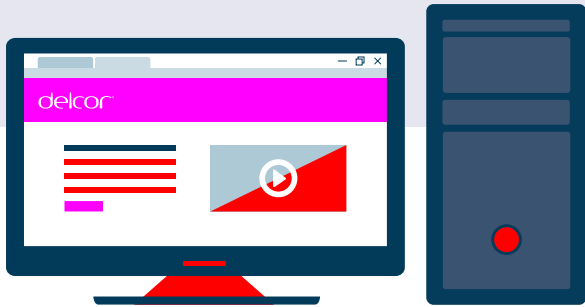


QUICK TIPS

Secrets to Managed Service Success



There are many reasons to employ a Managed Service Provider (MSP) to oversee your organization's network. Working with an MSP is cost-effective, frees up your staff's time, and allows you to easily adopt best practices. While moving to an MSP is the right step for many organizations, it can also be a scary jump into the unknown. Before you take the leap, here are some important questions to ask about a potential MSP.

TECHNOLOGY

What will the partnership with the MSP look like?

While MSPs bring network management expertise to the table, it's important to note that an MSP should still work with you on your terms. Your MSP should be able to provide all the systems, monitoring, and support services your organization requires for the foreseeable future. An exceptional MSP has the flexibility and familiarity required to work with all systems and ensure your organization is continuously maturing security and network operations.

PROCESS

Does the MSP have defined processes and procedures for managing your network?

When your network suffers from a critical failure, every second that it's offline costs your organization money. To ensure that these outages are kept to a minimum and fixed quickly, choose an MSP that has a defined process for responding to each potential problem. Make sure you ask the MSP about standard system configurations; quality assurance; and network issue resolution such as alerting, reporting, escalation, and action. Your MSP should provide the in critical applications needed to ensure maximum security and exceed cyber insurance standards.

QUALIFICATIONS

What qualifications and certifications does the MSP maintain?

Providers can be certified in two ways, and both are important to look for. Each consultant that works with your organization should possess manufacturer and industry certifications. On top of that, each MSP should have company-wide certifications that ensure their policies and procedures meet industry standards. You should also look for MSPs that hire consultants with association and nonprofit backgrounds—these consultants are more likely to understand your organization and mission fully.

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CONTROL

How much control will you have over your systems after moving to the MSP?

In many MSP models, clients are required to become deeply ingrained into the MSP's operating procedures to the point where they no longer own their network and security infrastructure. However, a quality MSP will meet your organization's needs at the level and in the manner required for you to be successful. The easiest way to determine an MSP's approach is to ask how difficult and expensive it would be to disconnect from their service.

RESPONSIVENESS

Does the MSP prioritize customer service and responsiveness?

The biggest fear when moving to an MSP is that you'll just become another number on a call sheet when something goes wrong. Guard against these kinds of engagements by judging the way the company responds to your questions and needs before signing the agreement. An MSP's culture should be built around responding to your issues and providing stellar customer service, and they should treat your network as if it were their own. The best MSPs act as a proactive extension of your team and work as partners with you to achieve your organization's mission and goals.

NONPROFIT EXPERIENCE

How well does the MSP understand your business, market, and mission?

If the MSP can't understand your organization's business, market, mission, and other critical pieces of information that makes you tick, then they will never become a valued resource for your organization. An MSP without a firm background in the nonprofit and association market will have a hard time understanding your organization's priorities, which can lead to issues down the road. Instead, your MSP should stay ahead of trends in the association technology market so your organization is always up to date.

PRICE AND VALUE

What are the costs involved with onboarding to the MSP?

Start by asking how much it will cost your organization to get started with this MSP. MSPs can often help organizations cut overall costs, but the initial costs should show the value they are bringing to your infrastructure. Also, be aware of any hidden costs, including costs stemming from the MSP switching platforms. Your MSP should be a true partner who informs you about all costs, and they should work with you to provide the best value for your budget.

Interested in learning more about MSP services? Contact us.

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