliate & Referral Program, Reseller Program, Web Professional Program, and the Liquid Web Partner Directory, which is a complete online listing of our partners to help them grow faster. Our Partner Community empowers individuals and businesses of all types to offer our suite of products to their clients.

In addition, we value our partners and understand they have unique needs. Whether you wish to bill and support your customers, or entrust them with Liquid Web's industry-leading Support from the Most Helpful Humans in Hosting™, the choice is yours. With the most aggressive SLAs and the highest customer support ratings in the industry, you can trust that your clients will have the best experience possible.

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About Liquid Web

Liquid Web powers content, commerce, and potential for SMB entrepreneurs and the designers, developers, and digital agencies who create for them. An industry leader in managed hosting and cloud services, Liquid Web is known for its high-performance services and exceptional customer support.

With over 30,000 customers spanning 150 countries, Liquid Web owns and manages its own core data centers, and provides a wide portfolio of offerings spanning from bare-metal servers and fully managing hosting to Managed WordPress and Managed WooCommerce Hosting. The Most Helpful Humans In Hosting™, Liquid Web earns the industry's highest customer loyalty* and has been recognized among INC. Magazine's 5,000 Fastest-Growing Companies for twelve years.

*2019 NPS score of 67.

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Liquid Web™

