

The Heartland Business Owners' Guide To IT Support Services And Fees

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

**(And How To Get *Exactly* What You Need
Without Un-necessary Extras, Hidden Fees
And Bloated Contracts)**

Read this guide and you'll 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, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll 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.
- ✓ How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.
- ✓ 21 revealing questions to ask your IT support firm BEFORE giving them access to your computer network, e-mail and data.

Provided as an educational service by:

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Never Ask An IT Services Company,
“What Do You Charge For Your Services?”

Instead Ask,
“**What Services Will I Get For My Money?**”



From The Desk Of:
T. Robin Cole, III
President & Chief Technology Advisor
The Rite Group

Dear Colleague,

If you own a business in the Mississippi River Valley region (from St Louis to Memphis) that is currently looking to outsource some or all of the IT support for your company, this report contains important information that will prove extremely valuable to you as you search for a competent firm that you can **Trust**.

Our company has provided information technology services to businesses in the Mississippi River Valley region for over 56 years now, since 1967. While you may not have heard of us, I'm sure you're familiar with one or more of the businesses who are our clients.

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 question—and a very important one to address—I decided to write this report for 3 reasons:

1. I want an easy way to answer this question and explain to all prospective clients who come to us the most common ways IT service companies package and price their services—and the pros and cons of each approach.

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2. I want to bring to light a few **industry secrets** about IT service contracts and SLEs (Service Level Expectations) that almost no business owner thinks about, or knows to ask about, when evaluating IT service providers that can end up burning you with hidden fees and locking you into a contract when they are unable to deliver the quality of service you need.
3. I want to educate business owners 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 increasing your sustainable competitive advantages,

T. Robin Cole, III
President & Chief Technology Advisor

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About The Author



Robin Cole was introduced to, and he became intrigued with main-frame computers in 1966 as part of his education at Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN, where he earned his degree in Electrical Engineering. In 1967, he moved to New York City to enter New York University's Graduate School of Business. He joined Univac's Sperry Systems Management Division assigned to the design team producing the first automated weapons delivery system for a multi-role combat aircraft. In 1972, he was recruited by F.S. Smithers & Co., a Wall Street trading firm, to pivot his career and begin selling securities to major financial institutions. In 1976, he joined First Boston Corporation as a Vice President-Institutional Sales.

During the years leading into the 1980s, he advanced his information technology mainframe computer expertise which he used to build investment security databases and portfolio analysis tools.

When IBM announced their breakthrough introduction of the first IBM-compatible personal computer on August 12, 1981, he was ready to recognize the emergent innovation. He bought one **that very day** to gain independence from the inflexible constraints of mainframe computing—never looking back, as an early adopter of PCs in finance. After he retired from Wall Street, he began to understand how vastly over-rated the retirement concept is, and vowed he'd never do that again.

Early in his life, he earned his general aviation pilot's license adopting that activity as a life-time avocation. Over the years since (that's been nearly half the time since powered aviation was invented), he's flown throughout every corner of the lower-48. In 2015, the FAA awarded him its Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, recognizing his 50 years of flying. When one compares flying airplanes and operating computer technology networks, many processes, such as planning, controlling processes, critical decision-making, and predictive maintenance, are strikingly similar—producing performance, reliability, safety, and security.

After four decades on the East coast, Robin returned to Cape Girardeau to lead The Rite Group, which his father had founded in 1967, and to modernize its business for service excellence and growth. In addition to his entrepreneurship, Robin is engaged in his community, an active aviator, and a truly proud father of two and grandfather of one.

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The Three Predominant IT Service 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 service models most of these companies fit within. 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.** 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.” Under this model, you might be able to negotiate a discount based on buying a block of hours. The scope of work may be simply to resolve a specific problem (like removing a virus), or it may encompass a large project like a computer network upgrade or move to a new location that has a specific result and end date clarified. Some companies will offer staff augmentation and placement under this model as well.
- **Managed IT Services.** This is a model where the IT services company takes the role of your IT department, and not only installs and supports all the devices and PCs that connect to your server(s), they often also offer VoIP telephone services, video surveillance services, and printer management. They may also offer remote support and on-site support, anti-virus, security, backup and a host of other services to monitor and maintain the health, speed, reliable performance, and cyber security of your computer network.
- **Software Vendor-Supplied IT Services.** Many software companies offer 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 application and NOT your entire computer network and all the applications and devices connected to it. If your problem resides outside the scope of their specific software or the server it’s hosted on, they can’t help you and will often refer you to *your IT department*. While it’s a very good idea to buy a basic-level support package for each critical software application you use to run your business, this is not enough to provide the full complement of IT services and support most businesses need to stay up and running without serious interruptions.

