

15 Questions to Ask Your Managed IT Service Provider

1. WHAT IS THEIR BUSINESS CULTURE?

If possible, interact with several people inside the business, and not just your sales rep. Being able to talk with several of their employees lets you have a good glimpse of the company culture, and if you think this culture fits well with your business.

3. WHO ARE THEIR PARTNERS?

No managed IT service provides every service perfectly themselves, and many partner with other firms or contractors for specialty services. Knowing who these partners are gives you a glimpse of the quality of the provided work.

5. DO THEY HAVE REFERENCES IN YOUR INDUSTRY?

If they are providing managed IT service for any length of time, they should have references. These references are valuable in providing their experience with the company, both good and bad. Make sure they understand your industry and workflow, a CPA firm and a Doctor's office do not operate the same.

7. WHAT CORE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE DO THEY MANAGE?

If your business relies on a specific piece of IT equipment, then you should find an IT service that is equipped to handle that software and hardware.

2. CAN THEY GROW WITH YOUR BUSINESS?

A company's staff size is not directly related to their level of service, but it has an impact on it. Sometimes larger companies only service larger clients, and sometimes smaller companies won't have the resources for larger clients. Even though the staff number is not a magic answer, it helps you see if it is a good fit for your business.

4. WHAT IS THEIR BUSINESS VISION AND GOALS?

A company without a clear vision or mission often does not have a clear identity as a company, and sometimes they do not know the direction they are going. A company's vision, mission, and goal helps you see the long term direction the company is going.

6. WHAT ARE THEIR STRENGTHS?

Most managed IT service providers have a market niche where they excel. This niche might be healthcare, government, accounting, law, construction, and many more. If an IT provider's niche doesn't line up with your business, it doesn't mean they don't provide good service, but having the two line up is advantageous.



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8. WHAT KIND OF DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN DO THEY OFFER?

Don't assume that just because they are a managed IT service, all of your data and programs are automatically backed up and ready to be restored. Make sure the company has a clear backup and restoration plan in case of failure.

10. WHAT SERVICES ARE INCLUDED IN THEIR PACKAGE?

Most managed IT services offer a variety of sales and customer packages depending on your needs and business. It is important to know what service is included in the package you want. How often do they send you reports, how do you contact them, what is their average response time; these and other service questions need to be asked.

12. DO THEY LISTEN TO YOUR BUSINESS GOALS?

Managed IT services which only focus on their company are difficult to trust. However, a provider who intentionally listens to your company's goals and future vision shows they are willing to help your team and business grow.

14. HOW WILL THEY SAVE YOU STRESS AND TIME?

This might be the most important question of them all; after all, if a managed IT service is not able to make your life and business easier to manage and run, then you shouldn't be talking with them. The answer to this question tells you their overall strategy and approach to solving your problems.

9. HOW DO THEY HANDLE IT AUTOMATION?

With today's technology, a large portion of IT monitoring and issues are done automatically and with automation. However, not all automation is created equally, and you need to make sure your IT provider is using technology that handles automation as expected.

11. HOW WILL THEY HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW?

Obviously, their main goal is having your IT running smoothly and correctly, but you also need to ask them how they plan to help your business keep growing.

13. WHAT WAS A SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE THEIR COMPANY OVERCAME?

It may seem strange to ask a company to brag on themselves, but hearing a challenge they overcame provides helpful clues. You learn about their staff's teamwork, ability to stick to a problem, dedication to their customers, and much more.

15. WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DECIDE TO END THE RELATIONSHIP?

This is not a fun question to ask or answer, but it is important to think about what happens to your IT, data, and software if you ever switch to a different Managed IT service. No customer likes being neglected if they switch providers, and a company with a clear off-boarding plan in place puts your mind at ease.

