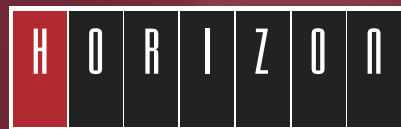


HOW TO CHOOSE A RELIABLE IT SERVICE PROVIDER FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



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INTRODUCTION

When you're a team of one or two working from home, Office365 and basic antivirus and cybersecurity protection may seem adequate. But what if you want to grow your team across geographies and offer in-person, hybrid and remote work? Your cybersecurity liabilities will increase, and you'll need strong IT support that can safeguard your business network from today's sophisticated attacks.

While hiring an IT specialist may seem like the answer to all your problems, we happen to be in the midst of an IT talent shortage. Skilled technicians are in high demand and it can be quite challenging to onboard the right resources with a limited budget.

If you are a small company trying to find its footing in today's competitive business landscape, building an internal IT team can be quite challenging. Luckily, you have the option of hiring an outsourced IT department that can provide you with all the software solutions and technical support you need to run an effective business.

If you're new to the world of reliable, outsourced IT services, read through this eBook to learn about all the benefits your business can experience.



CHAPTER 1

THE BENEFITS OF OUTSOURCING IT SERVICES VS. HIRING INTERNALLY

There's a growing trend today among businesses to hire technology partners to meet their IT staffing requirements. However, some are still on the fence and are unsure whether they should outsource their IT work or keep it in-house.

It's a prevalent misunderstanding that an internal IT team can resolve issues faster than an external IT service provider. On the other hand, an IT service provider can remotely configure, administer, repair and support any form of IT resources that you need help with using next-gen technologies.

Reduce the time you spend on IT upkeep and prioritize hiring an IT service provider that can address all your IT needs. Here are five benefits of hiring an outsourced IT service provider:



MORE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

Outsourcing allows you to onboard a team with the right qualifications, training, certifications and experience to meet the demands of your industry. Rather than relying only on one professional, you gain the skills of an entire technical support team. Having an IT partner who is compliant with government regulations and industry standards will improve accuracy as well as reduce risks and liabilities.



MORE RELIABLE

IT team members with stellar skills are worth their weight in gold. But what if they resign and take their institutional knowledge with them? This could put your business at risk since they were your only source of support who knew your business applications, systems and people inside out. On the contrary, when you outsource, you'll never lose support when a technician leaves your IT partner since a built-in backup is there.





WORRY-FREE

You can focus on running your business instead of debugging technical issues by outsourcing IT responsibilities. When you hire an IT service provider, they provide you with all the software and personnel you'll need so you don't have to go out and search, buy and manage everything yourself. It's simple to use — just plug and play.



PREDICTABLE COST

IT service providers generate predictable monthly bills, so you don't have to worry about things like benefits, bonuses or employee taxes. Your IT partner will take care of everything. This approach to value-based pricing enables them to provide a complete range of IT services at one flat fee instead of charging customers for each service.



ON-DEMAND

When you use an IT partner's on-demand support, you can access a team of experienced engineers and technicians 24/7 to fix your problem in the shortest amount of time possible. And most importantly, they never take a day off.

They serve 365 days a year, with no breaks over the holidays, and carry out continual monitoring. Your ideal provider will have the relevant resources and skills to assist you throughout the year.

IT support that's available 24/7 doesn't have to be expensive. You can choose from full, round-the-clock monitoring to contacting someone when any issue occurs, so you can get the service that suits your budget.

Even if you have a team of existing in-house IT resources, what better approach to maximize their potential than to merge their efforts with outsourced IT support?

A team within your organization can handle the tactical aspects, drawing their insights into day-to-day business operations and requirements, while outsourced IT consultants oversee the development of an effective strategic foundation for long-term growth.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO GET RIGHT-SIZED, ALWAYS-ON IT SERVICES THAT SCALE WITH YOUR BUSINESS

If your business doubled in size tomorrow, would you have the people, processes and technology ready to support that growth? Many small businesses would say no. With plenty of factors involved, there is no simple formula that can give you a sure-fire answer to this.

When you need to stick to a budget, outsourcing is the best possible way to meet your IT needs. This will help you stay relevant within the market without spending a fortune.

IT outsourcing enables small businesses like yours to obtain the services they want at a lesser cost than hiring full-time IT staff. You'll be able to seek IT support only when needed, saving money. This saved money could then be reinvested in the company's future.

Your company can benefit from a strategic, experienced IT partner like us if you need immediate support to keep up with your company's growing needs. We can make sure your company has the proper technical services and solutions in place to assist your employees and customers, whether it's temporary or permanent. Get the proper amount of always-on service whether your business grows or shrinks.



CHAPTER 3

FOUR SERVICES A HIGH-QUALITY IT PARTNER WILL DELIVER TO YOUR BUSINESS

Finding a great company to collaborate with is the first step toward building a successful partnership. Your tech partner should be able to meet your company's needs, assure optimal IT performance and address any developing difficulties straight on.

Let's look at four important services that any strategic IT partnership should provide:



REGULAR ASSESSMENTS

Fixing things when they break isn't enough for an IT service partner to be considered reliable. No business can afford downtime in today's fast-paced environment. You need a technology partner that works closely with you and anticipates your organization's IT needs, so they can set up the right technology resources for your business. Regular assessments and technological modifications are required to reduce downtime and guarantee that your equipment is always operating at its best.



