

# How to Successfully Systemize and Scale Your MSP Operations

# State of the MSP industry

The economy may be facing headwinds, and this is potentially affecting your clients. However, the MSP industry is decidedly growing.

You've probably experienced this!

Around 48% of MSPs reported double-digit growth in their monthly recurring revenue or MRR (see Figure 1).

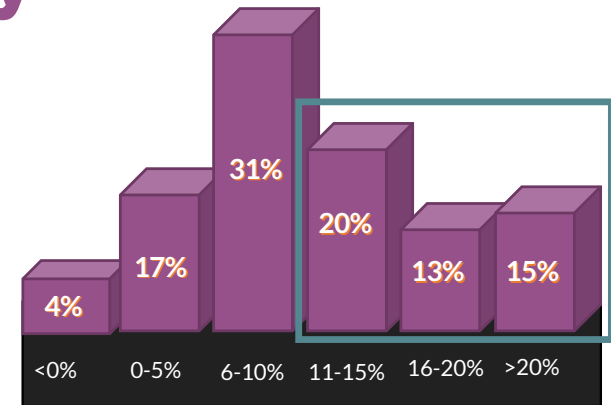


Figure 1. Almost half of the MSPs reported double-digit growth in their MRR in 2022

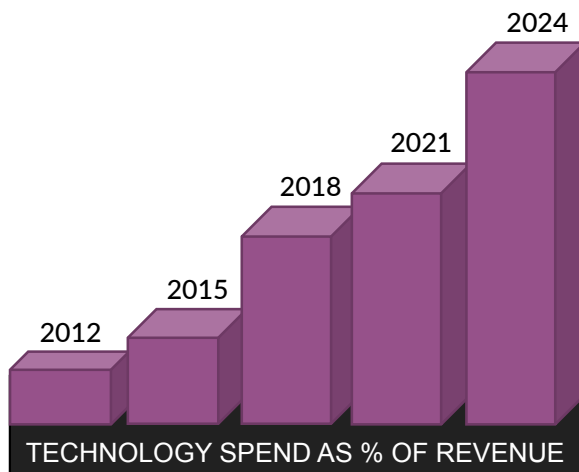


Figure 2. Businesses are expected to continue spending on technology solutions.

COVID-19 may have disrupted the world economy, but it also created opportunities for MSPs. Over 51% of MSPs reported that they expanded their services within their customer base during the pandemic period.

And guess what? There are no signs of this growth slowing down because (see Figure 2):

- 1) Your customers are becoming more technology centric.
- 2) Small and medium-size businesses are accelerating their digital transformation.

MSPs are riding a wave of growth by being at the right place at the right time. It's a unique situation that has created very specific challenges for you to grow your business.

In this eBook, we will explain how you could overcome these specific challenges that the MSP industry is currently facing. So let's dive in!

# Economic threats for MSPs

We can't ignore the macroeconomic environment. The economy is struggling and your customers — especially small and medium-size businesses — may be pessimistic.

They may be low on confidence and worried about the rising inflation (see Figure 3)

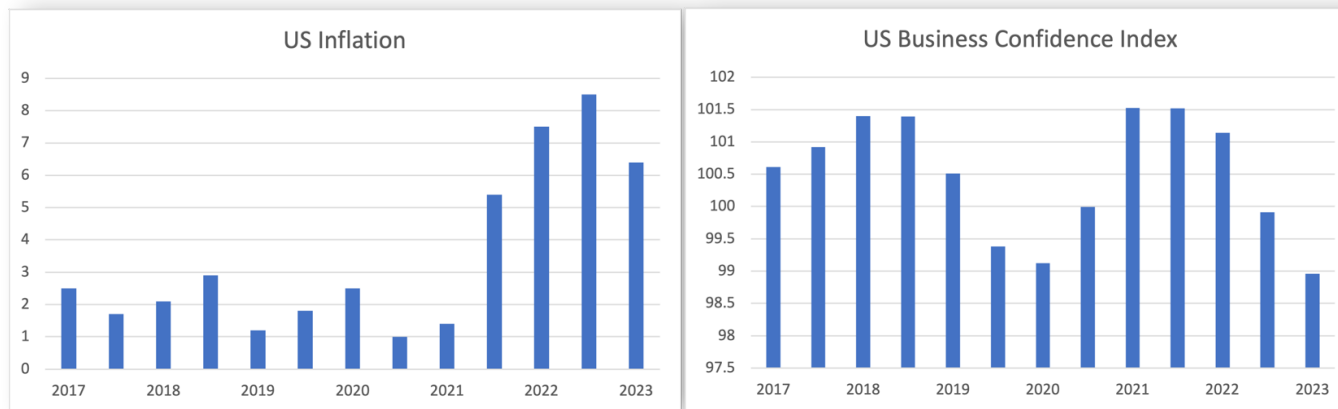


Figure 3. US inflation rate and confidence index (2017-2023).