When looking to outsource your IT support, the two service models you are most likely to end up having to choose between are *break-fix* model and the *managed IT services* model. 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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Break-Fix Vs. Managed IT Services:

Which Is The Better, More Cost-Effective Option For You?

You've often heard the famous Benjamin Franklin quote, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I couldn't agree more — and that's why it's my sincere belief that the managed IT approach is, by far, the most cost-effective, smartest option for any small business (typically up to 150 employees). The only time I would recommend the *break-fix approach* (which is classic time and materials) is when you already have a competent IT person or team proactively managing your computer network and simply have a specific IT project to complete. That would be something that your current in-house IT team doesn't have the time or expertise to implement (such as a primary software application upgrade, installing an auto-failover integrated firewall/anti-malware solution, etc.). Outside of that specific scenario, I do not think the break-fix approach is a good idea for general IT support for one very important, fundamental reason: break-fix approach is almost always reactive, relying on you to know specifically what you need and want done even if you aren't an IT expert, and you'll ultimately end up paying for a pound of "cure" for problems that could have easily been avoided with an "ounce" of prevention. And the incentives for an open-ended hourly consultant to fix all your problems and stop nickel-and-diming you are most often absent.

Why Regular Monitoring And Predictive Maintenance Are Critical For Today's Computer Networks

The fact of the matter is, over the past decade computer networks have become dynamic, ever adjusting to frequent updates to all their software and the additions and modifications of enormous stores of digital data, and absolutely, positively need ongoing around the clock monitoring with predictive maintenance on a timely basis to stay reliable and secure. The ever-increasing dependency we have on IT systems and the data they hold — not to mention the *type* of data we're now saving digitally — has given rise to enormous instabilities resulting from: when Line of Business ("LOB") software vendors update their software to new versions that are no longer compatible with your computer platform, more and more frequent software upgrades forced upon you by operating system vendors who arbitrarily impose end of life consequences you cannot otherwise control, and to very smart and sophisticated cybercrime organizations who work around the clock to do one thing:

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compromise your people, your network, your workstations and servers, employing illegal activities and extorting money from you. It's a business to them, and their effective way to suck money out of you.

In most cases cybercriminals' intent is to access financial information and password credentials to rob your bank accounts (or your clients'), or to create fake identities for credit card fraud, or steal your proprietary information, or in recent times, to encrypt your business data and extort money from you in exchange for returning or not disclosing it, etc. In other cases they may want to use your computer network to send illegal spam messages, to host pirated software, to make money with crypto-mining, to spread malware viruses, etc. And some do it just for the "fun" of being able to make computer systems inoperable. Finding joy in being destructive, these criminals work around the clock in teams, constantly finding and inventing new ways to get around your anti-malware software and firewalls; that's why you must remain ever vigilant against their attacks and make systematic improvements to thwart their evolving attempts to invade, damage and destroy.

Of course, this doesn't even take into consideration of other common disasters, such as rogue employees (which almost always surprise and devastate business owners), lost devices containing proprietary information, hardware corruption failures (which are the #1 reason for data loss), fire and natural disasters, interruptions of broadband service delivery, and a host of other issues that at least interrupt if not outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. Then there's regulatory compliance for any business hosting or touching credit card or financial information, medical records and even client contact information such as e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers. There's also cybersecurity insurance underwriters who increase their minimum security process requirements before they'll renew the cyber insurance protecting your business, (or accelerate increases in costs to formerly unheard of premium levels).

