



# How to Choose a Managed Services Provider

## Finding Peace of Mind

If you're outsourcing your IT services, you need to find a MSP you can trust. A technology partner with the experience, expertise and skills to manage your technology infrastructure. Whether you're considering an MSP for the first time, or thinking of making a change, it's important to know the factors to consider when choosing an MSP. Here's a look at what Bleuwire™ thinks is a great way to start.





## ► Infrastructure

Providing world-class IT services requires having a solid infrastructure in place.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- Do they have a state-of-the-art operations center?
- Do they operate that center themselves?
- Do they provide a redundant system designed to ensure reliability?
- Do they guarantee 99.9% uptime?
- Has they shared their comprehensive methodology for disaster recovery?
- Do they monitor backups 24/7/365?
- Do they provide on-site, voice and web-based support?

## ► Cloud

Your MSP has to know its way in, around and over the Cloud. That's how you'll be able to leverage the full value of cloud computing.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- Does the MSP offer private, public and semi-private clouds?
- Will it implement full and hybrid cloud architectures?
- Can it support every use case: Infrastructure (IaaS), Platform (PaaS) and Software (SaaS) as a service.?
- Are its services easily scalable ?
- Does it support physical and virtual environments?

## ► Client Support

An MSP's technicians, engineers and other staff should take pride in delivering service that delights. Most important—make sure you'll have a dedicated account manager who will be with your business for the long haul.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- Are all levels of support available 24/7/365?
- Do they perform inventory and management of all IT assets?
- Is there proactive network and systems management in place?
- Are their data center and help desk in operation ?
- Does they offer a range of flexible Service Level Agreements (SLAs)?
- Can they promise turnaround time for SLA-based services that start at 30 minutes?
- Does they provide a remote help desk, including after hours?
- Will they deliver standard and emergency onsite support?
- Can you submit support tickets over the Web?
- Is there instant escalation of emergency issues?
- Are their performance reports easy to understand?
- Does they invoice with predictable monthly charges?



## ▶ Security

Don't lose sleep worrying about the security of your IT assets. Demand a comprehensive range of security services.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- ▶ How do they protect data?
- ▶ What if they fail on their protection promise?
- ▶ How do they prevent unauthorized access?
- ▶ What are their backup and disaster recovery processes and systems?
- ▶ Is your data isolated from that of their other clients?
- ▶ Will they perform regular audits to assess network security?
- ▶ Will they be responsible for optimizing your network performance?
- ▶ Do they provide proactive critical patch and security alerts and updates?
- ▶ Do they protect against viruses, spyware and malware?
- ▶ Are there network-based intrusion detection systems (IDS) and instant threat-detection alerts?
- ▶ Will they handle network configuration management, including backups?

## ▶ Maintenance

A proactive approach to maintenance keeps your IT assets up to date. That's how you get the most out of your IT investment.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- ▶ Do they offer service and warranty contracting?
- ▶ Will they optimize desktops and servers?
- ▶ Will they handle software installation?
- ▶ Do they enforce corporate desktop policy?
- ▶ Do they provide SQL and Exchange maintenance?
- ▶ Are they responsible for network and VPN access administration?
- ▶ Will they configure and maintain your Wireless Application Protocol (WAP)?

## ▶ Reporting

You deserve to know what's going on with your IT. Make sure your MSP regularly delivers easy-to-understand reports that can help guide your business planning.

Ask the MSP if they report on all of these:

- ▶ Network health
- ▶ System activity
- ▶ Operating systems
- ▶ Software licenses
- ▶ Backup activity
- ▶ Disk utilization
- ▶ Patch updates
- ▶ Service tickets
- ▶ Machine summary



## ▶ Vendors

There's a lot that goes into managing vendor relationships, from reviewing invoices and evaluating new providers to negotiating terms and coordinating multiple vendors. Your MSP should be able to take these responsibilities off your plate.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- ▶ Do they manage broadband service vendors?
- ▶ Do they manage phone service vendors?
- ▶ Do they manage copier and printer vendors?
- ▶ Do they manage software and hardware vendors?
- ▶ Do they manage Web and email hosting providers?

## ▶ Projects & Planning

Having project management expertise can help your MSP formulate and execute key components of your long-term IT strategy.

