



BACS

HOW TO CHOOSE AN IT PROVIDER

Northern California
1793 Lafayette St., Ste. 120
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Phone: (650) 383-3850

San Diego
10251 Sorrento Vista Parkway,
Suite H
San Diego, California 92121
Phone: (619) 550-4600

Long Beach
3970 Atlantic Ave.,
Suite 210
Long Beach, CA 90807

Dallas/Fort Worth
17250 Dallas Parkway,
Suite DD
Dallas, TX 75248
Phone: (469) 778-7400

YOUR IT PARTNER IS A VITAL DECISION



One of the biggest decisions you need to make as the owner of a business is to select the best IT services provider for your company. How do you choose among the hundreds and thousands of IT service providers available in the market? They all claim to be the best and the most responsible company, so it is often difficult to select the best one for your business. The first step is to understand the basic needs of your business.

Here we will address the questions you should ask yourself and your team, and the factors that should be considered regarding potential IT service providers that will help you to find the best fit for your business. Plus, we will cover the questions you need to ask any prospective IT services provider you consider partnering with.

UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR TEAM



The first step in the process of choosing the best IT service provider for your company is to understand your business needs and how you can use the technology to fulfil those needs. You shouldn't start by telling your service providers about what exactly you want. Instead, you should understand your business needs thoroughly, so you can explain how your business works. You want to start the process off by creating a strong relationship with the provider. That way, you can ensure your culture and theirs will allow for a seamless partnership.

Here are some of the most important questions you need to ask yourself and your team prior to interviewing IT service providers. Once you know these answers, you will be able to better interview prospective IT consulting partners.

WHERE YOUR BUSINESS IS NOW



1. What is the current position of your business?

Before finding an IT service provider, gather some information about your current technical and business needs. Here are some questions that may make gathering this information a bit easier. That way, you can ask the people who would have these answers instead of wasting time or energy not knowing where to turn.

Needs Assessment Checklist:

- Are there any pieces of technical equipment that no longer work properly?
 - Does your business depend on any compliance, liability, or legal need to protect your customer's data?
 - Make a list of devices being used by your company (i.e., Internet, laptops, phones, eCommerce tools, fax machines, printers etc.) and give them a percentage based on usage.
 - Do you have any future technological needs that you want to include in your IT services?
 - Where do your team members connect with your current or prospective clients? Do they meet virtually? Is there an office you need to protect?
 - When was the last time you updated your cybersecurity protocols?
- Are your current forms of technology keeping up with your needs, or do they need an upgrade?
 - Do you still use equipment that is 6 years old, or older?
 - When was the last time you purchased any IT equipment?
 - Which cyber security tools are you using for your system security?

COMPANY GOALS FOR THE FUTURE



2. Where do you see your company in the next three years?

Think about those elements of your business that recently changed. Consider the income changes and goals based on the recent trends of your business. While you cannot predict with 100% certainty what will happen tomorrow, it can give you an idea of where your organization is headed. Look at the growth rate of your business along with what that means in terms of potential challenges your business will face. These potential challenges can help you determine what technology you need to bypass those challenges.

With the growth of your business, you also need some scalable solutions ready for you to take with you as you grow. For example, you may have no remote employees, but in the future, they may need remote options for family needs or even to cut costs for your organization. This implies some forms of technology you will need to protect your company and client data from intrusion.



TECHNOLOGY HELPS YOUR BUSINESS

Focus on the long-term goals your company has. Look at your competitors and see if they are doing things you want to do in the future, or if they are making mistakes you want to avoid. These all factor into your business model and your IT needs. By comparing your current and potential infrastructure needs to those in a similar space, you can get a better idea of technological needs you may have.

3. What could technology do for your business?

Write some of the important tasks that technology solves for your business. It is important for your IT service provider to have in-depth knowledge of the technical aspects of your business, so be sure to mention these technological functions when discussing your needs.

Some of the technology's common features include Wi-Fi, fax, email, telephone, synchronization, and file storage. While your IT service provider does not necessarily control all these technology tools, this information will help them to understand the security level and IT infrastructure that will work better for you.



YOUR IT NEEDS

4. Which type of IT service provider does your team need?

Rate the comfort of your team with technology your business uses. In many instances, young people, app developers, and entrepreneurs come with different levels of support needed when compared to non-technical employees. By knowing about your team, their questions, and their needs, you can choose what type of specialized IT consultant will work best for your specific needs.

It is possible that any change in management plan or update in technology might seem inconvenient for your team. So, involve your employees from the first day to find the provider with which they feel most comfortable. It could be that your employees will be working with the service provider more than you, so it is very important to maintain a strong relationship between them.

FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL IT SERVICES PROVIDERS



When you narrow down your unique business needs, don't hesitate to share them with your potential technology partner. The best way to start is by asking some tough questions to determine if they can handle your requests and any new ideas you may have to improve your business, or not.

We suggest you begin the conversation by showing you understand where your technology is currently, and showing that you have an idea where it needs to go. Give them an idea of how much you have invested in technology in the past, and where you feel your technology may lack currently. These help your IT consulting partner have an idea of your level of technological understanding, plus, it helps them see where your goals lie.

IT SERVICES



1. What Types of IT Services Do You Offer?

Not every IT service provider will be suitable for your business. Some IT providers deal with cloud storage and networking, while others are solely focused on secure e-commerce websites and data backup. So, it is important to understand your business needs first. When you get to know which services are best for your business, you will immediately start reducing the number of technology partners you have to choose from. Simply eliminate any potential IT provider that is unable to provide the services you need most, and move forward on your list.

SECURITY KNOWLEDGE



2. How Much Do You Know About Trusted Security Practices?

Having trusted managed IT security is essential in business today. No matter what other services you need, you need to have an IT partner that can keep your business secure. Your customer data, business information, facts and figures, plus your performance reports should never be at risk. Ask your potential IT service provider what they suggest in terms of trusted security for your company. Then, find out their past experiences with these suggestions and how those suggestions helped other companies that are like yours.

You need to know that the IT provider you choose stays up to date with trends, concerns, products, and software. On top of that, you need to also be able to see the experience that your prospective IT consultant has. There is a huge difference in tech experience and managed IT service experience. The industry also makes a big difference in how well an IT consulting company can help your business. Make sure their experience matches with your specific business needs. Any that do not have the length of experience your business needs should come off your list.

SERVICE EXPECTATIONS



3. What Is Typical in Terms of Response Time, Communication, and Onsite IT Assistance?

Some providers guarantee a quick response time. However, not all are equipped to do so. It is essential to get data based on companies your prospective IT partner has worked with in the past. Your needs are unique, but when you compare response rates, communication, and onsite times for a company in a similar industry and size, you can get a solid picture of what service will be like for your business.

This is a great time to make sure your expectations are relayed to any prospective IT solutions partner you speak with. Tell them what you need and expect, then allow them to explain if they can meet or exceed those expectations. Any that do not should also be eliminated from your list.

QUALITY PRODUCTS



4. Do You Use Reputable Products?

When your potential service provider starts sharing the detailed ideas and information about product types and solutions they will use, do quick research to get familiar with those products. That research can help reveal a lot about the reliability and scalability of these tools. Your goal is to have tools you can rely on now, but also tools that will grow as your business grows.

Don't be shy in asking questions about why they use a particular product or why they offer one solution for your business and not any others. This strategic thinking process will let you know about their understanding of the industry you work in, plus show you how well they can communicate your business needs.

You can also try “Rule of Five” which will help you to achieve a certain level of clarity. The rule is to ask at least five questions when your prospective IT partner recommends any product. You can ask:

- Why do you think we should use this product?
- Why is this product superior over other products?
- What does this product offer that will help our business directly?
- Is this a tool my team is going to be able to easily adjust to using, or can you teach my team how to use it effectively?
- What type of protection does this product offer the company as a whole?

VERIFY QUALIFICATIONS



5. Can I See Your Credentials, Certifications, and Reviews?

Finally, remember to ask to see the credentials, certifications, and to check the customer reviews of the IT service provider. Ask them to send you the contact information of clients who you can contact and have a conversation with. Do your due diligence in vetting a company you are going to trust your business to. You would not trust your health to a doctor that you did not properly vet beforehand, and the same goes with your company.

Go through their website and look for thorough information, case studies, and reviews from other businesses to ensure they feel like a good fit. It is essential that you find a company that has the certifications and credentials that cover your needs. Otherwise, you are hiring someone that may sound good but respond poorly when a situation arises later.

BACS HELPS COMPANIES JUST LIKE YOURS



Take Your Time to Pick the Perfect IT Services Provider for Your Needs

Take your time in finding the right IT service provider near you. Talk to each company that feels like their culture matches up with your own. Ask them questions and listen to the answers. You need to trust that this partnership is going to keep you, your employees, your customers, and ultimately, your business safe.

If you want to find out how BACS can help you with this process, please do not hesitate to [reach out](#). We are here to listen to your needs and offer our assistance at every step of the way.