Apart from these, the labor market remains tight so you also need to contend with its challenges.

- 45% of companies have job openings that are hard to fill
- 42% of companies are outsourcing because of hiring challenges
- 42% of revenue was lost due to hiring challenges

Amid the talent shortage, the cost of technicians has gone up while their loyalty toward your MSP has gone down. MSPs are unable to fully pass this increase in cost to their customers, which is making it difficult for them to thrive, if not survive.

Take a moment to reflect on  
What squeeze are you feeling?

- Increasing costs
- Finding and retaining talent
- Increased competition
- Clients are struggling financially
- None of the above

# How to scale without growing pains

Every stage of growth has its own unique set of challenges. However, what is common and a prerequisite for growth is having your IT operations streamlined.

Think about it. The major hurdle for growth is ensuring your processes are replicated and followed by everyone you work with.

Everything's plain and simple when you're the only one in your team and you have to follow all the processes you create.

It gets tricky, however, when you hire more employees, work with vendors, have partners you outsource to or merge and collaborate with other organizations.



How do you ensure your new teammates and partners follow procedures like they are supposed to?

The key to success and growth is having a single source of truth because it enables you to:

- Prevent repeat questions
- Speed up daily tasks
- Prevent inconsistencies
- Maximize long-term productivity
- Prevent knowledge loss
- Increase knowledge sharing
- Create a safety net for your IT processes

Most MSPs that achieved growth had everything documented, so their senior technicians didn't waste time explaining procedures to new team members and the new team members didn't waste time figuring out what needed to be done.

*Having a single source of truth is foundational to growth.*

# MSP external growth pathways

We've already looked at the economic uncertainties that pose a challenge to growing your business. However, it has not deterred MSPs from finding ways to grow.

Having a single source of truth by documenting everything works from an organizational standpoint. However, from a market standpoint, two avenues for growth that are popular among MSPs are:

## Mergers and acquisitions (M&As)

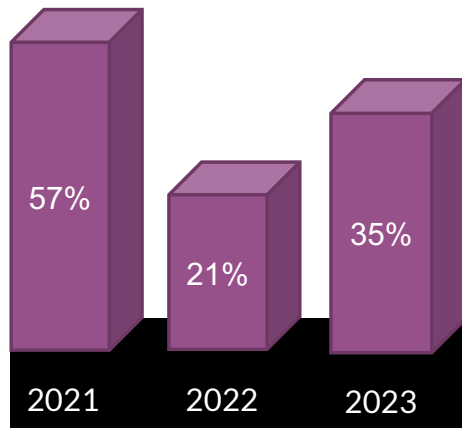


Figure 4. Percentage of MSPs engaging in M&As.

M&As took a dip in 2022, presumably due to the volatility of the market caused by the pandemic. However, they are expected to make a comeback in 2023 (see Figure 4).

## Outsourcing

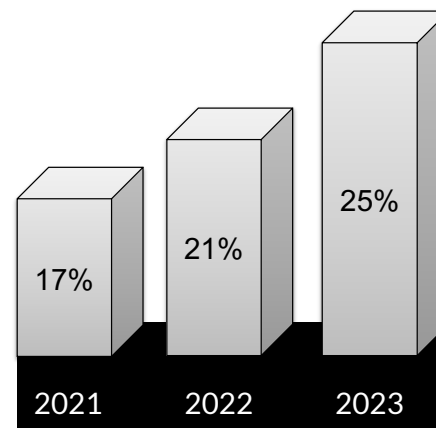


Figure 5. Percentage of MSPs outsourcing services.

Outsourcing, in IT, is growing. The global IT outsourcing market size was estimated to be around \$440.41 billion in 2022. By 2027, this market is expected to grow and rise to \$610.12 billion.