Ask the MSP these questions:

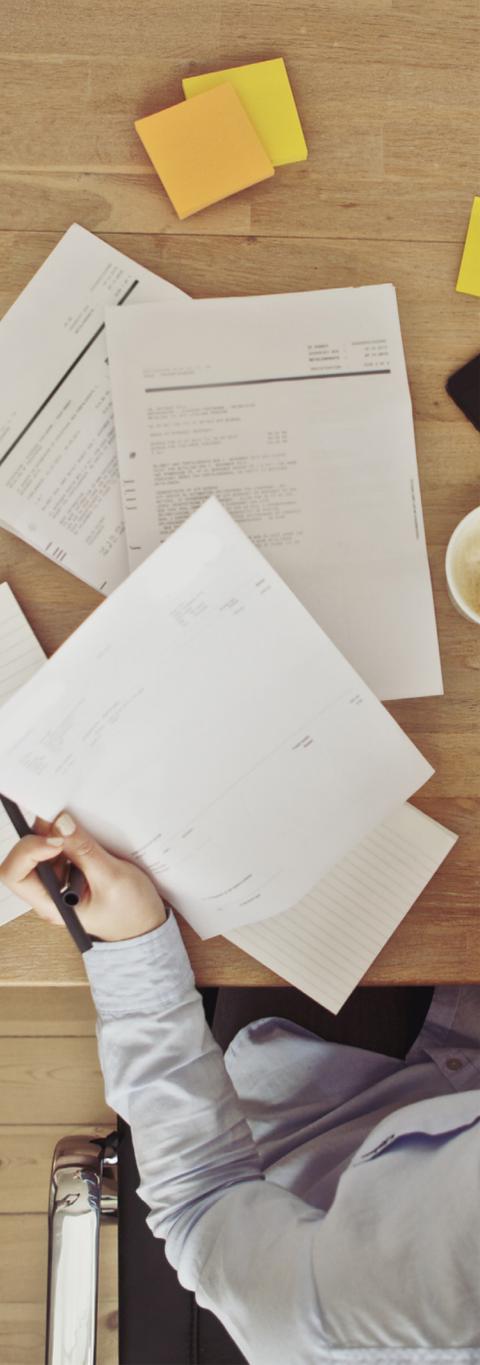
- ▶ Will they take on specific areas or tasks?
- ▶ Will they allow you to easily add or cut back on services?
- ▶ Does they perform needs analysis and management of security, risk and disaster recovery?
- ▶ Will they create a technology roadmap with periodic updates?
- ▶ Will they perform project research and proposals?
- ▶ Do they provide guidance regarding financial budgeting and forecasting?
- ▶ Do they perform yearly technology audits?

## ▶ Deployments & Scaling

Your MSP should be able to get your IT assets up and running (including a deployment timeline guarantee) and scale your resources as your company's needs grow.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- ▶ What is their performance promise and guarantee?
- ▶ How quickly will they respond to RFPs?
- ▶ Will they perform platform capacity planning?
- ▶ Can they consult on deployment issues?
- ▶ Do they offer custom implementation services?



## ▶ Contracts

The way an MSP structures its plans, plan tiering, fees and services can make all the difference between a one-size-fits-all and a perfect fit.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- ▶ Do they have tiered service plans?
- ▶ Do they have tiered SLAs?
- ▶ Do they have minimum or maximum fees?
- ▶ What are their terms of payment?
- ▶ Can they handle a totally custom project and contract?

## ▶ Company Certifications

Certifications really matter in the IT world. Make sure your MSP demonstrates strong technical expertise through certifications.

Ask the MSP these questions:

- ▶ On what hardware are they certified?
- ▶ With what software are they certified?
- ▶ Who do they have partnerships with?
- ▶ What certifications do their employees have?

## ▶ One More Question: Are You Ready to Take a Next Step?

If your IT infrastructure is getting harder to manage and more expensive than you'd like, it's definitely time to consider turning it over to a first-caliber MSP. In this paper, we've shared some of the questions to ask every MSP, but it's really just the start. Let's talk.

## ▶ About Bleuwire™

Located in Miami, Florida, Bleuwire strives to provide customer-first solutions that minimize the headaches you get from managing your IT and improve the way you use technology. As your local technology provider, we get to know our customers on a personal level, and your problems become our problems. That's why we implement the bleucare difference in every service we provide.

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