

5 Things to Look for in a Managed IT Service Provider

by Kraft Kennedy

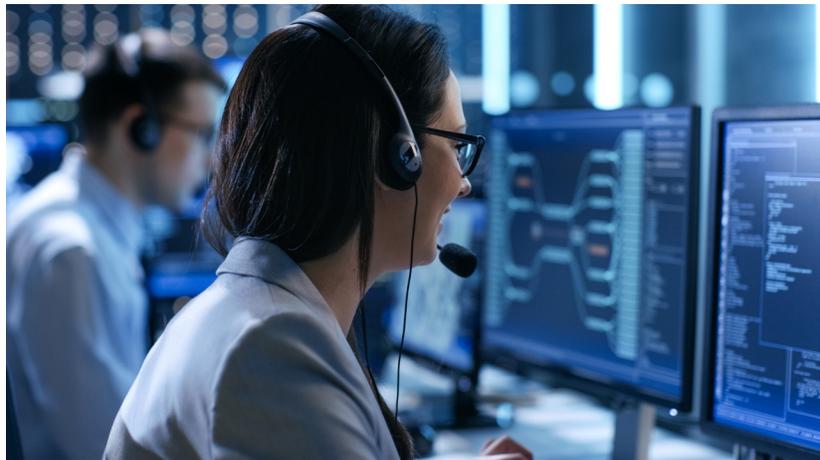
Are you in the process of searching for a managed IT service provider, or questioning whether you've partnered with the right one?

Here are five things you should look for.

1. 24/7/365 service

Whether it's a client calling from another time zone, a deadline that has the whole team up late, or the necessities of work-life balance, many organizations need round-the-clock IT. Your provider should honor that reality.

- Look for a managed services company that can **respond quickly to IT issues whenever they arise**. You shouldn't have to worry about locked-out documents, spotty remote access, or outages in the middle of the night, when you



can least afford technical issues.

- Ideally, your IT partner should offer **continuous performance monitoring** of your network and servers, so they can remediate outages before they become disruptions.
- Support should also be available **remotely, by phone, or in person as needed**. Look for flexible support plans that fit the needs of the modern company.

2. Communication and issue tracking

Have you ever felt that IT support was wasting your precious time by transferring you between technicians, making you repeat the story behind your issue?

Communication is the cornerstone of every good relationship. Here's what it should look like between you and your managed IT service provider:

- **Dedicated Team:** Look

for a provider that will assign engineers specifically to your account. This way, they will get to know you and your firm, take accountability for your issues, and easily keep track of them for seamless, white-glove service.

- **Responses and updates:** Transparency is key. A managed services provider should share with you its triage system, as well as expectations for response and resolution times. Your dedicated analysts should keep

you apprised of the status of your issue as they work to resolve it so that you don't have to wonder or chase anyone for an update. Modern managed IT providers also offer a webpage where you can easily check the assigned severity and status of your issues.

3. Subject-matter expertise

Sometimes technical issues require deep excavation. The generalists who field (and usually resolve) incoming tickets have an impressive

breadth of skills. But who can they turn to when issues require specialized knowledge?

Look for a partner that has a well-established escalation path, so your technology needs do not run into "dead ends." The right team escalates issues internally to certified experts in the platforms organizations typically rely on:

- Microsoft Exchange
- Office 365
- Windows
- Document management systems
- Cybersecurity



4. Microsoft Premier Support

Some IT providers have invested in a special relationship with Microsoft that allows them to offer clients Premier Support. This is a non-negligible perk, especially if you run Microsoft cloud platforms.

- **Faster Response Times:** Twice as fast, actually, than standard Microsoft support. The Premier expectation is one hour for critical issues, two for urgent, and three for those that have a minimal impact (as opposed to two-, four-, and eight-hour times for non-Premier customers).
- **Fast Escalation:** Issues go to Level 3 engineers or higher within Microsoft. Premier Support essentially allows you to skip the line.
- **Root-cause analysis:** Get to the bottom of your issue and prevent it from happening again.

5. Security operations center (SOC)

Security is crucial. Partnering with a managed



IT service provider that can also supply a comprehensive list of prevention and remediation services is a wise decision that is likely to prove cost-efficient. The majority of organizations do not have the resources to build out a round-the-clock security center on their own. Look for:

- Certified security analysts on staff
- Intrusion detection
- 24/7/365 security monitoring and log scanning
- Anti-virus and malware protection
- Managed backups and firewall
- Mobile device management
- Vulnerability scanning
- Endpoint tracking
- Incident remediation.

Hopefully the above guidelines help you on your search.

Get in touch with us to discuss how you can upgrade your IT services.

We offer strategic guidance and commitment-free month-to-month plans.

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