ONGOING MONITORING

Whenever problems arise, your IT partner should proactively respond through routine monitoring or via customer alerts, whether for operating system problems, server hardware failures, infections or antivirus and antimalware tool handling. An IT company that proactively monitors, patches and updates your software keeps your technology updated.



QUARTERLY REVIEWS

Since you probably have a busy schedule, meeting often with your IT partner may not be possible for you. As a result, a quarterly business review is an excellent opportunity to engage with your IT service provider and discuss your successes and challenges. Your IT provider should provide you with an open forum to discuss any bugs or issues with their technology. When an IT partner offers quarterly evaluations, it implies they're committed to helping you reach your objectives.



REGULAR REPORTING TO DEMONSTRATE ROI

Clients expect technology partners to demonstrate their value by providing a high return on investment (ROI). Regular reports to their clientele are one of the finest ways they can accomplish this. Your IT partner should provide you with visual reports on quarterly billing, regular risk assessments and scope of improvement that clearly show their performance.

CHAPTER 4

HOW YOUR IT PARTNER CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE BUSINESS GOALS

Our IT staff is knowledgeable about technology and spends time getting to know your goals and needs as a company. Afterward, they can assist you in selecting and implementing the best solutions that will meet your existing needs and provide the necessary IT platform for your business to grow steadily. By outsourcing your everyday IT support, your IT team can focus on bigger-picture items, like growing your business, instead of handling the day-to-day IT operations.



Here are four metrics a technology partner should focus on to help your business thrive:



TECHNOLOGY ALIGNMENT TO BUSINESS GOALS

Aligning your business strategy and IT environment minimizes obstacles and ensures a smooth ride for your company long into the future, just as aligning your tires ensures a smooth ride in your car. Your IT partner can guarantee that you have the IT infrastructure you need to get there if they know your business goals, the timeline and how you evaluate success.



UPTIME YOU CAN COUNT ON

Every business suffers from downtime. A single power failure, equipment breakdown or security hole can result in huge financial and productivity losses. With fully managed, real-time monitoring and rapid reaction, a skilled IT service provider can proactively assure constant uptime and increase network resilience.



RAPID RESPONSE WHEN ISSUES ARISE

You risk losing crucial information, productivity and money if you don't respond swiftly to issues. You may also be held liable for violating service level agreements (SLAs).

Your technology partner can rapidly fix vulnerabilities and resolve issues. Faster responses reduce the overall impact of events, minimize damage and ensure that your systems and services continue to work properly. Even if the problems are minor and have no long-term implications, a professional IT service provider will make every attempt to resolve them.



EFFICIENCY

When your IT partner understands your company goals, they can prepare for the hardware you'll need, determine what security measures to implement and decide what access rights staff will require. They may also ensure that your IT infrastructure has enough capacity to handle extra traffic before things slow down or cease.

CHAPTER 5

WHY NOT TO CHOOSE A TECHNOLOGY SERVICE PROVIDER ON PRICE ALONE

Be wary of IT service companies who have all the right solutions and messaging but no practical experience or certification to handle unique situations or sophisticated attacks.

Not every IT partner can live up to their claims. Filtering only by price might lead you down a costly road. If your IT service provider lacks expertise and experience, they may neglect critical settings and upgrades, leaving your business open to threat actors.

Here are three mistakes that businesses often commit while choosing an IT service provider:



1-PARTNERING WITH COMPANIES WHO SPEAK IN TECHNICAL JARGON

Some IT service providers explain things in complex technical language that might be difficult for you to comprehend. Ensure that your IT partner has the right resources to explain all facts to your employees in the simplest way possible.



2- NOT CHECKING ON SCALABILITY

You may require different degrees of assistance from your IT service provider depending on the demands of your organization at any given time. If your IT partner doesn't have the right skillset and adequate resources that can meet your business requirements as you grow, you could struggle. Inform your partner of your current company size and the breadth of your activities so that services may be scaled appropriately when required.





3- NOT SPEAKING ABOUT THE COMPANY'S SPECIFIC NEEDS

Never opt for a provider that offers you a one-size-fits-all service plan. Specify your unique requirements to IT service providers to verify whether they have the expertise to offer customized solutions that can meet your business needs.

It's time to find an IT company that understands your unique needs and has your back. Here are a few other things to look for when choosing an IT service provider for your business:

- Have they worked in your industry before?
- Will they perform regular network assessments?
- Will they be able to work with the technologies you already have?
- Will the solutions they offer be scalable?
- Will the solutions they offer be scalable?
- Are any of their solutions exclusive?
- Can they combine your service package into one predictable monthly bill?
- Will they generate real-time ROI reporting? For example, how many hours of downtime are avoided.

CONCLUSION

A good IT service provider should empower you to meet your technology and business needs with the right mix of people, technology and processes. They should provide you with the expert help you need to stay up to date with technological advancements.

Even if you have teamed up with a trusted expert to handle your IT needs, your business can still be vulnerable to security threats. Cybercriminals are always trying to exploit every gap in your system to hack into it and steal your personal information.

If you'd like an IT network health assessment or dark web scan to determine your company's cybersecurity status, contact us today. It never hurts to double-check — an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.