## Reasons why MSPs are outsourcing

- 21% were small MSPs expanding beyond one person
- 18% due to signing large new clients
- 14% had an out-of-hours need
- 5% were missing skill sets in internal staff

It's also interesting to note the services that are being outsourced by MSPs (see Figure 6). Nearly half of the MSPs outsource only their help desk, which is critical for customer experience. In the next section, we will see why this presents a challenge for growth and how you can overcome it.

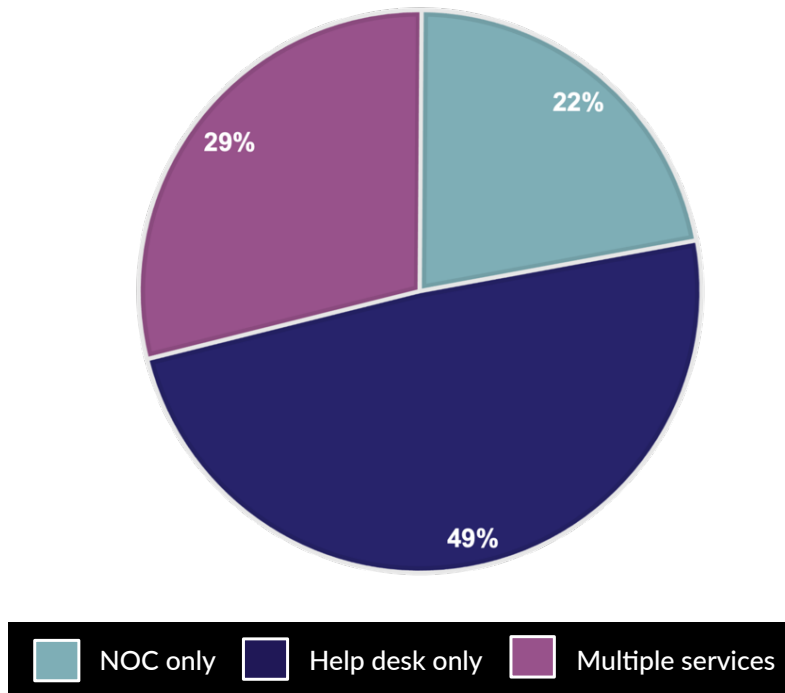


Figure 6. Services that MSPs are outsourcing.

# Challenges to growth

Regardless of how you scale, either organically or with external support through outsourcing or mergers, your service delivery and customer experience are paramount.

Therefore, the major challenges to growth are posed by things that impact your service delivery and customer experience. They are:

- 1) Ensuring customer experience continuity
- 2) Managing tools
- 3) Managing processes

## Ensuring customer experience continuity

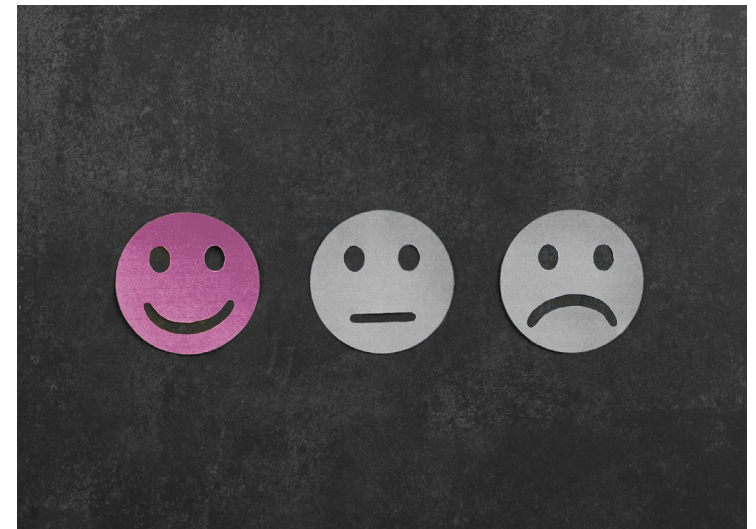
When you're outsourcing your services or collaborating with business partners, you want to present a unified front to your clients.

Your brand is defined by every customer interaction across a set of processes, and you want this to be consistent through:

- Customer onboarding
- Customer offboarding
- Service delivery
- Project management

How do you ensure that your brand is consistent and that you can deliver a personalized touch to make your customer relations more special?

The answer is by creating an IT playbook. Document everything. How do you onboard? How do you offboard? What is the tone your technicians should use while interacting with your clients? Answer these questions and more in detail.



