Your Roadmap to
Sourcing a New
Managed
Services Provider

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Managed Service Provider

With the growing number of managed services providers (MSPs) operating in today's market, finding one that perfectly aligns with your budget and business needs can be challenging. The ideal fit should provide **right-sized technology solutions** paired with **reliable, accessible support and service**. Selecting an MSP requires time to evaluate theservices they offer, their approach to partnership, and their business maturity and technical expertise. Where do you start?

Ask For Specifics About Key Solutions and Services

When examining potential MSP partners, ask the right questions about specific aspects of their offerings, including:

Multifaceted and Advanced Cybersecurity Solutions

Your MSP should offer sophisticated cybersecurity solutions that protect your business, employees, and critical data from ransomware, malware, and other types of digital threats. Their portfolio should include proven, innovative products supported by engineers with expertise with security.

Specialty Expertise

Pay close attention to MSPs that provide specialized services such as cybersecurity, managed backup and disaster recovery, and compliance support. Be transparent about any industry-specific toolsets or software your business requires in order to evaluate a potential partner's capacity to support those unique needs

Agility and Scalability

As your business matures and expands, a quality MSP should grow alongside it. As a result, don't forget to ask potential MSPs about their business strategy, from financial stability to evaluating and adopting innovative technology. Scalability and business agility on the part of your MSP ensures you select a partner who can pace with your business needs and both enable and support future expansion.

Do they Truly Offer 24/7/365 Support?

A trustworthy MSP will always be there when you need them. The dependable partner will set clear expectations about setting support ticket priorities, response times, holiday and weekend coverage and remote vs. on-premise support.

Proactive Monitoring, Troubleshooting and Maintenance

One benefit of managed IT services is migrating from a reactive posture to a proactive one. A reputable MSP should have a documented process for monitoring and then proactively maintaining and troubleshooting your network. With regular maintenance checks, automated patching, and consistent monitoring, IT issues can be spotted early on so they don't impede operations or cause disruption.

Explore the longevity of your potential MSP partners. Look for **financial stability** and **long-term partnerships** with clients, vendors and employees.

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Understanding Organizational Risk Tolerance

As your organization considers managed services and the right MSP partner, risk tolerance and the importance of a predictable, reliable technology ecosystem plays a big part in the decision-making process.

Consideration One
Hire an IT Team

⚠ **RISK FACTOR | HIGH**

It always sounds tempting to have in-house resources, whether it's technology, marketing, or HR. You imagine having instant support, someone you can grab at the water cooler for immediate answers to pressing IT support needs. But have you considered the pros and cons of hiring an IT person or building a small support team?

✓ **Direct control**. *You call the shots and have them at your disposal when and where you need them.*

✓ **Familiarity**. *They are familiar with your systems, people, politics, and culture.*

⊗ **Hiring challenges**. *One element of hiring the correct technology person or staff is understanding qualifications, making sure their expertise aligns with your needs, and validating experience.*

⊗ **Accessibility**. *Securing enough IT experts on your team to handle 24/7/365 support AND vacation time, holidays, and weekends off can be expensive and challenging.*

⊗ **Tribal Knowledge**. *Expertisein your IT systems lives with them, leaving you vulnerable when they leave. Rapid or sudden departures can leave you scrambling.*

⊗ **Limited Scope**. *In-house talent is typically hired to fill a "jacks-of-all-trades" role, but they rarely have deep knowledge of any specific technology, such as cybersecurity or compliance.*
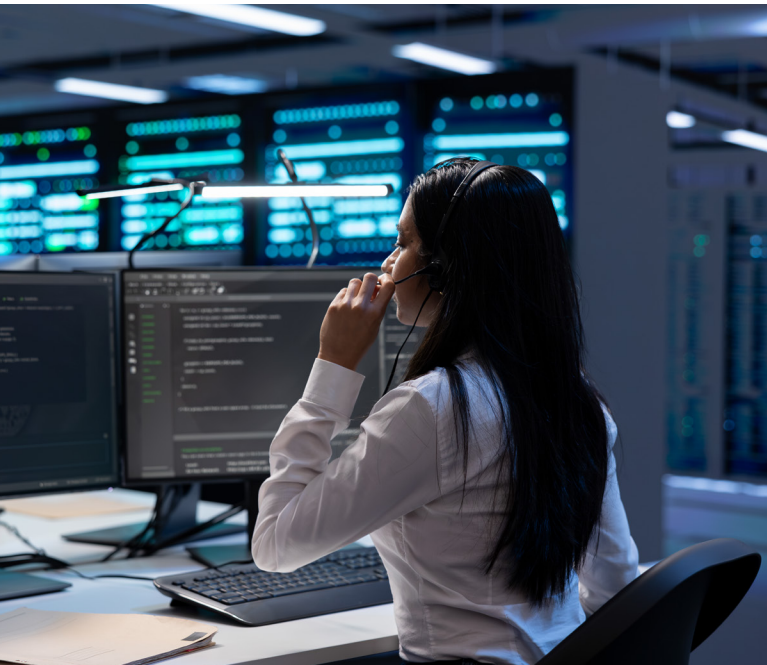
In Summary

If you choose to build an in-house IT team, you rely heavily on a single person or small group of individuals, increase your costs, and risk an IT ecosystem supported by less-than-qualified talent.

