



“What Every Small Business Must Know About Hiring an Honest, Competent, Responsive and Fairly-Priced Managed IT Services Provider”

**Don't Trust Your Company's IT Operations and Security to Just
Anyone! This Business Advisory Guide Will Arm You With 21
Revealing Questions You Should Ask Any IT Service Provider
Before Giving Them Access to Your Company's Network.**

Choosing the wrong IT Service Provider to support your business can not only be incredibly frustrating and expensive, but could also cost you in downtime, data loss, and expensive repair bills, not to mention the headaches and frustration!

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- ✓ The “dirty little secret” to the IT services industry that most people don't know and will NEVER be told by their current IT company. (Knowing this alone could save you from wasting tons of money and untold aggravation when outsourcing your IT support!)
- ✓ 21 revealing questions that will help you instantly spot an unethical or inexperienced IT Service Provider in minutes.
- ✓ 4 costly misconceptions small businesses have about IT Service providers; one you will need to know BEFORE you talk to anyone on the phone.
- ✓ Viruses, malware, spyware, and hackers: what you need to know to protect yourself.
- ✓ 5 mistakes to avoid when choosing a Managed IT Services provider.
- ✓ Why “cheap” or “lowest price” IT service providers aren't the bargain they initially appear to be.
- ✓ The one surefire sign that you should run – not walk – away from an IT support firm.

Provided as an educational service by:

Vince Tinnirello, Director of Business Development
Anchor Network Solutions, Inc.



116 Inverness Drive East; Suite 425
Englewood, CO 80112
303-904-0494 Phone x105
www.anchornetworksolutions.com



From the Desk of Vince Tinnirello
Director of Business Development, Anchor Network Solutions, Inc.

Dear Colleague,

Choosing an IT service provider to partner with isn't easy. There is no shortage of horror stories about incompetent IT "gurus" bungling projects and causing MORE problems as a result of their loose morals or incompetence. I'm sure if you talk to your own friends and colleagues you will get an earful of the unfortunate experiences they've encountered in this area.

Why is this? It's because the computer network and consulting industry, along with a lot of other industries, has its own share of incompetent or unethical businesses who will try to take advantage of clients who simply do not have the ability to determine whether or not they know what they are doing. Sometimes this is out of greed, but more often it's simply because they don't have the skills and competency to do the job right but won't tell you that up front. From misleading information, unqualified technicians, and poor management to terrible customer service, we've seen it all...and we know they exist in abundance because we have had several clients come to us to clean up the disasters they caused.

Buyer Beware: The IT Consulting & Support Industry Is NOT Regulated

Here's an embarrassing fact about our industry; It is not regulated like many other professional service industries, which means ANYONE can claim they are a "small business IT consulting expert." **In fact, a lot of the businesses in our space started because the owner was FIRED or laid off from their job and couldn't find work anywhere else, so they just started their own "consulting" business.**

Many professional services businesses are heavily regulated to protect the consumer from receiving substandard work or getting ripped off. However, the IT services industry is still highly unregulated and there aren't any laws in existence to protect the client – **which is why it's so important for you to arm yourself with the information contained in this report.**



Anyone who can hang out a shingle can promote themselves as an IT expert. Even if they are honestly *trying* to do a good job for you, their inexperience or lack of redundancy can cost you dearly in your IT security, data loss, or downtime. This guide is designed to help you evaluate whether your current or prospective IT provider is equipped to handle the demands of today's cloud and AI enabled world, and to give you useful information to help choose the right partner to work with.

Dedicated to serving you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince P. [unclear]", is positioned below the text "Dedicated to serving you,".



