



**Electronic Futures Audio Video Unlimited**

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## Information Technology Support Partnerships

Electronic Futures consistently strives to build strategic, mutually-beneficial partnerships with businesses, governments, and other organizations in Northern BC. The benefits of upgrading from over-the-counter service to a either a [Professional Services Agreement](#), or [Outsourcing Agreement](#), can't be overstated.

In a nutshell, knowing your business and systems inside and out, allows us to most efficiently meet your needs at the lowest-possible cost, and transition your organization from reactive support and spending, to enterprise-class proactive support, and financial certainty for your Information Technology Spending. Shift your focus from stressing about poorly-performing Infrastructure, and back over to your core business today.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution; after a thorough business analysis, we will tailor a solution to meet your specific needs, priorities, and financial ability. Your success is our success, and our business model is based on delivering phenomenal value in our services that keeps you coming back, term after term. Let our 20 years of B2B experience, covering everything from small storefronts to multi-national corporations, start working for you today.

## Highlights - Professional Services Agreements (PSA)

- **Low Monthly Retainer for Discounted Hourly Rates**

*Start Saving money now*

An introductory PSA is great for organizations that have recurring support costs and would like to start reducing their spending, with minimum monthly financial commitment. PSA's are negotiated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the support volume needs of your organization and the diversity of your existing IT Fleet.

- **Add the Specific Responsibilities & Deliverables You Need Now**

*Customize your PSA*

Many organizations don't have a thorough understanding of what it takes to keep their IT investments running reliably, or how to balance risk with spending on routine maintenance / administration, and their TCO suffers as a result. Many smaller businesses fail to formally allocate responsibility for maintenance and system administration, whether that is internal or externally, and unnecessary failures result as things "fall through the cracks."

Our business analysts are here to walk you through the strategic decisions you need to make, and strike the right balance between proactive services/spending, and risk. For very reasonable and predictable rates, Electronic Futures can take care of the specific IT tasks that are most important to you, when you need them. Incorporating these into a PSA doesn't necessarily need to include the cost commitment associated with a full-blown Service Level Agreement (SLA).



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- **How a PSA with Electronic Futures works for you**

- The Value Proposition*

- A PSA will benefit your organization far beyond the immediate savings from volume-discounting support hours...

- By utilizing the same support provider consistently, for clear responsibilities, your support hours will decrease over time, because the provider doesn't need to examine your installed systems and configurations to see what you have, or what has been changed since last time. The technicians will be able to build and leverage a knowledgebase of your fleet, your business, and related practices.
    - Your provider will gain a better-understanding of your business needs, and make more strategic observations and recommendations. Root causes of recurring issues are found and solved.
    - Depending on the options you include in your PSA, your provider can take immediate action to respond to key needs quickly, even outside regular business hours, without the uncertainty and delays associated with obtaining approval for needed work. You still have transparency on what was done, but with the added benefits of reduced administrative overhead, quick containment or outright prevention of issues, and more time to concentrate on your core business.
    - Retaining a PSA strengthens your business relationship with your vendor
    - A PSA has a lower cost than a full-outsourcing agreement, primarily because although the provider may assume specific technical responsibilities, the customer typically retains responsibility for management decisions regarding the lifecycle of their fleet and associated spending, and thus the retains the financial risks associated with those decisions.

## Highlights - Full Outsourcing Agreements

- **Larger and Regulated Organizations require more formal governance, risk management, granular accounting and decision making**

*Formal Outsourcing CAN BE a viable alternative, or compliment to, an internal IT Department for meeting these needs*

We've all heard of, and some of us have lived through, horror stories relating to outsourcing. Such stories are even cropping up locally in Northern BC. Successful outsourcing requires a thorough understanding of not only your business needs and the technology you use, but a solid understanding of how these change over time, a deep commitment to the strategic partnership, and formal, closed-loop mechanisms to communicate and feedback going forward. These always take time and commitment to establish, by both parties, and there is no "silver-bullet" solution that can be pulled off a shelf, except at great cost to you. Be very wary of any proposals that purport to magically make your systems run for X dollars per system per month, without doing the required background work up-front. Outsourcing your IT needs is an investment of trust, time, and money, and this investment is only as stable as the company you partner with, and their commitment to you.