## Here are some tips on creating an IT playbook

- Focus on building repeatable processes to align culture and make your service delivery consistent.
- Capture everything about client environments.
- Educate partners with the right information – what’s your history, who your clients are, how you’ve been successful, etc.

**01 - Business Continuity - Disaster Recovery Plan**

Add Flag

Happy Frog utilizes a complete Disaster Recovery system to maintain business continuity in a disaster situation. Use this document as a pathfinder to the correct procedure for your specific situation.

1. Call the site contact as listed in the **San Francisco HQ Site Summary Flexible Asset** and discuss the following:
  - Establish the impact to the business.
  - Identify the recovery goal given the timeframe and impact on the business.
    - Files
    - System
    - Both
  - Prioritize the recovery tasks based on the priority of systems impacted.
    - For hosted Line of Business apps, use the Applications Flexible Asset to determine the systems impacted by the down server and prioritize based on the business impact field.
  - Identify the date/time range to recover from.
    - Consult the SF-HQ backup server Backup Flexible Asset to guide the conversation in how often backups are completed.
2. Determine the impacted systems to identify the course of action needed:
  - **If systems are operational, but data has been lost, perform 02 - File Restore**
    - Example: File share has been deleted, Quickbooks database file overwritten
  - **If systems are not operational, perform 03 - Local Virtualization**
    - Example: Server HDD failure, ransomware
  - **If site and systems are not operational (physical damage), perform 04 - Off-Site Virtualization**
    - Example: Flooding, power outage
3. Verify that the recovery completed successfully. Contact the user and determine functionality.
  - Test network connectivity in office
  - Test network connectivity from client VPN
  - Test network connectivity across site-to-site VPN

**Apps & Services Core Assets Procedures**

Attachments  
No Attachments

Drop files to  
Max file size 100

Embedded Passwords  
Add Password  
No Passwords

Related Items  
Add Related Item

- Backup  
Unitrends SF Servers
- Configuration  
HF-SF-BACKUP1
- Document
  - 02 - File Restore
  - 03 - Local Virtualization
  - 04 - Off-Site Virtualization
  - 05 - Major Incident Tracker
  - Bare Metal Server Restore
  - Virtualize a Physical Server
- Password
  - AD Password
  - SF-HQ backup server

Creating an IT playbook helps deliver seamless service. It’s about documenting as much key information as possible so that your partners know more and can do more with all that you document.

Creating an SOP for a procedure like Disaster Recovery can help ensure that no matter who takes up this task, they know and do what you want them to. This includes information that is unique to a client.

Your technicians should be able to see everything they need to comprehensively perform any task in a single pane of glass (see Figure 7).

Obviously, “documenting everything” in this way can seem like a daunting task. It’s probably not something you can achieve in a day or even a week. However, here’s the good news.

Figure 7. A Disaster Recovery plan with all the relevant information in a single view.

IT Glue has a solution that will keep you accountable through the process of creating your IT playbook and it's called the Completion Report (see Figure 8).

Name ▲	Type	Status	Completen...	Checklists	Configurations	Contacts	Documents	Domains	Locations
<input type="text"/>	Demo ▼	▼							
Big Design	Demo	Active	29% (10/34)	2	5	16	15	1	4
Delta Cabling Co.	Demo	Active	76% (28/34)	5	5	1	9	+	3
District Of New Port	Demo	Active	6% (2/34)	+	+	1	+	+	3
Donti's Donuts	Demo	Active	53% (18/34)	14	+	26	+	2	1
Gareth Ryan Creative	Demo	Active	12% (4/34)	+	3	1	+	+	3
Happy Frog	Demo	Active	94% (32/34)	24	63	16	82	4	8
Key Pool, Co.	Demo	Active	12% (4/34)	+	2	5	+	+	2

Figure 8. The Completion Report in IT Glue.

The Completion Report gives you an overview of your progress along the documentation journey. It helps you strategize and prioritize procedures you want to document.

## Managing tools

The second challenge to growth is using fragmented solutions that don't interact with each other. A new employee may use a spreadsheet to document interactions with a client or your outsourcing partner may use their own set of tools.

When you have different people using different tools to document information about your business and your clients, it's hard to tell who has the latest information and what's the best action to take in any circumstance. The lack of documentation continuity in such cases results in:

- Lack of in-depth knowledge of clients
- Lack of a single source of truth for all teams

It also raises security concerns that emerge from:

- Varying security permissions
- Lack of a secure way of co-managing your services
- People working on different systems

How do you manage access to sensitive information in such an environment?