About the Author



Vince Tinnirello is the Director of Business Development at Anchor Network Solutions, Inc, a nationally recognized managed IT services and technology consulting firm in Denver, Colorado. Anchor has been named as one of the top 500 Managed IT Service Providers year after year and holds the Global Technology Industry Association Security Trustmark. Vince founded the company in 2002, after being disenchanted with the quality of service being provided by the firm he was working for at the time. Building on his 10-year Marriott hotel industry experience, he started Anchor with the goal of providing hospitality grade customer service to clients in need of technology consulting and support. His vision was to break the stereotype of IT people being difficult to communicate with and even condescending or rude. Over two decades later, Anchor has a staff of over 30 employees and is providing this high touch service to clients throughout the Denver Metro area.



21 Questions You MUST Ask Before Hiring Any IT Company to Support Your Network

Q1: Are there multiple ways to request service, or do you always have to leave a voicemail and wait for someone to call you back?

Our Answer: We have 3 convenient ways to get in touch with us to request service. The easiest and most convenient way is to enter your service request in our client portal, where you can check the status of any open requests, add notes to existing tickets, or run ticket metrics reports. You can also email our Help Desk, or you can call us by phone. We answer our phones from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and give all clients an emergency after-hours number they may call if a problem arises, including weekends. Why? Because some of our clients operate outside normal hours and if they cannot access their computer network AND can't get hold of anyone to help them, it's incredibly frustrating.

Q2: Do they have a published response time to your service requests?

Our Answer: We have published Targeted Response Times (TRT) with corresponding issue types and severity levels. This is documented in every service agreement, and YOU help set the request priority level.

Q3: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek-speak), or do they come across arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?

Our Answer: Our team has the "heart of a teacher." We explain in plain business language so leaders can make informed decisions about technology, security, and AI adoption.

Q4: Do they consistently (and proactively) offer new ways to improve your network's performance, strengthen security, and prepare your business for AI adoption — or do they wait until you have a problem to make recommendations?

Our Answer: We conduct regular Technology Strategy Meetings (TSMs) as part of our ***Anchored IT Process***. In these sessions, we review your environment for ways to enhance performance, reduce costs, and improve security. We also look ahead to ensure you are AI-ready — helping you build a secure, responsible roadmap that aligns AI opportunities with your business goals. This approach ensures your technology doesn't just keep up but keeps you competitive.

Q5: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?



Our Answer: We maintain \$2 million of E&O insurance. Here's something to consider: If THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider; If one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? It's vital that whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions insurance AND workers' compensation – and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

Q6: Do they guarantee to complete projects on time and on budget?

Our Answer: All projects are fixed priced and guaranteed to be completed to your satisfaction. This is important because many unethical or incompetent IT companies will only quote "time and materials," low balling the estimated number of hours needed up front to get you to buy. Then, when the project ultimately takes longer, they cite unexpected issues that couldn't have been predicted costing YOU money in additional support hours to complete the project. We see this all the time when quoting a project to a prospective client where a competitor is promising the sun, moon, and stars for a project they simply can't deliver in the estimated amount of time they say it will take. In the few times we've seen a prospect go down that road, they almost always pay more in the end.

Q7: Do they have a service delivery process that they can articulate?

Our Answer: Everything we do is based on process. In this business, you cannot wing it or deliver service effectively without a process. We follow ***The Anchored IT Process***, which is our time-tested proven process that ensures consistency, alignment to best practices, and includes a roadmap that supports your security posture and AI adoption strategy.

Q8: Do they have a structured on boarding process, or do we just start calling for support?

Our Answer: We follow a detailed client on boarding process to set expectations for working with Anchor. We have an on boarding meeting with the client, update them along the way, and conduct an onsite "Welcome to Anchor" meeting with the client's staff to build rapport and excitement around our partnership. When we're all on the same page, we hit the "Go Live" button and start taking client service requests. This ensures a smooth transition for our client's staff as they start working with us.

Q9: Do they have a process for new hires, user terminations, and new computer setups?

Our Answer: We help clients build checklists for new hires, user terms, and computer setups to make their lives easier. Many clients add these to their own HR process as part of the exercise. By following a checklist, we can ensure these tasks are done correctly each time a change is made.



Q10: Do they monitor your network 24-7-365 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions, and security patches up-to-date to help mitigate risk of downtime, security incidents, lost data, and other issues?

