

21 Questions You Should Ask Your IT Services Company Or Consultant Before Hiring Them for IT Support

Customer Service:

Q1: When I have an IT problem, how do I get support?

Our Answer: Requesting support should be easy and convenient. Some IT firms require you to log in to a portal to submit tickets, making the process cumbersome. At Centra Networks, we offer multiple ways to reach us - call, email, or submit a ticket via our portal - so your issue is resolved promptly. Our system tracks, prioritises, and documents all requests to ensure nothing is overlooked.

Q2: Do you offer after-hours support, and if so, what is the guaranteed response time?

Our Answer: IT issues don't follow a 9-to-5 schedule. We offer after-hours support with response times as fast as **1 hour or less** for both standard and emergency issues, such as critical outages. You'll always be able to reach us when you need assistance, even on weekends and holidays.

Q3: Do you have a written, guaranteed response time for resolving issues?

Our Answer: Yes, and it's a vital part of our service commitment. We guarantee a response time of **30 minutes or less** for priority 1 tickets, in writing, during business hours. We also provide detailed reports on our average ticket response and resolution times for full transparency. Be wary of providers that can't offer this.

Q4: Will I be given a dedicated account manager?

Our Answer: Absolutely. Your dedicated account manager will understand your business, goals, and IT environment, ensuring personalised and proactive support. Smaller firms might not provide this, leaving you reliant on reactive service from overstretched owners or junior staff.

Q5: Do you have a feedback system for clients to rate your service? Can I see those reports?

Our Answer: Yes, we actively collect client feedback through a simple thumbs-up or thumbs-down rating system. These scores help us improve and demonstrate the quality of our service. We're happy to share our consistently high ratings with you.

IT Maintenance (Managed Services):

Q6: Do you offer true managed IT services and support?

Our Answer: Yes, we proactively monitor and maintain your IT systems to catch and resolve issues before they become major problems. Our remote monitoring tools ensure your network stays secure, efficient, and operational.

Q7: What is NOT included in your managed services agreement?

Our Answer: Transparency is key. While our managed services cover most IT needs, some items - like major hardware upgrades, new software licenses, or disaster recovery - may fall outside the standard agreement. We'll clearly outline any additional costs upfront, so there are no surprises.

Q8: Is your help desk local or outsourced?

Our Answer: Our help desk is local, staffed by dedicated technicians who know your business and IT environment. Outsourcing can lead to inconsistent service and longer resolution times. With us, you'll always deal with someone familiar with your needs.

Q9: How many engineers do you have on staff?

Our Answer: We have a robust team of full-time engineers to handle your IT needs, ensuring coverage even during staff absences. Our detailed documentation ensures any engineer can step in seamlessly, reducing downtime and frustration.

Q10: Do you provide documentation of our network, and how is it maintained?

Our Answer: Yes, network documentation is standard. We maintain detailed records of your assets, configurations, and credentials, updated constantly. This ensures faster issue resolution and seamless IT support when needed.

Q11: Do you meet with clients regularly as part of the managed services agreement?

Our Answer: Yes, we conduct quarterly meetings to review your IT health, upcoming needs, and overall goals. These discussions focus on business outcomes, not technical jargon, and help align your IT strategy with your growth objectives.

Q12: If I decide to cancel my service with you, what does the offboarding process look like?

Our Answer: Reviewing the cancellation terms in your agreement is essential. Unfortunately, some IT providers lock clients into long contracts with heavy penalties, making cancellation difficult and contentious.

At Centra Networks, we believe in earning your business every day, not holding it hostage. If you're unhappy for any reason, we make it easy to leave—with no hidden fees, disputes, or hard feelings. Our "easy out" agreements ensure a smooth and professional transition while reinforcing our commitment to exceeding your expectations.

Cybersecurity:

Q13: What cybersecurity certifications do you and your team hold?

Our Answer: Ongoing training and up-to-date certifications are vital in staying ahead of cyber threats. If an IT firm can't provide proof of current qualifications or a plan for continuous training, consider that a major red flag.

At Centra Networks, our in-house technicians hold some of the most advanced certifications in cybersecurity. We also prioritise regular training to ensure we're always up-to-date with the latest security practices. After all, your network's safety depends on a team that takes learning seriously.

Q14: How do you secure our employees' devices and PCs to prevent breaches?

Our Answer: The best cybersecurity strategies combine multiple layers of protection. Here's what we employ to safeguard your business:

- **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Adds an extra layer of protection beyond passwords.
- **Advanced Endpoint Protection:** Far more robust than standard antivirus software.
- **Extended Detection and Response (optional):** Provide real time information and feedback on what activities are currently being actioned on the endpoint.
- **Security Operations Centre (optional):** Watch the endpoints 24x7 for any malicious attempts.