- **Why would I choose Outsourcing over managing my own IT resources within my Organization?**

*When Does Outsourcing Makes Sense*

Generally, there may be a business case for full outsourcing with a trusted supplier when:

- One or more of these cases fits your business situation:
  - You have high diversity among your IT Fleet (no consistency of hardware, software, or configuration), requiring technological knowledge that outstrips your internal resources.
  - You may not even really know what you have out there. You don't have a clear picture on what your specific IT needs are, or how to go about meeting them efficiently (yet)
  - You don't have internal IT resources, and don't want to go that route
  - You don't have internal IT resources yet, but want to consolidate and package your IT infrastructure and needs to facilitate developing the ability to meet this in-house
  - you already have internal IT resources, but they don't have the capability to meet your needs within your fiscal ability (yet)
  - Your IT spending is ad-hoc and out of control and you want to regain the reins, and leave the door open.

- You are facing an immediate need for additional IT infrastructure, without a clear business case to justify the investment
- You have a vendor with:
  - in-depth knowledge of, and experience with, IT Management Best Practices, such as COBIT/ITIL
  - A solid understanding of your business needs and priorities - this can be gained with thorough up-front work, if you are a new customer
  - Standards-based, Enterprise technical architectures, leveraging solid recipes with efficient deployments, centralized management, and rigorous monitoring processes. These recipes need to be customized to the individual needs and priorities for your organization
  - the experience, legal fluency, and rigor to meet and prove regulatory compliance, if you are in a regulated business such as finance, policing, energy, government, or health care, or carry ISO certifications
  - A critical mass of the right infrastructure, skill sets, tools, technologies, and processes to do this more efficiently, or better, than you could do yourself

• **Know Exactly What you Have**

*Eliminate the Fear - and costs - of the Unknown*

Now your organization has an opportunity to partner with world-class, certified professionals, in a solid business that has been locally-owned and operated for twenty years. Outsourcing Agreements with Electronic Futures require a detailed inventory, lifecycle and risk analysis, and network topologies for your fleet, as well as a formal Business Analysis of your vision, priorities, strategies and policies. Depending on your circumstances and SLA requirements, a full Failure Mode And Effects (FMEA) analysis of your critical systems may be required. If you don't have them, don't worry, we will help take care of that.

On a case-by-case basis, Electronic Futures may agree to amortize the up-front costs for this work into a negotiated minimum contract duration within your Outsourcing Agreement. This won't be possible if you share these document(s) with third parties (for example, provide them to other companies bidding in a tender process for outsourcing); In other words, please don't expect us to do weeks of work for free, just so that you can learn the hard way that Life is Better Outside the Box, with Electronic Futures. If this is your intent, it is important that this is stated up-front, the work is paid for, and you will own the rights to this resulting Intellectual Property.

• **Know Exactly What you Need**

*Make the Strategic Decisions that are Right for You*

Electronic Futures will conduct a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis

of your present infrastructure in the context of your business situation, and present you with a detailed report, proposing any applicable improvement options for your consideration going forward.

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This is especially important so we can tailor the report and recommendations according to your needs, ie. tailored as requirements for a generic tendering process

- **Only Pay for What You Get**

*Make Service Levels a Legal Commitment*

Electronic Futures backs our commitment to service with formal Service Level Agreements, which involve granular tracking and reporting on mutually-agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), and penalize us if we don't deliver. For example, such metrics may involve things like system availability (uptime), service response time (performance), planned downtime (such as for maintenance/reconfiguration), unplanned down time (from crashes / problems), and other statistics on handling of reactive problem, such as first-call resolution rate, time to respond, or total call resolution time.

