



GET MORE INSIGHTS ON OUR
TOP 20 QUESTIONS TO ASK
WHEN CHOOSING YOUR
MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER



IT SERVICES BUYER'S GUIDE

A GUIDE FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT
MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER

OVERVIEW

Digital acceleration prompted businesses to adopt new available technologies such as analytics, mobile-first, and cloud. Implementing all these advancements can result in a complex IT ecosystem due to multiple platforms, different data, sources, and compatibilities. When managing this hybrid environment, businesses must factor in IT budgets, shooting OpEx, and recurring costs. For one reason or another, adapting technologies is not digital acceleration per se unless organisations can work seamlessly, and maximize the benefits.

Over the years, businesses changed significantly with the pandemic, international conflicts, and economic regression. Hence, IT demands, and systems become harder to maintain and deliver. Functions and business processes are now more crucial than ever especially if done in-house.

Whatever business size, a managed service provider can be an efficient, and beneficial solution to streamline your IT strategies. Moreover, an external service is a valuable option for businesses to focus more on critical issues and strategic growth.

This IT Services Buyer's Guide aims to provide a high-level overview of technological evolution in business. At the end of this document, there will be clear expectations and criteria to help you employ a better IT service provider for your organisation.

Drive or Support Your IT Strategy

At the advent of cloud computing, it is important to have a great IT strategy in place. Indeed, having an IT strategy is necessary for every company today, since it tells how to create utmost value out of the acquired IT assets. Furthermore, it defines the direction the IT team wants to pursue.

IT strategy is a framework that will support the business process and be a viable reference for short and long-term business decisions. It puts a vision into action while covering IT support, hardware procurement, IT budgeting, standard operating environments, software automation and IT security.

Some of the IT strategy plan include having an IT asset inventory from hardware to software. It also defines where the IT site environment will live – whether on-premise, cloud, or hybrid. Moreover, it touches on security and government requirements such as firewalls, antivirus, perimeter networks, password management, disaster recovery and regulatory standards and compliance. The strategy must also have information on hosted servers, devices and interfaces.

This framework will serve as a roadmap for the IT team to create organisational value. Managed IT services providers can create and customise the IT strategy according to the organisation's plan. They have the expertise and know the best practices to implement in order to support your IT and organisational goals.

Ensure Qualifications, Skillsets and Experience

Although there are a number of Managed Service Providers in Australia, each of them has varying levels of expertise and experience.

Industry best practices and certifications can help businesses qualify and choose the fitting IT service provider. Here are some of good qualities to set a good MSP apart.

Firstly, they have an existing partnership with global brands. Nothing says reputation better than the global playing field. Hence, if the Managed IT Service Provider is partner with Microsoft, HP, Dell or Cisco, then it is a guarantee that only the most relevant technology is implemented.

Industry-based qualifications such as (Information Technology Infrastructure Library or ITIL) is a good indicator that the IT Service Provider adheres to detailed practices on all of their IT activities.

To add, the MSP staff are also granted with certifications that can boost confidence because they are knowledgeable on their work.

Businesses must also ensure that MSP candidates are using industry-grade tools for critical processes such as remote support and ticketing.

Service Competencies and Expectations

Aside from the industry qualifications, the organisation must also be equipped with proper knowledge on service competencies and expectations.

Since organisations are expected to innovate rapidly, an IT service provider must also be agile and operate according to technology standards.

They must be able demonstrate experience with networks that have various moving parts such as servers, databases, multiple sites, telephony and remote access.

Moreover, they must guarantee that various hardware and software solutions are compatible with each other. Producing a seamless workflow within the environment - from laptops, monitors, and docks, to servers, cloud, and solutions, as a result.

Skill sets, experience and industry qualifications are all important because outsourced IT service providers are also expected to oversee the whole digital architecture of the business. This means that their scope must be beyond the basic requirements.

Examine the core competencies and experience of the MSP and carefully assess their capability before drawing the contract.

It is crucial to have an idea on their performance and calibre as their service will fare for many years and will drive business growth.



Proactive Methodology

Ask about the IT provider's philosophy on service delivery. Does it take a more proactive or reactive approach to deliver IT services?

A proactive approach assumes that risks have already been identified and removed through ongoing maintenance efforts; in contrast, a reactive approach views problems as issues that only occur after they have struck – such as after a systems failure or security breach has occurred. Ask what resources the IT service provider has in place for monitoring and resolving potential issues before they become problems. Avoid employing MSPs with break/fix solution.

Whether it is the need to recover from an unplanned outage, minimize the probability of unwanted events from happening, or simply make better use of information technology to support business needs, an IT service provider must drive solutions that can mitigate risks and costs.