IT Glue has a couple of solutions that help you deliver consistent service regardless of whether you're collaborating with a partner on a one-off basis (restricted to a project or when you're relying on a third party for a limited period) or collaborating long term.

When you're collaborating on a one-off basis, you can set your partner up as an IT Glue Lite user and give them only read-only access. It helps you share information without duplication (see Figure 9).

	Administrator	Manager	Editor	Creator	Read-only	Lite
<b>Organization Restrictions</b>	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	5
<b>Global Data Access</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Manage Account Settings</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Manage Users</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Remove Data*</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Create/Update Data*</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>View Data*</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

\*Within the Organizations the User has access to according to their Organization Restrictions

Figure 9. Permissions overview of IT Glue Lite users.

However, if your collaboration is long term, you can rely on GlueConnect (see Figure 10). It lets you link your accounts securely so your partners have access to all your tools and the latest information (see Figure 11).

Account / GlueConnect Accounts

## GlueConnect Accounts

Name ▲	Role	Groups	Organizations	Last access	Actions
IT Glue <small>Certified Provider</small>	Editor	Marketing, testing Amrit, Tom's friends	All Organizations	Jun 6, 2016 - 11:30 pm	Actions
IT Glue Demo	Editor	Marketing, test group, testing Amrit	22 Organizations	Apr 16, 2016 - 11:30 am	View Account Edit Resend Invitation Delete
Global Mentoring Solutions <small>Certified Provider</small>	Read-only	test group, testing Amrit	23 Organizations	May 6, 2016 - 10:30 pm	Actions
Sandbox Design	Editor	test group, Tom's friends	12 Organizations	Apr 11, 2016 - 4:30 pm	Actions
78910 Corp	Editor	Deliciousness, Marketing, NoHasFun, Partner Suc...	23 Organizations	Apr 12, 2016 - 1:00 pm	Actions
abc123	Creator	Marketing, NoHasFun, Partner Success, Sales, te...	7 Organizations	May 16, 2016 - 10:30 pm	Actions
Inbay <small>Certified Provider</small>	Editor	Marketing, NoHasFun, test group, testing Amrit	5 Organizations	Feb 26, 2016 - 8:30 pm	Actions
Artspace	Read-only	NoHasFun, Partner Success	All Organizations	Feb 16, 2016 - 7:30 am	Actions
Happy Frog	Read-only	Marketing, Ten ORGS	7 Organizations	Jan 6, 2016 - 10:30 am	Actions
Kraken Techs, Inc.	Read-only	Marketing, test group	20 Organizations	Apr 8, 2016 - 9:30 pm	Actions
Arts Midwest	Creator	Marketing, NoHasFun, Partner Success, Sales, te...	16 Organizations	Apr 18, 2016 - 9:30 pm	Actions

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Figure 10. List of GlueConnect accounts.

