

# C-Levels IT Buyers Guide



IT NETWORK  
SOLUTIONS

# What You Should Expect To Pay For IT Support For Your Business

How To Sort Through The Confusion And Complexity Of  
IT Services Companies' Contracts, Services And Pricing  
To Avoid Hiring The Wrong One

## **Read this executive guide to discover:**

- ☒ The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.
- ☒ A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you when buying IT services; learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.
- ☒ Exclusions, hidden fees and other “gotcha” clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.
- ☒ 5 ways “cheaper” IT firms hide the TRUE cost of their services in their contracts.
- ☒ 25 critical questions to ask your IT support firm BEFORE signing an agreement.

## **Provided as an educational service by:**

Abdul Hassan, CEO

IT Network Solutions, LLC

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# Never Ask An IT Services Company, "What Do You Charge For Your Services?" Instead, Make Sure You Ask, "What Will I *Get* For My *Money*?" And Know What To Look For And What To Avoid



From the Desk of:  
Abdul Hassan, CEO  
IT Network Solutions, LLC

Dear Colleague,

If you are a C-Level executive currently looking to outsource some or all of your IT support, this report contains important information that will be extremely valuable as your search for a reliable and competent firm you can **trust**.

One of the most common questions we get from new prospective clients calling our office is "What do you guys charge for your services?" Since this is such a common and important question – and a very important one to address - I decided to write this report. Additionally, there are 3 key reasons why choosing an IT company solely based on fees – or even considering price as one of the top factors – can lead to overpaying, even when their initial pricing seems cheaper, and can expose your organization to extreme frustration and unnecessary risk. These reasons are:

1.

Unlike most industries, there is no such thing as "standard" pricing for IT services companies, even though most of the services appear to be the same. That's why it's impossible to compare IT providers on their fees alone. In this report I'll explain the most common ways IT services companies' package and price their services, and the pros and cons of each, so you can make an informed choice.

2.

There are a few "dirty little secrets" about IT service contracts and SLAs (service level agreements) that "cheaper" IT firms use to make their fees seem more affordable, but which actually put your organization at significant risk for cyber-attacks. Almost no C-Level knows what to look for, what questions to ask, or the severe consequences of cutting corners on critical areas like backups, cybersecurity, compliance, and disaster recovery. This lack of awareness is how these "cheaper" firms get away with offering seemingly lower prices. It is CRUTIAL that you understand this, and I'll explain it to you.

3.

I wanted to educate C-Levels on how to pick the **right** IT services company for their specific situation, budget and needs based on the **VALUE** the company can deliver, not just the price, high OR low.

In the end, my purpose is to help you make the most informed decision possible, so you end up working with someone who helps you solve your problems and accomplish what you want in a time frame, manner and budget that is right for you.

Dedicated to serving you,  
**Abdul Hassan**, CEO  
IT Network Solutions

# About The Author

My name is Abdul Hassan, CEO of IT Network Solutions, LLC, and a veteran IT specialist and network engineer with over 30 years of experience in the IT services industry. I have collaborated with local and federal government agencies and over 500 businesses across more than a dozen industries, ranging from small startups to multinational companies.

I am also a commercial pilot with extensive experience in flying various types of airplanes. I currently hold FAA Certified Flight Instructor Certificate. I have passion for technology that led me to earn a degree in Electronics Engineering from the City University of New York, followed by a bachelor's degree in Avionics Engineering and Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. In my spare time, I enjoys hiking and learning about new technologies.



In 1996, I joined a local technology company as a network engineer. I earned multiple certifications, including Certified Novell Engineer (CNE), Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE), Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), VMware Certified Professional (VCP), and various others from 3COM, HP, Dell, etc.

During my employment, I noticed that Small and Midsize Businesses (SMBs) often lacked proper technology solutions, putting them at a disadvantage. I was determined to address this gap, I aimed to bring enterprise-grade IT solutions and security to the SMB market.

In August 2000, I founded IT Network Services, later renamed IT Network Solutions. By early 2005, IT Network Solutions had shifted from a break and fix service to managed IT services and support to meet the growing demand for proactive, scalable IT services and to provide our clients with more reliable, long-term solutions that aligned with their business goals. Since then, the company has grown into a full-service managed IT services provider, catering to small to medium-sized businesses and local and federal government entities. IT Network Solutions specializes in pharmaceutical/bio research, financial, legal, engineering, medical, distributions, and commercial real estate development firms. The company is now a well-known Managed Solutions Provider (MSP) delivering enterprise-class solutions to their SMB clients.

IT Network Solutions serves New Jersey and surrounding areas.

# Comparing Apples To Apples: The Predominant IT Services Models Explained

Before you can accurately compare the fees, services and deliverables of one IT services company to another, you need to understand the 3 predominant pricing and service models most of these companies offer. Some companies offer a blend of all 3, while others are strict about offering only one service plan. The 3 predominant service models are:

## Time and Materials (Hourly).

In the industry, we call this “**break-fix**” services. Essentially, you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to “fix” your problem when something “breaks.” The price you pay will vary depending on the provider you choose and the complexity of the problem, but most will be in the \$150 to \$250 range.

