

How to Choose the Right Managed IT Provider for Your Business

A Practical Checklist for Small Businesses

Choosing an IT provider is one of the most important decisions a small business can make. The right partner helps prevent problems, protect your business data, and support your long-term growth. The wrong provider only shows up after something breaks.

Use this checklist to evaluate any Managed Service Provider (MSP) - including us.

Section 1: Proactive vs Reactive

- Do they proactively monitor your systems 24/7?
- Do they manage updates, patches, and security automatically?
- Do they provide regular reports on system health and risks?
- Do they have a documented onboarding process?

If the answer is no, you may be hiring a break-fix technician, not a strategic partner.

Section 2: Security & Protection

- Do they require Multi-Factor Authentication for critical systems?
- Do they implement modern endpoint protection (not just basic antivirus)?
- Do they manage and monitor backups?
- Can they clearly explain how your data is protected?
- Do they help reduce risk, not just respond to incidents?

Security should be built in, not added later.

Section 3: Business Continuity

- Can your business recover quickly from ransomware or hardware failure?
- Are backups tested regularly?
- Can files be restored quickly if deleted accidentally?
- Is your data stored in more than one secure location?

If your provider cannot explain your recovery plan clearly, that is a red flag.

Section 4: Strategic Partnership

- Do they meet with you regularly to review technology plans?
- Do they understand your business goals?
- Do they recommend improvements before problems occur?
- Do they communicate clearly in non-technical language?
- Do they help you budget and plan for future technology needs?

A true MSP should think about your business growth, not just your devices.

Section 5: Responsiveness & Trust

- Do they have clear response time commitments?
- Do they answer the phone when you call?
- Do they explain issues clearly and respectfully?
- Do you feel comfortable asking questions?

Technology is personal. Trust matters.

Warning Signs of a Poor IT Provider

- No documentation
- No security plan
- No monitoring tools
- No regular communication
- Only billing when something breaks
- Cannot explain what they actually manage

The right IT partner helps you:

- ✓ Prevent problems
- ✓ Protect your business
- ✓ Plan for growth
- ✓ Sleep better at night

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