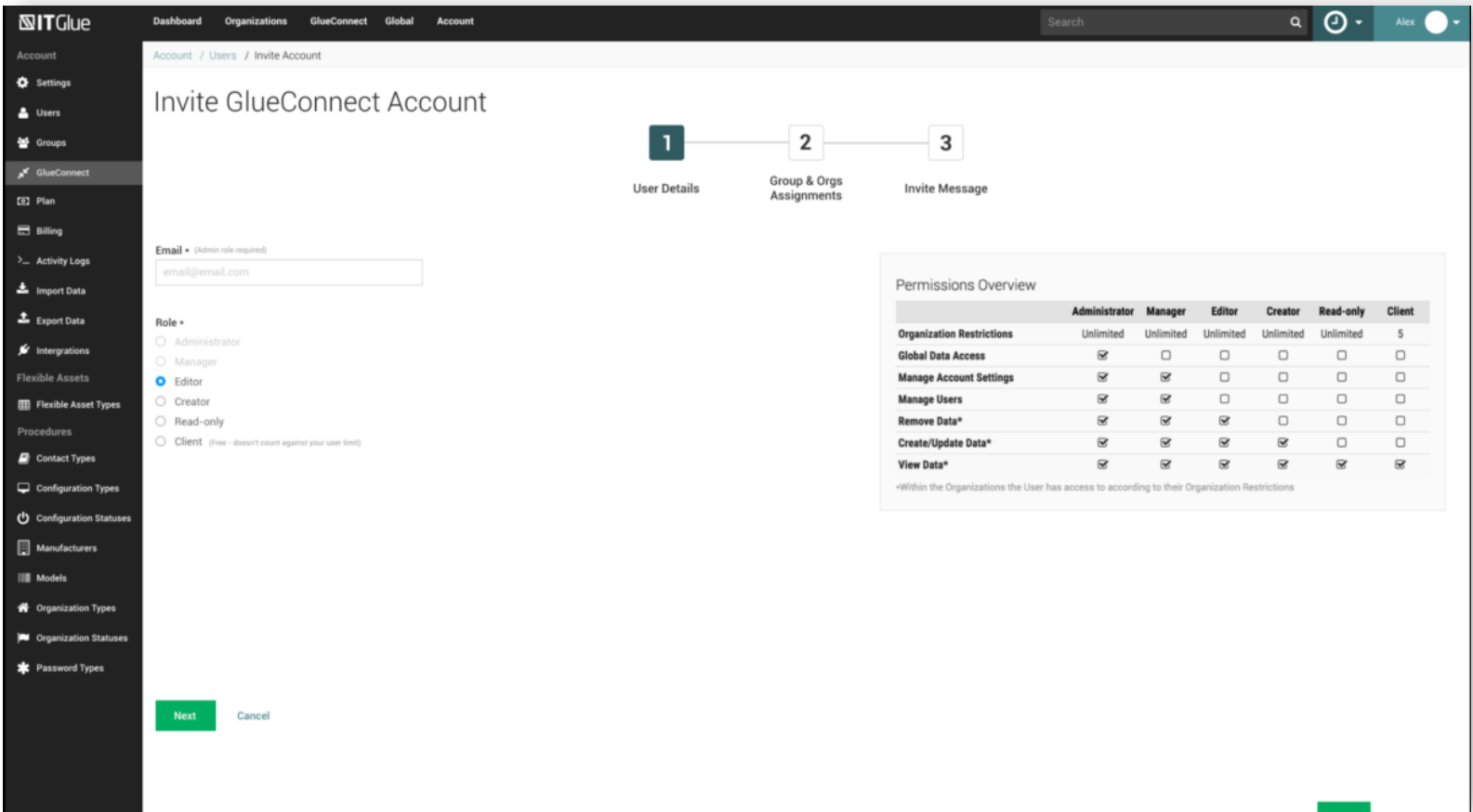


Figure 11. Invite to link GlueConnect account.

The best part is that GlueConnect creates an audit trail so you have complete visibility of all activities. With GlueConnect, your partners can access all the information they need from one place.

GlueConnect is a solution that's helped MSPs during M&As because when two organizations join, it's hard to integrate all processes at once. Nonetheless, you still want to leverage the larger group of human resources that are available, and GlueConnect helps in that regard.

Of course, you probably want all your documentation merged in the long term. IT Glue has a Cross-Account Migration Service dedicated for that.

# How GlueConnect Helps MSPs



*We've begun leveraging GlueConnect to partner with other NOCs that can assist us during peak call times, emergencies, and overflow situations. So far it's been very smooth."*

Matthew Burakowski, MDS, Senior Systems Engineer



*We use GlueConnect everyday because we have multiple instances of IT Glue through acquisitions. It is an easy way to switch between instances without having to leave IT Glue."*

Josh Ousley, Meriplex, Sr. Systems Analyst



*We use GlueConnect every single day as a secure way to collaborate with our MSP partners in documentation and password management in real time with perfect continuity."*