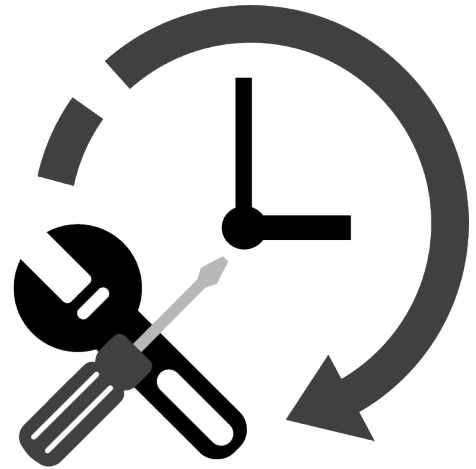
Under this model, you might be able to negotiate a discount based on buying a block of hours. The scope of work ranges from simply resolving a specific problem (like fixing slow WiFi or resolving an e-mail problem) to encompassing a large project like a software upgrade, implementing cyber protections or even an office move. Some companies will offer staff augmentation and placement under this model as well.

Similar to this are value added reseller services. VARs typically do IT projects for organizations that have internal IT departments. The term “value added” reseller is based on the fact that they resell hardware (PCs, firewalls, servers, etc.) and software, along with the “value added” services of installation, setup and configuration. VARs typically service larger organizations with internal IT departments. A trend that has been gaining ground over the last decade is that fewer VARs exist, as many have moved to the managed IT services model.

## Managed IT Services (MSP, or “Managed Services Provider”).

This is a model where the IT services company, called an MSP, takes on the role of your fully outsourced IT “infrastructure.” That includes things such as:

- Troubleshooting IT problems.
- Setting up and supporting PCs, tablets, Macs and workstations for new and existing employees, both on-site and remote.



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- Installing and setting up applications such as Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, SharePoint, etc.
- Setting up and managing the security of your network, devices and data to protect against hackers, ransomware and viruses.
- Backing up your data and assisting in recovering it in the event of a disaster.
- Providing a help desk and support team to assist employees with IT problems.
- Setting up and supporting your phone system.
- Monitoring and maintaining the overall health, speed, performance and security of your computer network on a daily basis.
- Cybersecurity

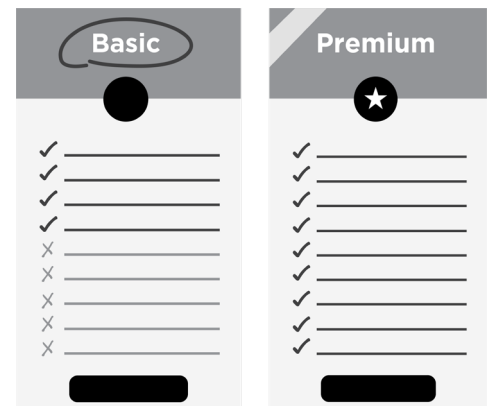
In addition to managing your IT, a good MSP will provide you with an IT Roadmap and budget for necessary projects to further secure your network and improve the stability and availability of critical applications, as well as ensure that your IT systems are compliant with various data protection laws (HIPAA, FTC Safeguards, PCI, etc.) and that your cyber protections meet the standards on any cyber insurance plan that you have.

These projects are not included in the routine, day-to-day maintenance and are typically planned out in advance, based on the growth of your organization, your risk tolerance, operations, unique business model, etc.

## Vendor-Supplied IT Services.

Many software companies and vendors will offer pared-down IT support for their customers in the form of a help desk or remote support for an additional fee.

However, these are typically scaled-back services, limited to troubleshooting their specific software application and NOT your entire computer network and all the applications and devices connected to it. If your problem resides outside of their specific software or the server it's hosted on, they can't and won't help you and will often refer you to "your IT department." While it's often a good idea to buy some basic-level support package with a critical software application you use to run your business (often referred to as a "line-of-business" application), this is not sufficient to provide the full IT services, cybersecurity, backup and employee (end-user) support most businesses need.



As a small or midsize business looking to outsource your IT support, you are most likely to end up having to choose between two service models: the managed services and "break-fix" models. Therefore, let's dive into the pros and cons of these two options, and then the typical fee structure for both.

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# Managed IT Services Vs. Break-Fix: Which Is The Better, More Cost-Effective Option?

The advantage of break-fix services is that you only pay for IT support when you need it, without being locked into a monthly or multi-year contract. If you're not happy with the service you're getting, you can change providers easily. If you're a micro-business with only a few employees, very simple IT needs where you don't experience a lot of problems and don't host or handle sensitive data (medical records, credit cards, Social Security numbers, etc.), break-fix might be the most economical option for you, but not from systems security and maintenance perspective.



However, the downsides of break-fix services are many if you're NOT a micro-business and are attempting to grow in revenue, staff and clients, or if you handle sensitive, "protected" data. The 6 big downsides are as follows:



1. **Break-fix can be very expensive** when you have multiple issues or a major problem (like a ransomware attack). Because you're not a managed client, the IT company resolving your problem will likely take longer to troubleshoot and fix the issue than if they were regularly maintaining your network and therefore familiar with your environment AND had systems in place to recover files or prevent problems from escalating.



2. **Paying hourly works entirely in your IT company's favor, not yours.** Under this model, the IT consultant can take the liberty of assigning a junior (lower-paid) technician to work on your problem who may take two to three times as long to resolve an issue that a more senior (and more expensive) technician may have resolved in a fraction of the time because there's no incentive to fix your problems fast. In fact, they're incentivized to drag it out as long as possible, given that they're being paid by the hour.