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Consideration Two
One-Man-Band Micro-MSP

⚠ **RISK FACTOR | MED**

A micro-MSP, often a solopreneur, promises dedicated, personalized service.
They offer white-glove service, but can they really deliver? While small
may seem more supportive, it has considerable limitations.

✓ **Personal Attention**. *You'll get virtually undivided focus, feeling like their most important client (and you maybe!)*

✓ **Enthusiasm**. *Solo providers are often eager to prove themselves, leading to excellent service in the early stages of the relationship.*

✓ **Impressive availability and responsiveness**. *Because the owner is the sales guy, tech guy, and marketing guy – you'll find he or she will always return your call, even while on vacation.*

✗ **Lack of stability**. *Small or solo MSPs typically are so focused on staying a float that they have no clear strategic plans or long-term vision.*

✗ **Limited Resources**. *Small MSPs likely lack access to training, tools, and specialized expertise, and don't have bandwidth for large projects. They may also lack the capacity to scale as your business grows.*

✗ **Shifting priorities**. *Your needs and standing in the support and service queue may degrade precipitously as they acquire more, larger, orespecially demanding new clients.*

In Summary

While you may get more dedicated attention at the start,
small or solo MSP limitations can create future headaches.

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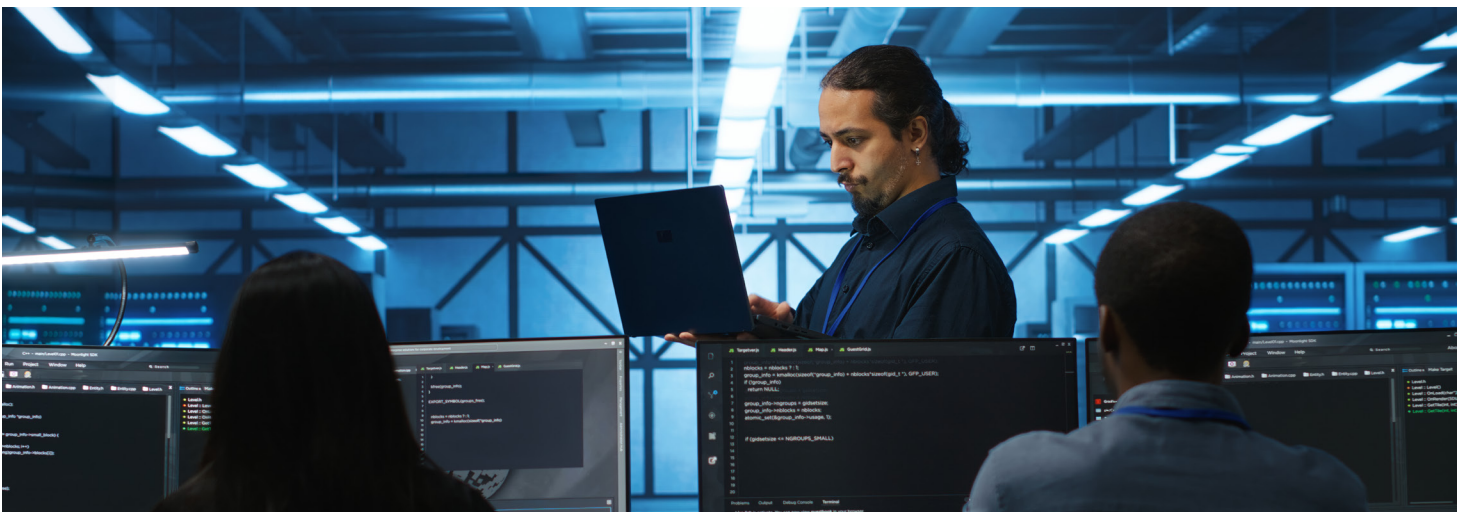
Consideration Three
The Right-Sized MSP

⚠ **RISK FACTOR | LOW**

Think of a right-sized MSP as the Goldilocks of IT partners. Mature, with 10-20 years in business, this MSP has the breadth and depth of expertise to handle complex needs and the documented, standardized processes to be stable, yet isn't so big that your company is just a number. Imagine having a team of tech experts at your fingertips, following proven methods and using sophisticated tools and systems. This MSP becomes your virtual IT department—taking on the challenge of delivering the reliable, stable technologies you need for employee and customer satisfaction and both growth and success.