Our Answer: Absolutely. Our security operations platform continuously monitors for vulnerabilities, ransomware, and suspicious activity so that we can address them BEFORE they turn into bigger problems.

Q11: Do they provide access to documentation of your network, or do they keep the “keys to the kingdom” for themselves?

Our Answer: All clients receive access to this information upon request. We will never hold your information hostage. If you get the suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their control as a means of job security, get rid of them. This is an unethical practice we’ve seen many times and it’s a danger to your organization, so don’t tolerate it!

Q12: Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your environment in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Our Answer: Yes. Thanks to detailed documentation (basically a blueprint of your infrastructure), any Anchor technician can step in without disruption.

Q13: When they offer an “all-inclusive” support plan, is it TRULY all-inclusive, or are there “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” managed services plan. These plans will save you a lot of money in the long run – HOWEVER, make sure you really understand what is and isn’t included. Some things to consider are:

- Is dispatched onsite support included or extra?
- What about adds/moves/changes?
- What about 3rd party software support? (We recommend that this IS included).
- If hardware and software is included, what happens if you cancel the contract?
- If you have a major disaster, is restoring your network included or extra?
- What about support of remote offices?

When reviewing proposals from multiple IT firms, make sure the quotes are apples to apples!



Q14: Do they INSIST you have an image based onsite as well as offsite backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated local hard drive or simple cloud-based file backups?

Our Answer: We do not allow our clients to use tape or USB hard drive backups because they are incredibly unreliable. We make sure all our clients use an image-based Backup and Disaster Recovery appliance that fully automates the backup process for both onsite and offsite. This provides clients with a true recovery option in the event of a disaster.

Q15: Do they perform test restores of your backups periodically to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?

Our Answer: We perform periodic test restores from backup for our clients to make sure their data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency.

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

Our Answer: All clients with our Datto image based backup solution have the ability to fail over to the cloud, so they can be up and running from anywhere. We encourage clients to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office, but at a minimum, their data network will be covered should something happen.

Q17: Is their help-desk US based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?

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

Q18: Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in on-going training – or are they learning on your dime?

Our Answer: Yes. Our team maintains current certifications across Microsoft products as well as all the software tools and platforms we provide. Ongoing training ensures we're ready for emerging threats and new technologies.

Q19: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line of business applications?

Our Answer: We own the problems with all line of business applications for our clients. That doesn't mean we are experts in answering "how to" questions, but we WILL be the liaison between you and your vendor to resolve problems you are having, and make sure these applications work smoothly instead of pointing fingers and putting you in the middle.



Q20: When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or tell you to call the vendor yourself to resolve?

Our Answer: We believe 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 IT guys won't do.

Q21: Do they recommend use of next generation security tools, or do they consider having a firewall and antivirus enough?

Our Answer: In today's cybersecurity landscape, firewalls and antivirus are not enough. We recommend and deploying the latest security tools to not only help our clients mitigate risk, but to also obtain the cybersecurity insurance needed to protect their business.



The 4 Most Costly Misconceptions About IT Infrastructure Consulting Services

Misconception #1: My IT infrastructure doesn't need regular monitoring and maintenance...it's in the cloud!

This is probably one of the biggest and most costly misconceptions that small businesses have. Usually this is because they've been fortunate enough to never have encountered a major disaster; but that's like someone thinking they don't need to wear a seat belt when driving a car because they've never had an accident.