3. **You are more likely to have major issues.** One of the main reasons businesses choose a managed services provider is to PREVENT major issues from happening. As Benjamin Franklin famously said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The smart way to avoid disasters and minimize the cost and damage is to prevent them from happening in the first place, not "hope" they won't happen.



4. **You can't budget for IT services** and, as already explained, could end up paying more in the long run if you have to constantly call for urgent "emergency" support.

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5. **You won't be a priority for the IT company.** All IT firms prioritize their contract managed clients over break-fix clients. That means you get called back last and fit in when they have availability, so you could be down for days or weeks before they can address your problem. Further, because you're not under a contract, the IT company has no incentive to keep you happy or even address the root causes of your problems, which can lead to MORE problems and MORE costs.



6. **If no one is actively maintaining the security of your network and data, your chances of getting hacked go up exponentially.** Believe me when I tell you most people grossly underestimate the costs and damage done by a ransomware attack. Your operations shut down and your client contracts, private e-mails, company financials, employee payroll and other sensitive data are in the hands of criminals who won't think twice about e-mailing your list of employees' and clients' confidential information.

Thinking you're fine because "nobody wants to hack us" or "we're 100% in the cloud" is gross ignorance. If you don't have a professional IT company monitor and maintain your company's IT security, you WILL get hacked, incurring significant financial losses, not to mention reputational damage and client losses.

For all these reasons, hiring an MSP to manage your IT environment for an agreed-upon monthly budget is, by far, the most cost-effective, smartest option for most businesses with 5 or more employees, or who handle critical operations and sensitive data and are risk-averse.

## What Should IT Services Cost?



**Important!** Please note that the following price quotes are industry averages based on a recent IT industry survey conducted by a well-known and trusted independent consulting firm, Service Leadership, that collects, analyzes and reports on the financial metrics of IT services firms from around the country.

We are providing this information to give you a general idea of what most MSPs and IT services charge and to help you understand the VAST DIFFERENCES in service contracts that you must be aware of before signing on the dotted line. Please understand that this does NOT reflect our pricing model or approach for your unique situation. We are simply providing this as an educational resource to help you understand the vast differences in price and value.

**Hourly Break-Fix Fees:** Most IT services companies selling break-fix services charge between \$150 and \$250 per hour with a two-hour minimum. In some cases, they will give you a discount of 5% to as much as 20% on their hourly rates if you purchase and pay for a block of hours in advance.



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**Project Fees:** If you are getting an IT firm to quote you for a onetime **project**, the fees range widely based on the scope of work outlined and the complexity of the project. If you are hiring an IT consulting firm for a project, I suggest you demand the following:



- **A detailed scope of work that specifies what “success” is.** Make sure you document what your expectations are in performance, workflow, costs, security, access, etc. The more detailed you can be, the better. Clarifying your expectations up front will go a long way toward avoiding miscommunications and additional fees later on to give you what you REALLY wanted.
- **A fixed budget and time frame for completion.** Agreeing to this up front aligns both your agenda and the consultant’s. Be very wary of hourly estimates that allow the consulting firm to bill you for “unforeseen” circumstances. The bottom line is this: it is your IT consulting firm’s responsibility to be able to accurately assess your situation and quote a project based on their experience. You should not have to pick up the tab for a consultant underestimating a job or for their inefficiencies. A true professional knows how to take into consideration those contingencies and bill accordingly.
- **Documentation and Completion.** Make sure you get a full documentation of the as-built project, copies of the configuration files, admin credentials for new systems, and preferably an updated network map.

**Managed IT Services:** Most managed IT services firms will quote you a MONTHLY fee based on the number of devices, users and locations they need to maintain. According to Service Leadership, the average fee per user (employee) ranges from \$146.08 per month to \$389.73 per month. This variation in fees reflect the level of service provided, including factors such as the comprehensiveness of support, the inclusion of advanced security measures, and the overall scope of IT management offered. As businesses demand more robust and responsive IT services, and the with ongoing inflation and a competitive IT talent market, these fees are expected to rise.



**Obviously, as with any service, you get what you pay for.** “Operationally mature” MSPs typically charge higher fees because they are far more disciplined and capable of delivering cybersecurity and compliance services compared to smaller, cheaper-priced MSPs.

These MSPs often include CISO (Chief Information Security Officer) services and dedicated account management, have better financial controls (so they aren’t running so lean that they are in danger of closing their doors) and can afford to hire and keep high skilled, qualified technicians vs. junior techs or cheap, outsourced labor.

To be clear, I’m not suggesting you have to pay top dollar to get competent IT services, nor does paying “a lot of money” *guarantee* you’ll get accurate advice and responsive, customer-centric services. But if an MSP is charging on the low end of \$146.08 per employee or less, you have to question what they are NOT providing or NOT including to make their services so cheap. Often, they are simply not providing the quality and breadth of service you would expect.