Preventing these problems and keeping your systems up and running reliably (which is what managed IT services is all about) is a LOT less damaging and less expensive to your organization than waiting until one of these things happens and then paying by the hour for emergency IT services to restore your systems to working order (in other words, *break-fix*).

Should You Just Hire A Full-Time IT Manager?

In most cases, it is not cost-effective for companies with under 125-150 employees to hire a full-time sufficiently-skilled IT person, because you can outsource this function of your business far cheaper and with a lot less work; and you DO want to hire an experienced IT professional to perform regular maintenance just as you would hire a roofer to replace your roof, an attorney to handle legal matters, or an accountant to prepare your taxes. **And if you truly understand the cost of your TIME and factor in lost employee productivity while waiting for an hourly IT guy to arrive, the fully monitored, predictive maintenance *managed IT service* model is considerably less expensive than any *break-fix* model.**

Why “Break-Fix” Works Entirely In The Consultant’s Favor, *Not* Ever In Yours

Under a *break-fix* model, there is a fundamental conflict of interest between you and your IT firm. The IT services company has no incentive to stabilize your computer network or to resolve problems quickly because they are getting paid by the hour to work on fixing problems; therefore, the risk of unforeseen circumstances, scope creep, learning curve inefficiencies and outright incompetence are all shifted to YOU, the customer. Essentially, the more problems you have, the more hours they bill, and the more they profit, which is precisely what you DON'T want.

Under this model, the IT consultant can take the liberty of assigning a junior (lower-paid) technician to work on your problems, who may take two to three times as long to resolve an issue than a more senior (and more expensive to the consultant) technician, who may have resolved in a fraction of the time. Once you sign a term contract, there is no incentive to properly manage the time of that technician or their efficiency, and there is every reason for them to prolong the project and to find MORE problems than solutions. Of course, if they're ethical and want to keep you as a client, they *should* be doing everything possible to resolve your problems quickly and efficiently; however, that's akin to putting a German shepherd in charge of watching over the ham sandwiches. They counteract the hours they bill by promising to come quickly when your systems go down and you become desperate for them to arrive and help. Not such a good idea.

Second, it creates a management problem for you, the customer, who now has to keep track of the hours they've worked to make sure you aren't getting overbilled; and since you

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often have no way of really knowing if they've worked the hours they say they did, if they are working on the same problem again they already billed you to correct on their prior visit, it creates a situation where you really, truly must just accept they are being 100% ethical and honest AND tracking THEIR hours properly (not all do).

And finally, it makes budgeting for IT expenses a nightmare since these may be zero one month and thousands the next.

What To Look For In A Managed IT Services Agreement And What You Should Expect To Pay

Important! Please note that the following price quotes are industry averages based on a recent IT industry survey conducted on over 750 different IT services firms. We are providing this information to give you a general idea of what most IT services firms 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, which is simply to understand exactly what you want to accomplish FIRST and then customize a solution based on your specific needs, budget and situation.

Hourly Break-Fix Fees: Most IT services companies selling break-fix services charge between \$65 and \$195 per hour with a one-hour minimum – sometimes a 4-hour minimum (and inflation is driving those numbers upward). In most 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, especially if you don't use them, you lose and waste them.

If they are quoting a **project**, the fees range widely based on the scope of work outlined. If you are hiring an IT consulting firm for a project, I would suggest you demand the following:

- **A very detailed scope of work that specifies what "success" is.** Make sure you detail what your expectations are in performance, work flow, costs, security, access, start date, completion date, etc.
- **A budget and time frame for completion.** Agreeing to this up front aligns both your agenda and the consultant's. The bottom line is this: it is the IT consulting firm's responsibility to be able to assess your situation and quote your project based on their experience. A true professional knows how to take into consideration contingencies and bill accordingly.

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Managed IT Services: As a managed IT services firm, we quote you a MONTHLY fee for monitoring your workstations, laptops and servers, for maintenance, back up and user support. In Missouri, that fee is somewhere in the range of \$50.00 to \$800.00 per server, \$65 to \$300 per desktop/laptop and approximately \$20 - \$45 per smartphone or mobile device.

