6 Considerations When Selecting a Managed Service Provider

Learn the essentials to make a confident choice.

IT environments are increasingly complex and time-consuming to manage, especially for small to medium-sized companies. It's often challenging for these businesses to plan and manage the dizzying array of technologies that change rapidly.

An experienced Managed Service Provider (MSP) can help deliver a streamlined IT environment, so your team can focus more on strategic and business-critical activities. Even better, MSPs can help improve operational efficiency by 45% to 65%, among many other benefits.

If you're thinking about choosing an MSP, here are six key factors to consider.

1. What is their scope of service?

An MSP won't just fix an outage and disappear until your next issue happens. The best MSPs are technology partners that understand your business and help you plan for your short- and long-term objectives.

As part of that process, some MSPs will even perform a complimentary in-depth IT evaluation and risk assessment. They will pressure-test your system, identify gaps and weaknesses, and recommend any new services needed – all before you ever sign a contract with them.

Look for an MSP that offers concierge-level service you can count on for all your technology needs, from running the day-to-day aspects to IT strategy, lifecycle management, cloud and remote working requirements, future planning, and much more.

Another factor to consider is their service model. To maximize the value of your investment and billing predictability, choose an MSP that charges by the employee instead of by device, which can add up fast. You'll also want a company that offers a robust customer service portal to manage requests, resolution, and other communication.

2. How responsive are they?

You don't have time to wait for support after a data outage, ransomware attack, or other major incident. You need 24/7 service with a dedicated IT support person managing your IT environment.

Your IT team needs the technical chops to resolve problems but also be able to clearly communicate with you in simple terms – you're not an IT expert, after all.

Also, select an MSP that monitors your IT service for cybersecurity threats, network problems, and other potential issues to proactively resolve them.

3. What's their onboarding process?

Onboarding is one of the most critical parts of working with an MSP – it's also one of the biggest perceived pains. Excellent communication is the key to a smooth experience. Your MSP should clearly explain the process and timeline while using a systematic approach to onboarding.

Another crucial feature of a good MSP is relationship-building from the start. You want to meet the team you'll be working with before the engagement kicks off, so everyone gets to know each other.

4. Will they grow with your business?

Your MSP should be able to scale with your business – that means understanding your big-picture goals and proactively guiding you to the right services. Think of them as a long-term advocate for your company.

For instance, what if your company expands rapidly due to a merger or acquisition, or what if you're considering a digital transformation for all your offices? Look for a partner that can guide you with speed and agility, addressing strategic plans and executions when and how you need them.

5. What are their technical qualifications and expertise?

With an ever-changing and complex IT environment, you want an MSP with a comprehensive understanding of your unique technology needs. Ask about their compliance expertise, industry certifications, and ongoing training requirements.

For example, they should have a deep understanding of the latest security requirements to ensure your employees and assets are protected. That means proactively monitoring computers, applications, and other services for the latest release updates. A trusted MSP will always be in communication with your team and stay on top of any vulnerabilities and threats.

6. Do they have excellent references?

An MSP might tell you they have great service and qualifications, but you should do your own research by checking referrals, reviews, and testimonials. Trust is a vital part of a strong MSP partnership.

Besides online research, an industry-standard key measurement tool is the Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT). You can see for yourself customers' authentic experiences and feedback on timeliness, responsiveness, accuracy, and other factors. This will help tell the genuine story of the MSP's customer successes.

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Customer service is at the heart of our approach.
See how we combine technical expertise and concierge-level service.

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