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The **10-Point Checklist**  
You Need to Review  
Before Selecting a  
Technology Provider

Carefully selecting an IT company to work with is a mission-critical job. After all, consider what IT controls for your business: Data, revenue, productivity, loss control, and ultimately, it impacts your bottom line.

You need to know you're working with a company you can trust to look out for your interests. How? Review our 10-point checklist for selecting a new managed service provider (MSP) and ensure you're comfortable with the answers you get from the IT support team you're considering trusting with your money and your business' reputation.



### **1. How experienced is their staff?**

The number of years the business itself has been operational isn't important, but you want to ensure that the members of their team are experienced. The main project leader for the team should have at least three to five years' experience in the IT industry. The more experience they bring to the fold, the better it is for you.

### **2. What kind of experience do they have with the technologies that you rely on?**

Ensure that they have documented experience with the technologies that matter most to your business.

It could be working with technologies and systems from vendors such as Microsoft, Apple, and Cisco. If the MSP you're evaluating doesn't have the credentials servicing the technology vendors you predominantly use and count on, it ought to be a warning sign you need to continue your search.

### **3. Ask for references, testimonials and case studies.**

You wouldn't hire on a new staff member without checking their references. So, don't treat a potential MSP partner any differently. Ask to see existing client testimonials and case studies that you can read. Furthermore, ask for contact information for their existing clients so you can query them about their experience working with that MSP. A worthwhile technology partner should have nothing to hide.

### **4. Ensure they have a clear and immediate contact policy.**

It's important to know that you can reach out to your IT support provider whenever you need assistance day or night. Make sure their policies on IT support match your hours of operation and beyond. Know precisely how and when you can contact them for help, as well as what you should expect from them in terms of their response time. There are 24 hours on the clock, not eight.

### **5. Will they customize their services to fit your needs?**

You should never be locked into a cookie-cutter plan. Your needs are unique, and you need the flexibility to have a plan designed to meet those needs. Their offer of a basic plan is fine, but how flexible they are to customizing those plans specifically to match your business's needs? If they aren't willing to meet your needs, move on.

### **6. Security, security, security.**

Your chosen MSP needs to conform to the same regulations you do – HIPAA, SOX, PCI, etc. By protecting your data from unauthorized access, malware, and unexpected disasters, and meeting the regulatory compliance standards you are legally obligated to meet without fail, they are deeply involved in the privacy and security of your and your clients' data. Don't accept shortcuts to save a few bucks.



## 7. Have they worked with other businesses in your industry?

Though all businesses are unique, you will have similar needs to others in your industry. If the MSP you're evaluating has worked with other companies that operate in the same industry that your company does, they will understand your operational requirements, and they won't hesitate to become a primary resource to help you use technology to improve your daily operations.

## 8. Beware of technobabble.

A significant part of the job of a trusted technology partner is to deal with all the details pertinent to the sustainability and advancement of your business. That's one of the many things you're paying them for. Don't be distracted or bogged down by geek-speak. Be critical. If they don't talk to you using plain language and concisely explain to you and your team everything you need to know in terms of what you will get out of the technology solutions they're recommending, and how to make use of them, that isn't good enough.

## 9. Ask how they plan to stop or minimize your IT downtime.

The biggest drag on any company in the modern age is the amount of downtime caused by technology-related issues. Frankly, it's a business killer. Why? Because it will destroy your company's good reputation if you can't deliver what you promised to your clients. Put simply, downtime is inexcusable. Your MSP partner should have proactive solutions in place like monitoring and preventative maintenance to flag and avert catastrophic technology blackouts well before they happen.

## 10. Find out what their core values are.

Ultimately, you want to develop a long-term relationship with your IT support partner. To do that, you need to know what kind of people they are and what the culture of that organization truly is.

Claiming to be a cutting-edge firm with respect to communication, integrity, and transparency is one thing – living and breathing it is another matter altogether. How do they treat their staff? Are their employees motivated, empowered, dedicated personnel? Or are they merely going through the motions to earn a paycheck?



The technologies you deploy and your IT infrastructure is intended to help your business succeed by keeping your clients happy. It shouldn't be the reason you lose business. Ever.

If you have concerns about your technology infrastructure and services, talk to us. Spade Technology is New England's premier small-to-mid-sized business technology provider, with the experience and testimonials to back up our claims.



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