How to Choose an IT Provider

(Even If You Know Nothing About IT)

Through a series of questions, you should be able to determine if your potential IT services provider will be a partner or a problem—and how they'll think of you. Here are several important questions to ask potential IT services providers, and why the answers are important.

Background Information

Get the conversation started with the basics. There's no right or wrong answer here, but some answers may help set the tone for follow-up questions.

- ☐ How long have you been in business?
- ☐ How many employees do you have?
- ☐ How many clients do you have?
- ☐ How do you keep up with new technological developments?

The Right Fit

Explore if your company is a good fit for the IT company. If you're an outlier, now is the time to ask how they would be able to support your business. If you aren't the right fit for an IT company, there's no way they'll be the right fit for you.

- ☐ What size company do you prefer to work with?
- ☐ What industries do you specialize in?
- ☐ What percentage of clients do you retain year over year?
- ☐ Why do clients stay or go?
- ☐ Do you support or work with [key program, stack, workflow, or OS]?
- ☐ What is your typical response time?

Experience

Look for answers that include details. Listen to how technical aspects are explained to you. Don't be afraid to ask questions! If they can't communicate technical issues in a way you understand, how will they help you move your business forward?

- ☐ Tell me about a recent cyber threat that you helped a client with. What happens if I suffer a cybersecurity event? How will you protect me?
- ☐ What does day-to-day support look like?
- ☐ Will I get my own dedicated team?
- ☐ What should I expect (onboarding, point of contact, project work) if we choose you?
- ☐ What do services cost, and what does that cost include?
- ☐ What's included in managed services? What's not included? What do I pay extra for?
- ☐ Do you charge extra to come to our office? Can you support my out-of-state branch offices?
- ☐ How often will you review our technology needs with us? Does your service include specifying and acquiring new hardware for me? Does your service include helping me with one-, three-, and five-year infrastructure plans?
- ☐ What kinds of cybersecurity protections do you offer? How are you going to maintain the integrity of my data?

The Clincher

- ☐ What is the #1 job of a systems administrator?

The only acceptable answer is a simple one: to protect and preserve the integrity of client data.

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