



IT SERVICE PROVIDER

CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT IT SUPPORT PARTNER

If you want an IT company that supports your organization's success, choosing the right partner is very important. Whether you're reviewing your existing technology or looking for new solutions to extend your company's capabilities, choosing the right partner is critical. We've created this checklist to help you evaluate your options and find the right match.

1) A face-to-face meeting

Outsourcing to an IT support partner isn't like a blind date – you *can* go and see them before you commit! And indeed, you should.

Meeting your potential team reassures you that they are people you can communicate with, that they are professional, and that they will treat you with the respect you deserve.

2) A process of getting to know your business

Most of us would be put off a potential partner who pretends to know us completely. Just because you remind them of their ex doesn't mean they know who you are. And the same goes for your IT support partner. They should have a process of getting to know you, your business, your needs, worries, ambitions, etc.

Following this process, you will be confident that a potential IT support partner 'gets' your business and are truly aligned. They will also give you better advice and support to help you get to where you want to go.

3) The knowledge and experience to suit your business

They might have the gift of the gab, but do their skills actually match up to what you need? This is where we see a lot of companies run into problems: they find a reputable IT support partner, who are professional and talk the talk, but they just don't know what they are doing with your IT system. Perhaps they're experts in VMWare when your system runs only Hyper-V, or maybe they're focused on business continuity when your business priority is security. If their knowledge and experience do not suit your business needs, then they are next to useless.

4) Proactive support

There are two types of IT support partners in the world: those who are proactive and those who aren't. If you find the familiar routine of downtime each month comforting then you might be fine with an IT support partner that isn't proactive. If you would like your IT systems to actually improve so issues don't keep cropping up time after time, then you will want to opt for a proactive partner.

Proactivity means going out there and finding and deploying solutions to problems that haven't happened yet. In that way you experience less downtime, not more.

5) Flexible, 24/7 support (online, on the phone and on-site)

You could have the most experienced, knowledgeable, proactive IT support partner, but if they aren't available when you need them then what good are they really?

For any other quality on this checklist to be worth anything at all, your IT support partner needs to be available 24/7 by phone, online, and on-site. Only then will you be able to avoid costly downtime!