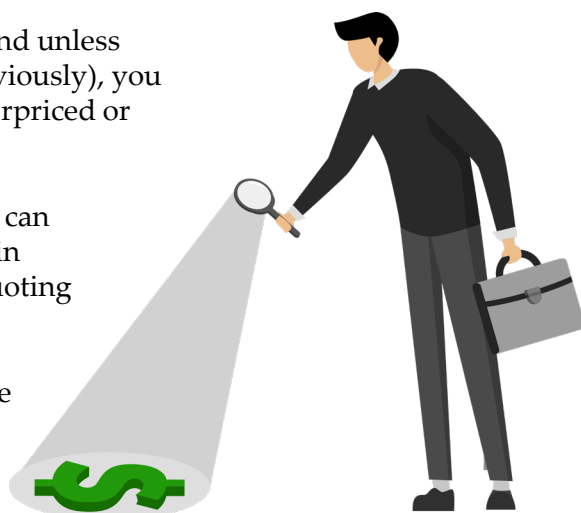
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# 5 Ways “Cheaper-Priced” IT Firms Hide The TRUE Cost Of Their Services In Their Contracts

As we said previously, no two IT services agreements are alike, and unless you are technically savvy (and most C-level executives aren't, obviously), you won't really know if what you're being quoted is insufficient, overpriced or even underquoted.

If you're not careful, the “cheapest” or less expensive IT provider can end up costing you a lot more due to carve-outs and hidden fees in their contracts that they will later nickel-and-dime you over or quoting inadequate solutions that you'll later need to pay to upgrade.

Here are the 5 most common things “cheaper” IT companies leave out of their proposal to make themselves appear cheaper – but those companies are NOT the bargain you might think they are.



As we've highlighted, understanding the true cost of IT services goes beyond just the initial quote. Often, these 'too good to be true' offers come with vague service level agreements and ambiguous terms that leave critical support out of scope. Without the right expertise, it's easy to overlook these crucial details, resulting in unexpected downtime, data vulnerabilities, or compliance issues that could have been avoided with a more comprehensive, albeit initially higher, service plan.

## 1 Grossly Inadequate Compliance And Cybersecurity Protections.

A ransomware attack is a significant and devastating event for any business; therefore, you must make sure the IT company you're talking to isn't just putting a basic (cheap) antivirus software on your network and calling it done. This is by far the one critical area most “cheaper” MSPs leave out.

Antivirus is good but woefully insufficient to protect you. In fact, insurance companies are now requiring advanced cyber protections such as employee cyber awareness training, 2FA (2-factor authentication) and what's called “advanced endpoint protection” just to get insurance coverage for cyber liability and crime insurance. We provide those standard in our offering, so not only do you greatly reduce your chances of a cyber-attack, but you also avoid being denied an important insurance claim (or denied coverage, period).

## 2 Inadequate Backup And Disaster Recovery Solutions.

Make sure your IT company includes daily backups of your servers and workstations, as well as CLOUD APPLICATIONS such as Microsoft 365, Google Workspace and other line-of-business applications, such as your CRM data, client data, etc. That's because online applications do NOT guarantee to back up your data (read the small print in your contract and you'll be shocked). Further, your backups must be immutable, which means they cannot be corrupted by a hacker. Many insurance companies now *require* immutable backups to be in place before they insure against a ransomware or similar cyber event that erases data. Be sure to ask your IT company if that's what they quoted you.

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**3****Carve-Outs For On-Site And After-Hours Support.**

This is another area that takes many business owners by surprise: all after-hours and on-site visits might involve an extra fee. We include ALL of this in our complete agreement, so you aren't nickel-and-dimed for every request, but you need to make sure you understand what is and isn't included in the service agreement you're signing.

**4****Nonexistent Vendor Liaison And Support.**

Some IT firms will charge you hourly to resolve issues with your phone system, ISP, security cameras, printers and other devices they didn't sell you but that still reside on the network (and give you technical problems). As a client of ours, you get all of that INCLUDED, without extra charges.

**5****Cheap, Inexperienced Techs And No Dedicated Account Managers.**

Many of the "cheaper" MSPs will hire techs under a 1099 agreement or find cheaper, less experienced engineers to work on your network and systems. Obviously, the more experienced and knowledgeable a tech is on networking and, more specifically, cybersecurity, the more expensive they are. Make sure the company you are outsourcing to has a team of certified, full-time engineers with extensive experience in both networking and cybersecurity.

Further, smaller MSPs can't afford dedicated account managers, which means you're depending on the owner of the company (who's EXTREMELY busy) to pay attention to your account and look for problems brewing and critical updates that need to happen, upgrades and budgeting you need. Good account management includes creating and managing an IT budget, a custom roadmap for your business and review of regulatory compliance and security on a routine basis to make sure nothing is being overlooked.

**Buyer Beware!** In order to truly compare the "cost" of one managed IT services contract to another, you need to make sure you fully understand what IS and ISN'T included in the SLA you are signing up for. It's VERY easy for one IT services provider to appear far less expensive than another UNTIL you look closely at what you are getting.

The SLA should define the following:

- What services the MSP is providing in clear terms.
- Guaranteed response time to a problem (both minor and major outages).
- What fees are extra (like on-site fees, after-hours support, etc.).
- Contract terms and renewals.
- Cancellation terms: specifically, how do you get out of the contract if they are not delivering the services promised?
- Liability protection, both for them and you.
- Payment terms.

But the BEST way to avoid having a problem is to pick the right MSP to begin with.