If you hire and sign up for a managed IT services contract, here are some things that **SHOULD** be included (make sure you read your contract to validate this):

- Remote monitoring and management of the computers on your network
- Unlimited Prompt Help Desk Support for all your employees
- Monitoring disk space on workstations and servers
- Monitoring hardware for signs of imminent failure
- Security patches, applied in less than 15 days, for urgent and emerging threats
- Antivirus software, updates and monitoring
- Firewall updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and file integrity confirmation
- Spam-filter installation and updates
- Optimizing systems for maximum speed
- Warranty Protection Monitoring for workstation and server hardware
- Coordination of Line of Business (“LOB”) software vendor maintenance
- Scheduled Business Technology Reviews

The following services may **NOT be included** and will often be billed separately. This is not necessarily a “scam” or unethical UNLESS the managed IT services company tries to hide these separately-billable fees when selling you a service agreement. Make sure you review your contract carefully to know what is and is NOT included!

- Hardware, such as new servers, PCs, laptops, etc.
- Software licenses, yada, yada, yada.
- Project Management of hardware & software installs/major version upgrades
- etc.
- etc.

Warning! Gray areas of “all-inclusive” service contracts. 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 AND the SLE (Service Level Expectation) you sign 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, and especially, what you are not.

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The following are 21 questions to ask your IT services provider that will clarify exactly what Value 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 uptime guarantees) 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.

21 Service Clarification Questions You Should Ask Your IT Services Firm Before Signing A Contract

Customer Service:

Q1: Do they answer their phones live or do you reach an auto-attendant and always have to leave a voicemail and wait for someone to call you back (in a day or two)?

Our Answer: We answer our phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., don't shut down for lunchtime, give all clients emergency after-hours numbers they may call if an urgent problem arises, even on weekends, and give all clients my personal phone number whenever they need to speak directly with me. Why? Because the number one reason businesses become forced to change their IT services provider is lack of response. Waiting interminably for someone to call them back; frustrating beyond belief.

Q2: Do they respond promptly to your calls?

Our Answer: Our standard is we answer your call live to learn about your service requests when we will triage your issues. Our standard is our technicians will begin working on your critical problems within 60 minutes or less, and will begin working on your less critical yet important issues in sequence as soon as 180 minutes.

Q3: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not techno-babbling you into submission), or do they come across arrogantly making 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 non-tech-savvy simple terms.

Q4: Do they consistently (and proactively) offer new ways to improve your network's performance, or do they wait until you have a problem to make recommendations?

Our Answer: We schedule business technology reviews with our clients to look for new ways to help improve their staff's productivity and operational flows, to lower their production costs, to improve their communication and their customers' satisfaction, and resolve any smaller problems arising before they become bigger ones. Our goal is to help our

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clients cost-effectively modernize their technology investments, help them better train their staff to use their technology investments, and to focus on increasing their sustainable competitive advantages.

Q5: Do they provide detailed invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?

Our Answer: We provide detailed invoices that show what work was done, why and when, so you never have to guess what you are paying for. We also double-check our invoices for accuracy before sending them to you.

Q6: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Our Answer: Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to suffer a significant loss, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt while working at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn sure whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions insurance AND with workers' compensation insurance — and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True Story: A few years ago Geek Squad was slapped with multimillion-dollar lawsuits from customers for bad behavior by their technicians. In some cases, their techs were accessing, copying and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers' PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In other cases, they lost a client's laptop (and all the data on it) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line: make sure any IT company you hire proves they maintain adequate insurance to protect YOU.

Q7: Do they guarantee to complete projects on budget?

Our Answer: All projects' scope of work is fully defined from beginning, through testing, to the end, are fixed-priced, and guaranteed to be completed within the scope, and in writing. This is important because many unethical or incompetent computer guys will only quote projects according to time and materials consumed using an open-ended design-build model that keeps you paying as you go. This gives them free rein to discover required steps they left out, to nickel-and-dime you as they want while performing your project after they start and have you over a barrel.

