

VIEWPOINT



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Julia Unkel has been with PwC since 2002 and became a partner in 2009. Among other roles, she served as insurance leader (Germany) until July 2020. From June 2021 to the end of 2022, she took on the position of chief financial officer at Allianz Partners. She returned to PwC in 2023 and is leading Managed Services in Germany.

The IT and business value of PwC Managed Services

In the face of complex IT challenges and ever-evolving business needs, managed services can provide a strategic advantage. Here, Julia Unkel, partner at PwC Germany, Managed Services Leader, shares insights into the ways managed services help large enterprises standardize processes to achieve transformation goals — all while delivering measurable business value.

What IT trends are you seeing in the market and among your customers?

Generative artificial intelligence (genAI) and automation are significant trends, with a strong focus on integrating existing systems to allow them to communicate effectively. We're also seeing organizations leverage customer-centric AI applications to personalize services and enhance interactions.

Customers are moving away from dedicated solutions for individual functions and are instead adopting unified systems — like enterprise resource planning solutions — that serve multiple purposes. This “less is more” philosophy is critical for efficiency.

IT departments are facing increased workloads due to cybersecurity threats; new regulations like the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA); and the rise of genAI, which requires careful allocation of internal IT talent.

In addition, as data privacy and ethical considerations gain importance, organizations are focusing on strong data governance and compliant AI practices while the shift towards cloud-native solutions accelerates.

What challenges do large organizations face in managing complex processes?

Large organizations, especially those that have grown through mergers and acquisitions, face significant challenges in standardization and efficiency. Integrating multiple legacy systems and processes is complex, making it difficult to establish a unified standard.

Many companies still operate in departmental silos, hampering a holistic, process-driven approach. Breaking down these silos by adopting a big-picture perspective is essential for streamlining processes and enhancing operational efficiency. For example, consider the procurement process, which spans legal, tax, finance, and operations departments.

Adopting consistent policies and compatible technologies across all departments throughout the entire procurement life cycle is essential to achieve efficiency.

How can managed services help organizations achieve long-term business objectives?

Managed services enable organizations to align IT capabilities with long-term business objectives through strategic partnership. Not every IT trend justifies immediate investment — particularly in back-office functions. By working with PwC, for example, organizations can leverage standardized, scalable IT solutions that are easily replicated across the enterprise, driving a faster impact than independent investments.



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As clients reevaluate their strategies — focusing more on production and innovation — back-office functions such as finance, tax, and legal often receive less attention and investment. PwC addresses this by helping clients with standardizing processes and managing both transformation and operations within a unified framework. This integrated approach leads to faster returns on IT investments and quicker realization of cost savings.

How does PwC help its customers deliver measurable return on investment (ROI)?

Our managed services are structured around fixed outcomes, delivering predictable ROI through efficient resource allocation, cost reduction, and optimized IT infrastructure investments. This creates a predetermined, fixed-cost component over a defined period — typically five years — with planned cost reductions tied to specific outcomes over time.

In areas like finance and payroll, we improve cost efficiency, contributing to indirect ROI. For example, by implementing technologies like genAI, we help clients streamline operations and achieve significant cost savings with near-immediate payback.

Additionally, we leverage data analytics to monitor performance and measure outcomes in real time, supporting informed decision-making to drive overall ROI.

On the technology side, how does PwC help organizations effectively transform?

Our technology managed services optimize clients' cloud infrastructure and software solutions, improving cost efficiency and enhancing data strategies.

We also help clients leverage AI for validation and analytics, enabling them to process large

volumes of historical data to identify patterns and better fill data gaps; this is particularly valuable to mitigate risks in finance, legal, tax compliance, and financial crime detection.

Our services also include integration of emerging technologies such as machine learning into existing workflows, fostering innovation and agility. This holistic approach ensures that organizations can adapt quickly to market changes and drive sustainable transformation.

How does PwC collaborate with clients to manage compliance and risk concerns?

Our compliance services cover financial crime prevention, including transaction monitoring, anti-money-laundering, and “know your client” processes — adhering to the highest industry standards. We manage third-party risk and conduct essential control testing, which are resource-intensive and require ongoing attention.

By overseeing compliance reviews and internal audits, we allow clients' IT teams to concentrate on strategic initiatives rather than operational burdens. PwC follows strict service-level agreements and strives to ensure timely delivery at the highest quality. This frees organizations to focus on core and value-added activities without compromising compliance.

In addition, we leverage advanced analytics to enhance risk assessments and monitoring capabilities — helping organizations manage compliance challenges and take a proactive approach to risk.

Discover how PwC Managed Services can help your organization deliver improved business outcomes. [Click here for more information.](#)



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