✓ **Scalability**. *They can grow with your business, adapting to your evolving needs and guiding your organization through the complex landscape of evolving technology solutions.*

✓ **Professionalism**. *This MSP has invested in advanced tools and training, ensuring top-notch service and performance. This is a mature business, not someone playing technology doctor.*

✓ **Transparency**. *Transparent, documented processes and effective communications keep you informed and in control.*

✓ **Reliable**. *Partnership means reliable service, clear communication, and quality across the board. You'll likely find many long-term relationships exist between this MSP and customers, employees, and vendor partners.*

✓ **Proactive**. *This MSP thinks long-term, with proactive technology planning that aligns with your business goals—they lead rather than follow.*

✓ **Responsive**. *A reputable MSP has invested in sophisticated ticketing and support infrastructure to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.*

✗ **Selecting the right partner**. *Finding an MSP that aligns with your organization's culture, goals, industry focus, growth trajectory, and specialized needs can be tricky.*

✗ **Potential change**. *Mergers, acquisitions, or outside investments could impact your relationship.*

In Summary

With due diligence, you will find and engage a mature, proven partner and IT support team, minimizing uncertainties and maximizing stability.

Selecting the right IT partner depends greatly on your specific needs and risk tolerance. An in-house team offers direct control but at a high cost and vulnerability. Micro-MSPs provide personalized attention but lack longterm scalability. Right-sized, mature MSPs deliver a well-balanced combination of expertise, stability, and growth potential once your organization has found its perfect match.

" The relationship we have with the team at Exigent is the piece of the partnership that keeps us with the company. They always **hire great staff**, they are **easy to work** with, and they are **responsive**. That's what you want, for the team to be available when you need them. "

Lynne Rolsing,
Practice Manager, The Advanced Spine Center

Find a Reputable and Reliable MSP

Here is a simple checklist of questions to use as
you evaluate a potential MSP partner

Costs and Pricing

- ☑ How do you price your managed services?

- ☑ Can you provide an accurate price estimate for your services?

- ☑ Do you offer multiple levels of service packages?

- ☑ Are your service packages customizable?

- ☑ Do you have a managed IT services cost calculator?

- ☑ Do you offer block hours of service or support?

- ☑ Do you charge for after-hours or holiday support?

- ☑ What are your contract terms and minimum commitments?

Technical Support

- ☑ How do you price your managed services?

- ☑ How do I request support when I have a problem?

- ☑ How quickly can an engineer be dispatched to my location?

- ☑ What is the procedure for submitting an IT support ticket?

- ☑ Is your IT support reliably available 24/7/365?

- ☑ What are your response time SLAs?

- ☑ Do you offer a dedicated account manager?

- ☑ How will you communicate IT updates and service reports?

Cybersecurity

- ☑ Do you have cybersecurity services that are SOC2 compliant?

- ☑ Do you offer 24/7 network monitoring and maintenance?

- ☑ Do you provide endpoint protection measures and security awareness training within your managed services package?

- ☑ Are your cybersecurity services industry-specific?

- ☑ Do you offer next-generation firewall protection?

- ☑ What security measures are in place at your business to protect customer information?

- ☑ Do you comply with relevant industry regulations?

- ☑ What is your track record on security breaches?

- ☑ Do you have a clear incident response plan in place?

Remote Helpdesk

- ☑ What is your average response time for responding to tickets or IT issues?

- ☑ Is your help desk staffed by in-house experts or is it outsourced to a third party?

- ☑ How many help desk teams or technicians do you have?

- ☑ Will we get a dedicated team or technician?

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IT Consulting

- Will we have a dedicated vCIO to help us build a technology roadmap and budget?

- Can you help us grow our business while ensuring that our IT needs align with our objectives?

- Can you provide references related to your success in helping other businesses align their IT needs with their objectives?

- How experienced are your IT consultants with helping organizations achieve their long-term objectives?

Compliance Services

- What compliance standards do you specialize in?

- Can you help us prepare for compliance audits?

- Do you offer compliance monitoring and remediation services?

- Can you help us with cyber insurance if compliance standards require it?

- How long have you been dealing with regulatory compliance?

Software Development

- What kinds of software can you help us develop?

- What platforms do you rely on for software development?

- How can you help us modernize our existing software?

- Do you offer disparate system and API integration?

Engineering and Technical Staff

- Do your team members have any industry certifications?

- What specific certifications do they have?

- Are your team members familiar and experienced with IT industry standards?

- How do you keep your team up to date on technology?

- What tools and technologies do you use to support clients?

Cloud Computing Support

- What services do you offer for cloud migrations?

- Do you offer virtualization services, and if so, what are they?

- Do you have any cloud-specific certifications?

- Do you offer private or public cloud hosting?

Vendor Relationships

- Do you have a relationship with major vendors like Microsoft or Apple?

- Are you able to interact with vendors on our behalf?

- Can you easily escalate issues with our vendor partners?

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