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The following are 25 questions to ask your IT services provider that will clarify exactly what you're getting for your money. Some of these items may not be that important to you, while others (like response time, adequate insurance and cybersecurity and compliance services) may be critical. Make sure you fully understand each of these items before making a decision about who the right provider is for you; then make sure you get this IN WRITING.

## 25 Questions You Should Ask Your IT Services Firm Before Signing A Contract

### Customer Service:

#### Q1 How do you request support?

**Our Answer:** When you have an IT issue you need help with, how do you get support? Do you have to put in a service ticket via your PC? Can you call in to a dedicated help desk or do you have to send an e-mail? If they require you to enter a ticket, what do you do when the Internet is out, or your laptop or PC isn't working? Make sure they explain exactly how they handle IT support requests.

At our company, we provide exceptional support by offering three convenient options: PC, email, and phone. We answer phones live in 20 seconds or less, ensuring you get the help you need promptly. Whether you prefer to reach out via PC or email, or need immediate assistance over the phone, we have a dedicated team ready to assist you. Our commitment to quick response times and multiple support channels ensure that you're never left in the lurch, even if you encounter issues with your Internet or equipment.



#### Q2 Do you have a written, guaranteed response time for working on resolving your problems?

**Our Answer:** The #1 frustration we hear from business owners about their current IT company is "They never return our calls" or "I have to wait forever to get someone to respond to a problem." Obviously, if you're paying for support, that's unacceptable.

That is why we put our commitment in writing and back it with detailed proof of our response times. We make sure every support request is handled within our promised timeframes, and we offer transparency through regular reports that verify our adherence to these standards. Your time is valuable, and we're dedicated to delivering prompt and reliable service you can count on.

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**Q3**

**Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek-speak) or do they come across as arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?**

**Our Answer:** Our technicians are trained to have the “heart of a teacher” and will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms. Just look in the client comments section of this report to see how our clients rave about our team of techs dedicated to supporting you.

**Q4**

**Do they create an IT Roadmap and budget and meet with you quarterly to review it?**

**Our Answer:** We conduct quarterly strategy meetings with our clients to look for areas of high risk (such as cybersecurity, compliance, unstable systems, old equipment, etc.) as well as new ways to help improve employee productivity, lower costs, increase efficiencies and align IT with your business goals. Most MSPs don’t offer these fractional CIO services, don’t know how to put together an IT budget and Roadmap, and simply offer basic help desk support and some maintenance, NOT strategy.

**Q5**

**Do they bill you properly and provide invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?**

**Our Answer:** Another complaint we hear from new clients is over billing. Either the IT company forgets to invoice you for something, then hits you with a giant bill to make up for months of incorrect billing, or they invoice you so randomly with confusing bills that you don’t really know what you’re paying for. We provide detailed invoices that clearly outline what work was done, why it was necessary, and when it was completed, so you never have to guess about your charges. Additionally, we meticulously double-check our invoices for accuracy before sending them to you, ensuring that your billing is both transparent and correct.

**Q6**

**Do they have adequate insurance to protect YOU?**

**Our Answer:** Since your IT company is directly maintaining and supporting your critical data and IT infrastructure, it’s extremely important that they carry cyber liability and errors and omissions insurance to cover any damages (and costs) they might inadvertently cause to you. If they fail to carry insurance, it’s YOUR liability. Don’t be afraid to ask to see their coverage.

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**Q7**

## If you need or want to cancel your service with IT company, how does this happen and how do they offboard you?

**Our Answer:** It's important to carefully review the cancellation terms in your contract. Unfortunately, many IT firms lock clients into long-term agreements with significant cancellation fees and may even resort to legal action if payments are withheld.

At our company, we believe in earning your trust, not holding you hostage. If you're ever dissatisfied with our services, you can easily cancel your contract without penalties or disputes. Our "easy out" agreements push us to consistently exceed your expectations, ensuring we retain your business through quality service, not contractual obligation.

**Q8**

## Is your help desk local or outsourced?

**Our Answer:** Be cautious, as smaller IT firms often outsource this critical function. This means you could end up with a technician who is unfamiliar with your network, previous issues, and personal preferences—or, even worse, someone who lacks the necessary qualifications. This can lead to recurring problems, longer resolution times, and the inconvenience of having to explain your situation to new technicians repeatedly.

Fortunately, we assign a dedicated technician to your account who will become well-acquainted with your company, your preferences, and your history. When you work with our local help desk technician, you'll always have someone who knows your system inside and out, ensuring quicker resolutions and a more personalized experience.

**Q9**

## What is not included in your managed services agreement?

**Our Answer:** One common oversight that many IT companies fail to clearly explain is what **isn't** included in your monthly managed services agreement, which can lead to unexpected charges. Their "all-inclusive" or "all-you-can-eat" packages often come with hidden limitations, and what sounds like comprehensive coverage can quickly result in additional invoices for services you assumed were covered. Whether it's after-hours support, certain software upgrades, or specific hardware issues, these exclusions can add up fast. It's essential to understand exactly what is and isn't included before signing, so you can avoid surprises down the road.