Jason Cohen, Mission Control, CEO



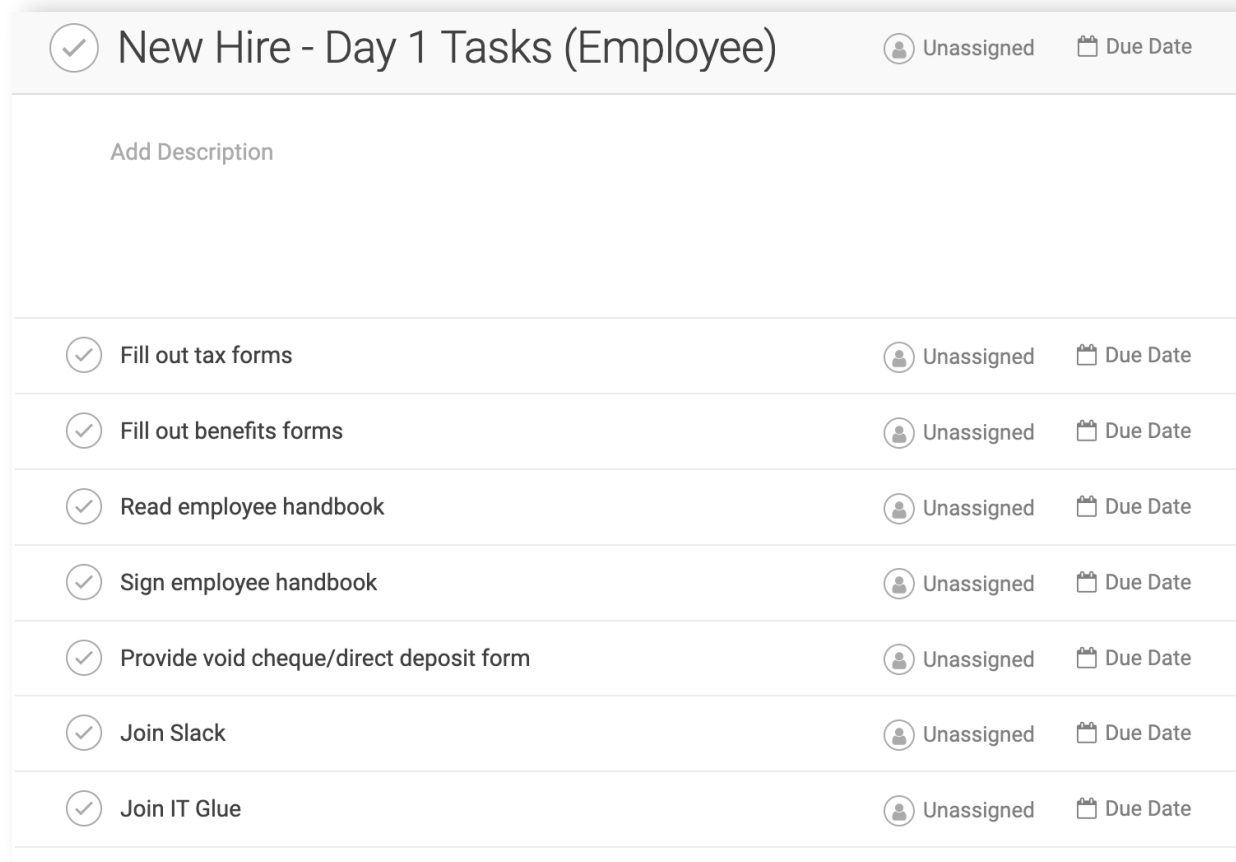
*We use GlueConnect as a great way to integrate with other companies while doing onboardings and offboardings."*

Alex, CB20, Onboarding & Escalation Engineer / Manager

## Managing tools

The final challenge after creating your IT playbook and interconnecting your tools is ensuring your procedures are correctly followed. How do you do that when technicians have varying levels of maturity and skills or you lack oversight of procedures?

The answer again is – by having a single source of truth. Create and use standardized best practices, workflows, checklists and SOPs that make your processes easier. Ensure consistency from partners by using your documentation in your day-to-day processes.



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Hire - Day 1 Tasks (Employee)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
Add Description		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fill out tax forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fill out benefits forms	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Read employee handbook	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sign employee handbook	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide void cheque/direct deposit form	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Join Slack	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Join IT Glue	<input type="checkbox"/> Unassigned	<input type="checkbox"/> Due Date

Figure 12. Sample checklist for onboarding.