Maintenance Of Your Network:

Q8: Do they insist on remotely monitoring your network 24/7/365 to KEEP EVERYTHING OPERATING PROPERLY? Do they monitor critical security settings, anti-malware definitions, backup processes, update critical security patches? Do they PREVENT PROBLEMS from turning into big, expensive downtime, such as overloaded

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storage drives, phone system interruptions, corrupted or lost data, broadband disconnects, or other disruptive issues?

Our Answer: Yes—our remote network monitoring and management system watches over your network to constantly look for developing smaller problems, security issues ... so we can address them BEFORE they turn into bigger problems and big costs.

Q9: Do they provide you with a report that shows all the updates, security patches, and status of every machine on your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?

Our Answer: Our clients get a detailed report that shows an overall health score of their network and the updates to their anti-virus, security settings, patches and other important network checks (like hard-drive space, backups, speed and performance, etc.).

Q10: Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written network documentation detailing critical network credentials, user information, or are they the only person with the “keys to the kingdom”?

Our Answer: All clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost. 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.

Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have control over you and your company that makes you feel like a hostage. 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!

Q11: Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Our Answer: Yes; and since we keep detailed network documentation (basically a blueprint of your computer network) and updates on every client's account, any of our technicians can pick up where another one has left off.

Q12: When they offer an “all-inclusive” support plan, is it TRULY all-inclusive, or are their “gotchas” hidden in the fine print?

Our Answer: Our “all-inclusive” support plan is just that — all-inclusive. One of the more popular service plans offered by consulting firms today is an “all-inclusive” or “all-you-can-eat” managed services plan. These are actually a good thing because they’ll save you a lot of money in the long run. HOWEVER, make sure you REALLY understand what is and what isn’t included. Some things to consider are:

- Is phone/e-mail help desk included or extra?
- What about moves or adding/removing users?
- Is hardware and/or software included?
- What about 3rd-party software support? (We recommend that this IS included.)
- What if you aren’t happy with their services? Do they offer a money-back guarantee?
- If the hardware and software is included, what happens if you cancel the contract?
- Are on-site backups included? How often?
- Are off-site backups included? How often? To what degree?
- If you have a major disaster, how will your network be restored?
- What about on-site support calls?
- How do they connect home PCs used to access the company’s network? How do they secure these connections?
- How are employees’ home computers anti-malware protected?

Backups And Disaster Recovery:

Q13: Do they INSIST on monitoring an off-site as well as an on-site backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated backups?

Our Answer: We do not allow our clients to use external hard drive backups because external hard drive backups are incredibly easy for hackers to encrypt with ransomware. We make sure all of our clients have immutable backups protected from hackers intrusion and destruction.

Q14: Do they INSIST on confirming the integrity of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?

Our Answer: We perform a daily confirmation all the files sent to the remote data center are accurate and complete to make sure data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency. After all, the WORST time to learn a backup is corrupt is when you desperately try to restore it and restoration fails.

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Q15: 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. We avoid situations where a limb might be sawed off behind you.

Q16: If you were to experience a major disaster, do they have a written plan for how your data could be restored FAST and/or enable you to work from a remote location?

Our Answer: All 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.

Technical Experience And Support:

Q17: Is their help-desk U.S.-based or outsourced to an overseas company whose team speaks English as a second language, or a third party who may not know you?

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

Q18: Do their technicians participate in ongoing training on your providers time — or are they learning on your dime?

Our Answer: Our technicians are required to keep up-to-date in all the solutions we support. Plus, our hiring process is so stringent, 99% of the technicians who apply don't make it through. (You can guess who's hiring them?)

Q19: Do their technicians arrive on time and dress professionally?

Our Answer: Our technicians are true professionals that you would be proud to have in your office. They dress professionally and show up on time, and if they cannot (for some odd, unforeseen reason), we always notify the client immediately. We believe these are minimum requirements for delivering a professional service.

Q20: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line of business applications?

Our Answer: We own the problems with all lines 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.

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Q21: 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 and resolve any of these issues on their own — that’s just plain old good service and something many computer guys won’t do.