Responsive Service Level Agreement

The IT industry has been experiencing rapid and continuous changes in terms of security, technology, and requirements over the past decade. Indeed, businesses cannot sustain themselves without IT solutions nowadays.

Thus, any IT service provider must strategically combine advanced technical skills with business insights and a passion for customer service, through a fast and comprehensive service level agreement.

An IT service provider must have a responsive service level agreement that comprises of wide-range of managed services, sophisticated help desk outsourcing and a critical incident monitoring plan.

With a responsive service level in place, businesses are assured that problems are being addressed and resolved in the quickest and most effective manner.



Business Continuity Ready for IT Transformation

Most IT managers place high importance on making sure that business activities continue even in the most unforeseen crises. That is the reason why it is essential to look for a managed service provider that has a business continuity plan.

An IT-focused plan that addresses key areas such as IT infrastructure, people and data communications, legal and regulatory issues, facilities, locations, key suppliers, customers and financials.

It's crucial to find a reliable managed service provider who is knowledgeable about business continuity and can support any current disaster recovery, while collaborating to test the plan at the same time.



Strong Support for Multiple Vendors

IT service providers must have at least proven experience utilizing and communicating with different vendors in varying cloud, or hybrid conditions.

Even more, an Outsourced IT Provider should maintain reputable accreditations and certifications that guarantee availability and transparency on IT improvements.

Provides Financial Stability and Confidence

Strategic partnership when done with a reputable IT service provider can bring not just significant financial results, but also better business culture, productive workflows, and profitable processes.

Ask the IT Service Provider whether they can produce reliable financial reports, analysis, and quantified metrics. Today, customer feedback scores, testimonials and reference site visits are the best predictors of successful partnerships.



CHEAT SHEET

TOP 20 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING YOUR MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDER

After learning the qualifications of a prospective IT service provider, here are some direct questions to ask the candidates. These are industry-based questions that each organisation will find beneficial.

ON BUSINESS QUALITY

01

What services do you provide?

02

How big is the staff we will work with?

03

Can you help us build an IT roadmap to support our business goals and objectives?

04

What are the IT best practices you follow?

05

Do you have an experience with the similar industry as ours?



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ON TECHNICAL PROCESS

- 06** What is the scope and limitation of a typical service agreement?
- 07** Do you have cloud and on-premise support options? How do you backup data?
- 08** What is the required length of term for agreement?
- 09** Can you help us establish a disaster recovery / business continuity plan?
- 10** What are your guaranteed response times for differing types of IT issues?

ON SERVICE QUALITY

11

How will you improve our company's efficiency?

12

What is your company structure? Who are the different teams that will be servicing our company?

13

What do you do internally, and what do you outsource?

14

What are your options for maintaining appropriate privacy measures and data back-up/retention in line with the Australian Privacy Principles?

15

Does your company have the capacity to determine any gaps in cybersecurity and propose a range of solutions for this?



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ON PRICING, OFFERS, AND OTHERS

16

What is included in the contract price?

17

Are you able to help with purchasing and setting up new hardware, ready for use?

18

What level of transparency and communication can we expect?

19

How will you support our exponential growth in the future?

20

Do you have recent customer references, case studies, or testimonials to share?

DO YOU CONSIDER US TO BE THE **RIGHT** **IT SERVICE PROVIDER** FOR YOU?

As an Australian-owned and operated IT Service Provider, Empower IT Solutions understands Australian business operations and needs.

Facilitating IT developments for over 15 years, we have built reputation anchored on service quality and real-impact on numbers.

Our customer-driven focus and delivery of the right solutions to our customers has made us the preferred Managed IT consultancy for Australian businesses.



ABOUT

Empower IT Solutions is an Australian-owned and operated Managed Information Technology company. We provide scalable outsourcing IT solutions including software development, cyber security, managed IT and cloud-based services for businesses in Australia.

"For over 15 years we've helped Australian businesses manage, protect, and grow."

Our business began nearly two decades ago with three professional software and system engineers joining forces wanting to make a difference in the way businesses use IT. At that stage, we already had over 30 years of experience in the IT industry.

Since then, we have expanded to include more professionals in engineering and strategic thinking, all committed to solving and advising on business IT problems. As a team, we focus on demonstrating how and why technology can increase business productivity, improve efficiency, and keep costs down.

Our reputation has been built on our quality of service, having a real impact on the advancement and application of technologies. Key technology partnerships, insight-driven experience and use of the latest innovative technologies allow us to tailor business solutions that actually suit your business needs.



Empower IT Solutions

Phone: 1300 797 838

Email: sales@empowerit.com.au

Head Office

Level 6, 1 Wentworth Street
Parramatta NSW 2150 Australia

CBD Office

Suite 1, Level 36, Gateway Tower 1 Macquarie Place
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

empowerit.com.au