

## 4 Critical Questions to Ask When Choosing an Outsourced IT Provider



Managed services providers (MSPs) offer significant benefits, including improved security, enterprise-level expertise and up-to-date technology without prohibitive capital expense. But not all MSPs deliver the same level of service. Make sure to ask the right questions when choosing an outsourced IT provider.

Businesses who report dissatisfaction with their current IT provider list response time as the number one reason for changing providers. Additional top reasons for moving to a new provider include cost and competency. Doing your homework in key areas will help to ensure that you find the right fit for your business needs.

### 1. What Response Time Will You Guarantee?

A reputable MSP will guarantee a response time when addressing issues. Typically, guaranteed response times vary according to the level of support purchased and the priority level of the problem. For instance, for critical issues, an MSP may guarantee a response time of 15 minutes. For a medium priority issue, one or two hours may prove more likely.

Your service level agreement (SLA) should specify response times and include measures to hold the provider accountable for meeting them. Keep in mind that response time generally refers to the time in which a technician will respond to your call, not the time to fix the problem.

## 2. What Support Options Do You Offer?

In addition to response time, have a detailed conversation with potential IT providers about how they deliver support. Many providers offer multiple levels of support, allowing you to choose according to your needs and budget. Be sure you know what your support contract includes, as well as what it does *not* include.



For instance, managed services should include [24/7 monitoring](#) and support. And, while today's cloud environment allows for detailed remote monitoring, some problems require on-site technicians. Will the provider send a technician onsite if needed? And if so, will that result in additional charges?

Also, when choosing an outsourced IT provider, ask questions about support processes, ticketing systems, and procedures. An experienced provider should have advanced support technology and standard procedures for handling various situations. For instance, about their communication procedures and how they troubleshoot issues.

Additionally, ask potential providers to explain their processes for proactive maintenance, security testing and monitoring, backups and [cloud services](#). Vague answers that suggest simply "we cover all that" might indicate a lack of experience or expertise.

## 3. What Do These Services Cost?

Partnering with an MSP involves an investment. In many instances, that investment will save money down the road. However, before choosing an outsourced IT provider, make sure you know how and when you will be charged. This will help you to avoid future surprises.

For instance, many providers offer tiered support systems that involve a flat monthly fee. Look at the details of what services each tier includes. Does your desired service level only include a specific number of support tickets each month? Can you add or remove services with relative ease?

#### 4. What Expertise Do You Provide?

IT needs vary from one organization to another. Consequently, the “one size fits all” concept does not apply to MSPs. Once you have identified your organization’s IT needs, look for a provider that offers the competencies that meet those needs. This will involve looking under the hood before you buy.

In addition to the expertise and partnerships providers list on their websites, look at their job ads. These will highlight the hard and soft skills they hire for in the professionals who will support your systems.

*For example, in addition to top technical skills, eMazzanti screens for a good work ethic and customer service patience and dedication by seeking candidates who worked during high school.*

Additionally, choose an outsourced IT provider with substantial experience in your industry and with proven longevity. Highly-regulated industries such as healthcare and banking place a heavy demand on IT providers to help ensure [regulatory compliance](#).



#### Take the Pain Out of Choosing an Outsourced IT Provider

eMazzanti knows that your business success depends on exceptional IT implementation and support. Consequently, we provide customized, 24/7/365 managed services to meet your needs. For 20 years, we have supported organizations in multiple industries with comprehensive IT services, including [cyber security](#), [managed network services](#) and more.

Call us for a consultation. Ask all the detailed questions. More importantly, talk to our customers to gain a sense of the success we can bring to your organization.