Put in plain English, we live in the same community. If we don't do what we say, we don't bill you for it, and you don't pay for it.

- **How an Outsourcing Agreement with Electronic Futures works for you**

*The Value Proposition*

Any Outsourcing Agreement is a big commitment and we thank you in advance for placing such trust in us.

All our Outsourcing Agreements carry the following benefits:

- Agreed and documented roles & responsibilities, clearly allocated between your organization and Electronic Futures
- Agreed and documented Service Level Agreements for your contracted critical systems and services
- Periodic, formal reporting on Key Performance Indicators for each Service Level Agreement
- Periodic, detailed billing for

- any periodic payments scheduled under your agreement,
  - any other incremental costs applicable under your agreement within the period (examples may include change requests, or any administration/maintenance tasks outside agreed volume thresholds),
  - MINUS any performance penalties (credits) for deviation outside agreed KPI thresholds
- Centralized tracking of issues facing your organization, and efficiently addressing root causes. Chances are we've dealt with these issues already somewhere else anyway.
  - Bringing an in-depth understanding of, and experience with, World-Class IT management practices to bear on your contracted services and infrastructure

Depending on the specifics of your agreement, Benefits may include...

- A clearly-defined and agreed shift in financial risk balance between yourself and Electronic Futures, for some, or all, of your IT Infrastructure
- Financial Transparency for your IT Fleet - Periodic reporting on budgeted vs. actual spending using our detailed TCO model
- Periodic physical and/or virtual inventory checks and reports, covering the subscribed aspects that concern you the most, for your selected systems:
  - key network and Operating System Configuration (Computername & Active Directory memberships, protocol stack, IP & DNS, VLANS/Subnets)
  - hardware health status (status of redundant systems such as disk arrays, any hardware problems, installed Firmware revisions vs. applicable base system recipe)
  - software health status (file system status, disk utilization, system conformity with applicable base system recipe)
  - security posture (installed vs. available patches & anti-malware protection, firewall configuration)
  - security activity in the period (any malware incidents, security audit failures such as failed logins or file access attempts blocked by ACL, network activity blocked by firewalls, network scans)
  - Overall Equipment Effectiveness (System availability, reliability, and utilization)
  - System Lifecycle status for Operating System and hardware (status of vendor support, and availability of key spares)

- Configuration Changes made in period (accounts added/removed/changed, software installed or removed)
- For key systems as identified in your agreement, a detailed analysis of the reporting above, complete with an executive summary and action plan for any deficiencies identified.
  - If included or pre-authorized per your agreement, remediation will be done as needed, and reported to you
- Lifecycle Certainty for your IT Fleet - we will follow-through on your agreed LifeCycle evolution plans, developing and deploying new recipes as required, thus leveling out the peaks of your IT expenditures as much as possible, and allowing for smooth, planned system evolutions as and when required
- Access to a live dashboard for status of your systems and Key Performance Indicators
- Access to a customer portal for reporting problems/change requests, or status of outstanding problems/change requests
- Periodic, custom training for your end-users to address knowledge gaps and better-leverage the potential business gains made possible by your infrastructure
- Retail discounts for your employees at our store, which can be incorporated in your employee benefits program
- Automatic Transfer of Intellectual Property (you own all documentation produced regarding your installation), such as system inventories, network topologies, installation & configuration recipes, checklists, procedures. This option is a great package to gain and preserve critical knowledge within your organization, and preserve options for changing how you manage your infrastructure later. Note that Electronic Futures is NOT one of those companies that will hoard this information to keep you locked-in with us, but compiling and packaging this documentation after-the-fact is a large, time-consuming endeavor, at a higher cost. Accordingly, we highly recommend that organizations pursuing outsourcing always include it in their agreement up-front.
- Periodic mock-audits for regulatory compliance - address your issues internally, before they become major issues
  - mitigation planning assistance and follow-through
  - Knowledgeable Assistance during actual audits

For more information, please contact <mailto:outsourcing@elfut.ca>