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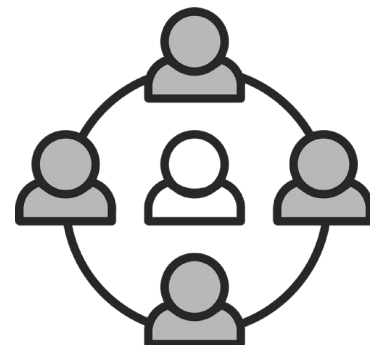
## Q10

### Do they have a dedicated account management team?

**Our Answer:** If they are too “cheap” to offer dedicated account management, you’ll end up frustrated trying to find someone to help you. Often these companies rely on the owner to manage accounts, which means their attention is split, and you may not get the attention you need.

In contrast, with us, you’ll have a dedicated account manager who is fully focused on your needs. As the owner, I’ve structured my team to ensure that you’re never left wondering who to turn to when you need assistance.

Make sure you know what team is going to be dedicated to supporting YOU when you need help.



## Cybersecurity And Compliance:

## Q11

### Do they insist on providing security that meets the FTC Safeguards Rule?

**Our Answer:** The FTC Safeguards Rule has been around for years, but recently has been updated to be far more aggressive in its requirements for all businesses. Penalties are serious – \$100,000 per violation and over \$43,000 per day. If you fail to meet the security standards outlined (and most businesses ARE required to meet these standards) you could be fined by the FTC and sued, creating significant financial costs, tying you up in litigation and lawsuits, not to mention reputational damages.

If your current IT company has not talked to you about this, they are putting you at significant risk. We won’t allow a client to NOT have adequate security measures in place to meet these standards; and one of the ways cheaper MSPs charge less is because they allow their clients to operate without these critical protections. It is not the “bargain” their clients think it is.

That’s why we **implement comprehensive security protocols** that ensure full compliance with the FTC Safeguards Rule, including regular audits, robust encryption, advanced threat detection, and employee training. We take proactive steps to safeguard your business from potential penalties, legal troubles, and reputational damage. Protecting your business isn’t just our job—it’s our commitment.

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## Q12

**Do they provide you with a quarterly report that shows all the updates, security patches and the status of every machine on your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?**

**Our Answer:** Every quarter, our clients get a detailed report that shows an overall health score for their network and the updates we've made to their network. We reassess their security, stability and compliance every quarter to ensure we are doing OUR job in watching over critical operations and data to drastically reduce the chances of a disaster or cyber-attack.



## Q13

**Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written network documentation detailing what software licenses you own, user information, hardware inventory, etc., or are they the only person with the "keys to the kingdom"?**

**Our Answer:** All clients receive this in electronic form at no additional cost. We provide you with access to all your company's IT systems documentation and configuration via a secure online portal. We also perform a quarterly update on this material and make sure certain key people from your organization have this information and know how to use it, giving you complete control over your network.

If your current IT company doesn't provide you with any documentation and they keep you in the dark about what "inventory" you have of equipment, software licenses, system passwords, etc., you are being "held hostage" and should NEVER allow an IT company to have that much control over your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their control as a means of job security, get rid of them (and we can help to make sure you don't suffer ANY ill effects). This is downright unethical and dangerous to your organization, so don't tolerate it!

## Q14

**Do they, and their leadership team, understand regulatory compliance such as the HIPAA, PCI compliance, FTC Safeguards Rule?**

**Our Answer:** We have a deep understanding of regulatory compliance, including HIPAA, PCI compliance, the FTC Safeguards Rule, and other critical standards such as GDPR and CCPA. Our leadership team is well-versed in these regulations and is committed to ensuring that our clients not only meet but exceed these stringent requirements. We stay up-to-date with the latest changes in compliance to protect your business from potential legal and financial risks.

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## Q15

### Have they asked to review your cyber liability, ransomware or crime insurance application to ensure they are doing what is required in your policy for coverage?

**Our Answer:** Many businesses now carry insurance to help cover the costs of a ransomware attack or other cyber fraud case where money is stolen from your organization. HOWEVER, all insurance carriers are now requiring strict cybersecurity protections be implemented BEFORE they will cover you. If your IT company has not talked to you about this, you might be at risk to have your claim denied for coverage due to your failure to meet the cyber standards YOU agreed to in the policy.



If a ransomware attack happens, your insurance company won't simply pay out. They will investigate the matter first to determine what happened and who caused it. If they discover you didn't have adequate preventative measures in place (as outlined on the application, you completed to get coverage) they are within their right to deny coverage.

You might think your IT company is actually doing what is outlined on the policy, but there's a very good chance they aren't. We see this all the time when reviewing potential new clients' networks. One of the things we can do for you in a complimentary Risk Assessment is review this important area of protection and see whether or not you're meeting basic cybersecurity requirements that are in most insurance policies.

## Backups And Data Recovery:

## Q16

### Do they INSIST on immutable backups for your data?

**Our Answer:** The only kind of backup you should rely on is an **immutable backup**, which ensures your backup data cannot be altered or corrupted. This is crucial because ransomware attacks often targets backups, forcing you to pay ransom to recover your data. As a result, many cyber insurance policies now require the companies they are insuring to have immutable backups in place. Any competent IT firm should not only be aware of this but should also strongly recommend implementing it.

## Q17

### Do they insist on backing up your network BEFORE performing any type of project or upgrade?

**Our Answer:** We do, and that's simply as a precaution in case a hardware failure or software glitch causes a major problem.