A Final Word—A Cyber Assessment Will Show You How To Eliminate System Intrusion Risks, Chronic Slowness, Crashes And Viruses That Will Dramatically Lower Your IT Maintenance Costs

I hope you have found this Guide helpful, shedding some light on what to look for when choosing who to hire as a professional firm to outsource your IT support. As I stated in the opening of this Report, my purpose in providing this information is to help you make an informed decision that will avoid you getting burned by incompetent or unethical firms luring you by offering cheap prices for inadequate services.

Below you will find information on how to request a Cyber Assessment for your company as a next step to engaging with us. I guarantee you will find this consult to be extremely valuable, attention getting, and eye-opening. We are dedicated to increasing our clients’ sustainable competitive advantages.

Looking forward to starting our conversation,

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All Right, Now Is The Time To Assess Your Situation

Do you have a **nagging suspicion** that your current IT provider isn't delivering the responsiveness and quality of service you're paying for?

Maybe you're experiencing **chronic problems** with your computer systems, phone systems, printers, or video surveillance that your current IT provider just never seems to resolve. Maybe it has become easier to find a work-around or **try to fix IT problems yourself** than to call your IT provider, who just takes forever or maybe never comes when you call.

Or maybe you're sending a check every month for their services **but don't really know what you're paying for**. Could they really get you back up and running after a disaster? Do they ensure your organization is as resilient as you think it must be? Are they *truly* maintaining critical security updates for all your IT systems? Are they purging credentials for old employees from your login directories – keeping them fresh and accurate, and purging re-used login credentials that are at risk of exposing your network to cyberhackers? Have their best people left them, or have you simply outgrown their ability to adequately support you?

It's very common for businesses to be unhappy with slow responses and the quality of service and support they're getting from their current IT company, but then they tolerate it simply because they don't know who else to call, or they're just too darn busy to take the time to find someone else.

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Cyber Assessment And Free Customized IT Optimization Plan

If I just described your situation, I want to prepare a **customized IT Optimization Plan** that will reveal what's REALLY going on in your computer network and show you the fastest and most affordable way to get your systems working the way they're supposed to, as securely as you want them to be, saving you a great deal of time, aggravation and money. **Briefly, here's what I have in mind...**

First, I want to perform a **Cyber Assessment** of your computers and computer network.

There's a minimal charge for this. After doing this type of thing for almost 15 years, we've truly perfected our thorough investigation process for helping companies like yours get their IT systems working securely, affordably, and well.

After conducting this **Cyber Assessment**, we'll be able to answer your top questions, such as:

- How secure are your IT systems from hackers, viruses, and rogue employees?
- Are your systems optimized for proper speed, performance, and employee productivity?
(I can tell you, 99% of the computer networks have lost speed and performance.)

Once we have a clear picture of the state, health and performance of your current IT systems, we'll then deliver a **custom-tailored IT Optimization Plan** that will show you how to eliminate every single nagging problem, enable your team to work faster and easier, and lower IT costs wherever possible.

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At The End Of This Cyber Assessment, One Of Two Things Will Happen:

You love the plan and decide to implement it on your own. If this is the case, we'll wish you all good fortune and *ask that you keep in touch with us to let us know how you're doing.*

You love the plan and ask to partner with us as our client so we can personally help you implement what is affordable in your budget ASAP. *If that's the case, we'll deliver for you...and that's a promise.*

The best that can happen is we work together to finally take all IT complaints off your plate.

Here's How This Will Work:

Once you call us to start a conversation, we will set up a convenient time on your schedule for us learn what you think, and where you want to be, before we perform our **Cyber Assessment**.

Then we'll quietly perform the Cyber Assessment for you—without alerting anyone.

We'll prepare our **Report Of Findings** that will reveal any open, unprotected vulnerabilities in your security, if any, as well as show you how to optimize your technology that will increase everyone's productivity in the most affordable way possible.

So Why Would We Do This?

For one simple reason: After all, if you like what you see because we identify previously unknown vulnerabilities, and show you how to solve IT-related problems in your company in an affordable way, why wouldn't you want to work with us?

Of course, we approach this with no expectations or sales pressure of any kind. I don't like pushy salespeople any more than you do — **and we stand on our belief that providing real Value is the best way to showcase our services** and win new business.

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The ONLY catch is that we can't help everyone, so we have a strict (but reasonable) set of criteria that need to be met in order for us to proceed.