Our approach ensures your network is locked down with no compromises. Protecting your data requires using every tool in the arsenal, and we deliver just that.

Q15: What insurance policies do you carry to protect us from potential IT-related risks?

Our Answer: Mistakes can happen, and it's crucial to work with an IT provider that's adequately insured. If something goes wrong—like a technician's error causing downtime, a data breach, or even an accident on your premises—you want to know you're covered.

At Centra Networks, we carry full cyber liability, errors and omissions, and workers' compensation insurance. This ensures that your business is protected no matter what. We're happy to share our insurance details with you for peace of mind.

Q16: Who audits your cybersecurity protocols, and how often is this done?

Our Answer: Even the best IT firms need an external perspective. Professional audits by independent third-party experts are essential for airtight cybersecurity. If your provider doesn't engage in regular, formal audits, it's a sign they might not take security as seriously as they should.

We partner with **Connect Secure** for quarterly audits of our cybersecurity protocols. This commitment ensures our systems—and yours—stay secure against ever-evolving threats.

Q17: Do you have a Security Operations Centre (SOC)? Is it in-house or outsourced?

Our Answer: A Security Operations Centre (SOC) monitors and manages your network's security 24/7. Whether it's in-house or outsourced, having a SOC is non-negotiable for any business handling sensitive or regulated data.

At Centra Networks, we collaborate with a trusted outsourced SOC provider to deliver proactive, expert-level monitoring and threat management, ensuring your network stays secure around the clock.

Backups And Disaster Recovery:

Q18: How quickly can you restore our network after a disaster?

Our Answer: Effective disaster recovery involves two key steps: **failover** (keeping your business running) and **failback** (restoring your systems).

We provide cloud-based failover solutions to minimise downtime. If disaster strikes, we can have critical systems operational immediately and full network functionality restored within **48 hours or less**. This commitment ensures your business keeps moving, no matter what.

Q19: Do you perform test restores of backups to ensure data integrity?

Our Answer: Daily backup monitoring is crucial, but it's not enough. Regular test restores are the only way to guarantee that your data can be recovered when it's needed most.

We conduct monthly randomised "fire drill" restores to ensure your backups work flawlessly. This proactive approach means your files are always safe and accessible in the event of an emergency.

Q20: How would you enable remote work in the event of a disaster or office closure?

Our Answer: If the last few years have taught us anything, it's that disruptions - pandemics, natural disasters, or civil unrest - can happen at any time.

At Centra Networks, we specialise in enabling seamless and secure remote work setups. From cloud-based collaboration tools to remote access systems, we ensure your team can stay productive from anywhere, no matter the circumstances.

Q21: Can you show me your process for onboarding new clients?

Our Answer: A professional onboarding process is critical for ensuring a smooth transition to a new IT provider—especially if the previous one is uncooperative.

We have a documented, step-by-step onboarding plan that covers everything from transferring systems to securing credentials and documenting your IT environment. This process ensures your business experiences minimal disruption. If you choose us, we'll gladly walk you through our onboarding plan so you can see how we work.

Other Things to Notice and Look For:

Are they speaking your language?

A good IT provider won't bamboozle you with technical jargon or make you feel like you're out of your depth. Clear, straightforward communication is essential. The best consultants have the heart of a teacher - taking time to explain everything in plain terms, so you feel confident and informed every step of the way.

Our Promise: At Centra Networks, our technicians are trained to communicate in clear, jargon-free language and ensure all your questions are answered in a way that makes sense to you.

Do they act like true professionals?

First impressions matter, especially when it comes to those working in your office. A professional IT provider should reflect the standards you uphold in your business.

If they show up late, dressed inappropriately, or seem disorganised and unprepared, what does that say about their ability to manage your IT? The way they handle themselves is often a reflection of how they'll manage your business systems.

Our Promise: At Centra Networks, we take professionalism seriously. Our team is punctual, appropriately dressed, and proactive in keeping you informed if unexpected delays arise. We believe reliability and respect are the foundations of any successful partnership.

Do they have experience in your industry?

It's not just about IT expertise; it's about understanding how your business operates. From the software you rely on to the unique challenges of your industry, a good IT partner should have relevant experience.

Our Expertise: With 22 years of experience working with Queensland and national businesses, we understand the complexities of a wide range of industries and can provide referrals to reflect our abilities in your industry.