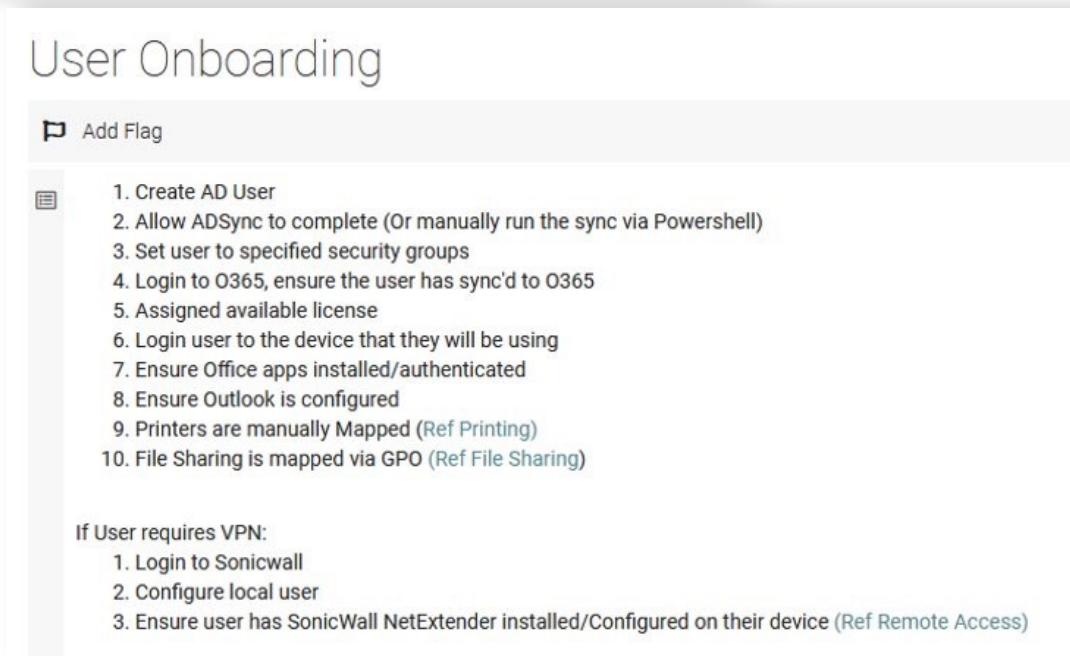
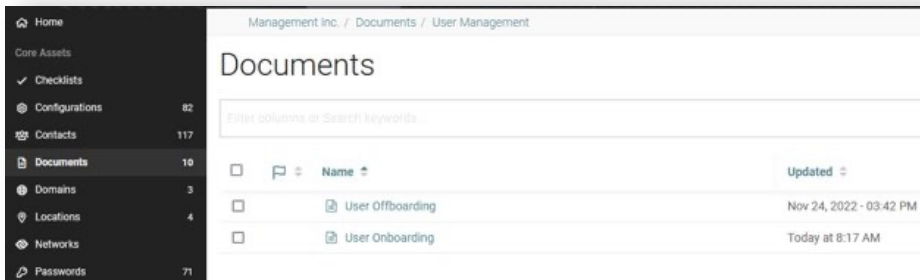


Figure 13. Sample SOP for user onboarding.

You could create checklists and SOPs for:

- Onboarding and offboarding
- Troubleshooting
- Procurement tracking
- Project tracking
- Auditing

Take a moment to reflect on  
What aspects of customer  
experience are you concerned  
about as you grow?

- Maintaining service delivery standards
- Process consistency
- Customer satisfaction remaining high
- Avoiding complexity of tools
- All of the above
- None of the above

# Four key takeaways

**1** As we discussed, every stage of growth has its own set of unique challenges. Plan for the stage you're in by setting appropriate goals.

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**2** The prerequisite to growth in all stages is having your IT operations in order. You can do this by documenting everything that is critical to your IT team and having a single source of truth for everyone who works with you.

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**3** Don't let the economic uncertainties or talent shortage slow you down. Grow organically by streamlining your operations or outsourcing to achieve growth. M&As are also an option.

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**4** While working with partners, have a standardized IT playbook and use a documentation solution that accelerates knowledge sharing while maintaining security.

# Secure, Mature and Integrated Documentation



## Make documentation easy

Create and store KB, checklists and SOP articles effortlessly, embed rich network diagrams or import Word documents so your team is empowered to train and help themselves.



## See the complete picture

Link related items together, so that all the information you need is at your fingertips. Rapidly define and understand relationships between various elements of your documentation.



## Secure your critical information

Sleep better with next-level password management featuring access control, host-proof hosting, at-risk password report and audit trail.



## Build a documentation culture

Edit and collaborate directly within the platform. Automatically save and sync to ensure your documents are always up to date for all team members.

Trusted by More than 13,000 Partners  
in 70+ Countries



STREAMWOOD  
ILLINOIS

REVO  
HEALTH



# Safeguard Your IT Operations With Secure Documentation

Request a Demo

When it comes to data security, [IT Glue](#) is second to none. We have achieved a SOC 2 Type-2 attestation, a set of data security and service controls that can only be maintained through ongoing, company-wide commitment.