1. You have to have at least 10 employees using your computers.

Our services and advice work best for companies that have at least one server and 10 workstations/laptops. If that's not you (or if you are a brand-new startup), we might be able to help you through a different process. Call me and we'll discuss some options: 573.334.4439.

2. You must be the owner of the business.

Due to the nature of the advice we'll give you, it will be actionable only for the owner or key executive.

3. You must have a growth mindset. Those who operate a growing small business recognize their growing need for secure IT systems, installed and maintained in a cost-effective return-on-investment manner, and are the ones we have learned are open to partnering with a modern managed services provider.

If You Meet The Criteria Above, Here's How We Get Started:

Step 1: Call me to start a conversation together. Don't worry, it's EASY, simple and unobtrusive. No obligation.

Step 2: Once we receive your call, we will set up a time for us to meet.

The initial meeting will be between 30 - 60 minutes. This is where we really begin working to learn from you exactly what you need, what you want, what your budget can afford, and how to make it happen the way you want. If you are ready to take a first step only, we'll begin with performing a **Cyber Assessment**.

Step 3: After we complete the Cyber Assessment, we'll prepare the **Assessment Report Of Findings** that will reveal any vulnerabilities in your network's security, if any. We'll meet with you a second time to explain any **Findings**, and we'll also prepare and present a **custom-tailored IT Optimization Plan** to show you how to

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optimize your information technologies in ways that will increase your team's productivity in the most affordable ways. This second meeting will be informative, and should be a real eye-opener and attention getter for you. Remember: No obligation.

After the second meeting, if you see Value for your Money in engaging beyond that, great! We can talk about it at that time. And if you don't want to partner with us as a client — *that's OK too*. By the way, we've *never* had anyone feel like we wasted their time. EVER.

So, unless you are 100% happy with the IT support you are currently getting for what you're paying, and you're absolutely positive your network is secure, backed up properly, and running at optimal levels, why wouldn't you give this a try? Do it now, and I believe you'll be glad you did.

Thank you for the honor of your attention reading this Guide.

Call 573.334.4439 to Start a Conversation with us

Dedicated to increasing your sustainable competitive advantages,

T. Robin Cole, III
President & Chief Technology Advisor
The Rite Group

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The 6 Top Reasons Why You'll Want To Outsource Your IT Support To Us:

1. **We Answer our Phone LIVE.** The average amount of time it takes for one of our clients to get on the phone and speak with our service dispatcher is less than 1 minute. We know you're busy. We've made a sincere commitment to making sure your computer problems get fixed FAST. And since most repairs can be done remotely using our secure management tools, you don't have to wait around for a technician to roll a truck.
2. **No Techno-Babble.** You deserve to get answers to your questions in PLAIN ENGLISH, not in confusing technical terms. Our technicians will also not talk down making you feel stupid because you don't understand how all this technology works. That's our job!
3. **100% No-Small-Print Satisfaction Guarantee.** Quite simply, if you are not happy with our work, we'll do whatever it takes to make it right to YOUR standards. And if we can't make it right, the service is free.
4. **All Projects Are Completed On Budget.** When you hire us to complete a project for you, we won't nickel-and-dime you with unforeseen or unexpected charges or delays. We perform in-scope, on time, on budget. No surprises.
5. **Lower Costs, Waste And Complexity.** By utilizing cloud computing and other advanced technologies, we can eliminate the complexity and problems of managing your networked computers while giving you more freedom, cost control, tighter security, and prompt disaster recovery, helping make your business more resilient.
6. **We Won't Hold You Hostage.** Many IT companies do NOT provide their clients with simple and easy-to-understand documentation that outlines key resources, passwords, licenses, etc. By keeping that to themselves, IT companies hold their clients hostage to intimidate them. This is both unethical and unprofessional.
7. **Peace Of Mind.** Because we monitor all our clients' networks 24/7/365, you never have to worry that a virus has spread, a hacker has broken in, or a backup has failed. We watch over your entire network, taking the management and hassle of maintaining IT off your hands. This frees you to focus on your customers and their needs.

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