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## Q18

### **Do they INSIST on doing periodic test restores of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?**

**Our Answer:** A great IT company will place eyes on your backup systems every single day to ensure that backups are actually occurring, and without failures. However, in addition to this, your IT company should perform a periodically randomized "fire drill" test restore of some of your files from backups to make sure your data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency. After all, the WORST time to "test" a backup is when you desperately need it.



We verifying your backups daily and testing them on a regular basis to ensure your data can be restored successfully. These are the lengths we go to for all our clients, including multiple random "fire drill" test restores to ensure ALL your files are backed up and restorable on demand.

Ask your IT provider about the "3-2-2" rule of backups, which has evolved from the "3-2-1" rule. The 3-2-1 rule is that you should have three copies of your data: your working copy, plus two additional copies on different media (tape and cloud), with at least one being off-site for recovery. That rule was developed when tape backups were necessary because cloud backups hadn't evolved to where they are today. Today, there are more sophisticated cloud backups and BCDR (Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery) solutions. Therefore, we recommend three copies of your data with BCDR solution.

## Q19

### **If you were to experience a major disaster, such as an office fire or ransomware attack, or pandemic shutdown preventing you from being in the office, do they have a written plan for how your network could be restored FAST and/or enable you to work from a remote location?**

**Our Answer:** If Covid taught us anything, it's that work-interrupting disasters CAN and DO happen when you least expect them. Fires, floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes can wipe out an entire building or location. Covid forced everyone into lockdown, and it could happen again.



We could experience a terrorist attack, civil unrest or riots that could shut down entire cities and streets, making it physically impossible to get into your office. Who knows what could be coming down the pike? Hopefully, NONE of this will happen, but sadly it could.

That's why you want to ask your prospective IT company how quickly they were able to get their Clients working remote (and securely) when Covid shut everything down. Ask to talk to a few of their clients about how the process went.

All our clients receive a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage them to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office, but at a minimum, their network will be covered should something happen.

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## Q20

### How long it will take them to get your network back up and running in the event of a disaster?

**Our Answer:** There are two important aspects of data backup that many business owners may not fully understand: "fail-over" and "fail-back." Think of it like a power outage—when the power goes out, you "fail over" by switching to a backup generator to keep everything running. Once the main power is restored, you "fail back" by reconnecting to the regular utility company power to return to normal operations.

In the event of a disaster – weather from a ransomware attack or natural disaster – you must have a **fail-over** solution in place so your team can continue working with minimal disruption. This fail-over should be cloud based and locked down properly to prevent ransomware from infecting both the cloud backups and physical servers. Once the crisis is resolved, your data will need to be restored to your on-premise systems, which could take days or even weeks. If the backups aren't managed correctly, recovery might be impossible, and you run the risk of losing your data.

Therefore, it is essential to have a thorough discussion with your IT consultant or firm about how they approach both the **data backup AND disaster recovery**. They should provide a detailed plan outlining their strategy for handling an emergency fail-over, as well as the process for fail-back, which restores your systems and data to their original state – complete with a clear timeline.

In today's fast-paced world, whether the issue is a natural disaster, equipment failure, ransomware attack, or any unforeseen event, your business must be able to fully restore operations, including access to critical data, within **six to eight hours** or less.

We recognize how vital data is to your business, and we know that quickly restoring operations is crucial for your success. That's why, in the event of any disaster, we are confident in our ability to get your network up and running within the required timeframe, minimizing downtime and ensuring a smooth recovery.

## Technical Expertise And Service:

## Q21

### Is their help desk U.S.-based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?

**Our Answer:** We provide our own in-house help desk and make sure the folks helping you are friendly and supportive. We consider this one of the most important aspects of customer service, plus we feel it's important to keeping your data secure.

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## Q22

### **Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in ongoing training – or are they learning on your dime?**

**Our Answer:** Our technicians are required to keep the most up-to-date vendor certifications in all the software we support. Each technician undergoes continuous training and must complete certifications from leading software providers like Microsoft, Cisco, VMware, Linux, and AWS. We also prioritize specialized training to ensure they stay ahead of new technologies and industry best practices, enabling them to tackle complex issues efficiently and effectively. Plus, our hiring process is so stringent, 99% of the technicians who apply don't make it through. (Guess who's hiring them?)

## Q23

### **Do their technicians conduct themselves in a professional manner?**

**Our Answer:** Our technicians are true professionals who are not only polite, but trained in customer service, communication and high standards. They won't confuse you with "geek-speak," make you feel stupid or talk down to you. If they have to be on-site at your office, you would be proud to have them there. We believe these are minimum requirements for delivering a professional service.



## Q24

### **Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line-of-business applications?**

**Our Answer:** We own the problems with all line-of-business applications for our clients. That doesn't mean we can fix faulty software – but we WILL be the liaison between you and your vendor to resolve problems you are having and make sure these applications work smoothly for you.

## Q25

### **When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or do they say, "That's not our problem to fix"?**

**Our Answer:** We feel WE should own the problem for our clients, so they don't have to try to resolve any of these issues on their own – that's just plain old good service and something many computer guys won't do.

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## An Invitation to Connect: Exclusive Offer for You.

I hope this guide has been helpful in offering valuable insights into what to consider when selecting a professional firm to outsource your IT support. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, my goal in sharing this information is to equip you with the knowledge needed to make an informed decision, and to help you steer clear of the unreliable, incompetent, or unethical firms that may tempt you with cheap prices but fail to deliver quality service.

**If you want to partner with an IT company you can trust to do the right thing, the next step is simple:** call my office at (732) 254-2511 and reference this report to schedule a brief 10- to 15-minute initial phone consultation.

You can also go online and schedule the call here: [www.itnsusa.com/book-a-consult/](http://www.itnsusa.com/book-a-consult/)

On this call we can discuss your unique situation and any concerns you have and, of course, answer any questions you have about us. If you feel comfortable moving ahead, we'll schedule a convenient time to conduct our proprietary network assessment to help identify and potential risks or areas for improvement, ensuring your systems are secure, efficient, and aligned with your business goals.

This Assessment can be conducted with or without your current IT company or department knowing (we can give you the full details on our initial consultation call). **At the end of the Assessment, you'll know:**

- Whether or not your IT systems and data are truly secured from hackers and ransomware, and where you are partially or totally exposed.
- Where you may be overpaying or receiving inadequate service and support from your current IT provider or team.
- If your data is *actually* being backed up in a manner that would allow you to recover it quickly in the event of a data-erasing emergency or ransomware attack.
- Areas where you may unknowingly be in violation of data breach or compliance regulations.
- How you could lower the overall costs of IT investments, improving communication, security and performance, as well as the productivity of your employees.

**Fresh eyes see things that others cannot** – so, at a minimum, our free Assessment is a completely risk-free way to get a credible third-party validation of the security, stability and efficiency of your IT systems. There is no cost and no obligation. We are here to earn your trust and demonstrate a far better way to get you the IT services and support you need.

**To Schedule Your Initial Consultation**  
please visit: [www.itnsusa.com/book-a-consult](http://www.itnsusa.com/book-a-consult)  
or call our office at **732.254.2511**



Dedicated to serving you,

**Abdul Hassan, CEO**

IT Network Solutions, LLC

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## See What Other Business Owners Are Saying:

### “ITNS Empowers Our Business Through Exceptional IT Support”

The most significant advantage we've experienced since partnering with ITNS for our IT needs with their managed IT services for our multi-site, multi-state organization, is their **exceptional accessibility and prompt problem resolution**. Their readiness to support, particularly for our senior leadership, means that any IT issues are swiftly escalated and resolved. This rapid support has not only saved time but also ensured uninterrupted workflow, positively impacting our overall operations. Moreover, ITNS's ability to smoothly transition our in-house IT support to an outsourced (third-party) model has really set them apart from other firms. This shift allowed us to eliminate the need for onsite IT support and **significantly reduce costs**.

For anyone considering ITNS as their IT service provider, I would emphasize their dedication to prompt response and issue resolution. **Their commitment to service excellence** instills a strong sense of confidence, which any leader would desire!

– Lenore C., President, Cosmetic Company

### “Unmatched Reliability, Proven Over the Years”

IT Network Solutions has been our lifeline for over a decade. They're not just our IT partners; they're our tech guardian angels. Their team has this uncanny ability to make complex IT issues feel manageable, always showing up with a solution and a smile.

What I love most is how they're always one step ahead. Before we even realize we have a problem, they're often already working on it. It's like having a crystal ball for our IT needs!

Thanks to their round-the-clock support, I sleep better at night knowing our systems are in good hands. They've given us the freedom to focus on what we do best, without worrying about tech hiccups.

If you're looking for an IT partner who'll treat your business like their own, look no further. IT Network Solutions isn't just a service provider; they're the tech-savvy friends your business needs.

– Mukesh B., CFO, Textile Company

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## See What Other Business Owners Are Saying:

### **“IT Network Solutions Made Me Look Like a Hero for Over 2 Decades on More Occasions Than I Care to Admit”**

I have known and worked with Abdul Hassan from ITNS for 19 years. In that time, he has not only proved a valuable resource to the two organizations I have been with, but his level of expertise, patience, and thorough understanding of the business requirements, are unparalleled.

Abdul's level of expertise has not only helped the organization's streamline and run extremely efficient networks, but has, at the same time, raised my level of knowledge and understanding way beyond what I could have achieved by other means. He has gone way above and beyond for me on more occasions than I care to admit and helped me out of seemingly impossible situations – sometimes in the middle of the night -all with the caring and patience that one cannot possibly assign a price tag.

I am proud to have Abdul in my corner, and even more so, to call him friend.

– **Andrew B., IT Infrastructure & Cybersecurity Manager, Small Appliance Manufacturer**

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### **“Your Trusted Business IT Partner”**

From day-to-day support to major upgrades, ITNS has transformed our IT experience. Their seamless process has made technology management a breeze for our firm.

What truly sets ITNS apart is their exceptional help desk. Whenever we reach out, we're met with responsive, kind, and patient staff. They don't just fix problems; they see them through, ensuring we're completely satisfied and informed.

When it came time to upgrade our systems, ITNS was there every step of the way. Their end-to-end support made what could have been a daunting process smooth and worry-free.

For any business looking for reliable, friendly, and comprehensive IT support, I wholeheartedly recommend ITNS. They're not just service providers; they're partners invested in your success.

– **Jennifer M., Practice Manager, Law Firm**



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