Technology isn't getting simpler; it's getting more complicated. IT infrastructure networks are complex systems that need regular management to stay up and running problem free-whether on premises or in the cloud! At the user level, it's surprising how fast a brand-new PC or laptop will slow down after a few weeks of use without proper updates and maintenance. Here are just a FEW of the critical tasks that need to be done regularly:

- Security patches applied – with NEW viruses and hacker attacks cropping up DAILY, this is a CRITICAL part IT security at the endpoint level
- Antivirus updates and monitoring
- Firewall services updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and test restores
- Email security system in place performing spam filtering and quarantine monitoring
- Malware detection and removal via a Managed Detection & Response system.
- Monitoring disk space on workstations and servers (both on premises and cloud based)
- Monitoring hardware for signs of failure
- Optimizing systems for maximum speed

Just like car ownership, if you don't change the oil, replace the filter, rotate the tires, flush the transmission, and perform other regular maintenance, your car will eventually break down and cost you FAR MORE to repair than the cost of the basic maintenance – and cars are far simpler than a computer network!

If your IT consulting company does not insist on some type of regular, automated monitoring or maintenance of your IT infrastructure both on premises and in the cloud, then DO NOT HIRE THEM.



Lack of appropriate network and security monitoring is the NUMBER ONE reason most people end up losing valuable files and incurring heavy data and system restore fees or worse, insurance claims. If your existing IT firm isn't offering you these services, you need to find someone else to support your network for two reasons:

1. Either they don't know enough to make this recommendation, which is a sure sign they don't follow best practices (or worse, are very inexperienced), *OR*
2. They recognize that they are profiting from your IT problems and don't want to recommend steps towards preventing you from needing their help on an ongoing basis. After all, they'll get paid MORE to react to a recovery situation than to make sure your system is patched, updated and secured (which can be done quickly and inexpensively with good monitoring).

Either one is a good reason to get as far away from that firm as possible!

Misconception #2: My nephew/neighbor's kid/brother-in-law/office manager knows this IT stuff and can take care of our computers.

Most people look for a part time "guru" for one reason: to save a few bucks; but this often comes back to haunt them. We sometimes get calls from businesses who desperately need our help to get them back up and running or to clean up a mess that was caused by an inexperienced neighbor, friend, or relative who was just trying to help.

If the person you have working on your machine does not do IT consulting and support for a living, there is a good chance they won't have the knowledge or experience to truly help you – they are a hobbyist at best. Do you really want a part-time, inexperienced person responsible for handling something as important as your data and cybersecurity needs? As with everything in life, you get what you pay for. That's not to say you need to go broke to find a great consulting firm, but you shouldn't be choosing someone on price alone.

Misconception #3: All IT consulting firms are created equal. Your best option will be the one who offers the lowest price.



As we stated a moment ago, you get what you pay for. A cheap price usually means a cheap job. Really good IT service providers do NOT work at a discount because they are in high demand just like any other professional. The only firms that will work for highly discounted rates are those just getting started in the business and are very inexperienced or ones that simply do not know how to price services appropriately. They will typically work for any fee and will be out of business by the time you really need them.

And some shops will hire college kids or newbie technicians because they will work for next to nothing to gain experience (which means they are learning on YOUR dime), OR they will bring in interns because they don't have to pay them at all. An inexperienced technician like this can end up costing more.

With your client data, accounting records, e-mail, and other critical data at stake, do you REALLY want the lowest-priced service provider to work on your network and have access to your data?

We take the view that most people want value for price paid and simply want the job done right. You will find that we are not the cheapest, but we're not the most expensive either. We believe that we should offer a good service at a fair price. That's why we've been able to stay in business for over 22 years and have many clients who've been with us since the beginning.

Misconception #4: An honest IT service provider should be able to give you a quote over the phone.

I wish this were true, but it isn't. Just like a good doctor, an honest and professional firm will need to assess your IT infrastructure before they can quote any price over the phone. Without seeing and understanding your IT infrastructure in detail, most firms will quote you their highest rates if you insist on a quote by phone.

In contrast, some individual consultants or smaller shops will quote you a cheap rate over the phone to get in the door, but then jack up the prices once they get in your office by taking 3 times as long, selling you add-ons and up-sells, etc. And finally, reputable firms don't charge by the hour anyway -- they give you a fixed fee, flat-rate. Here's why...

One of the easiest ways to take advantage of a customer is to get them to agree to a time and materials repair. Unless you know what's wrong and how long it should take, they can soak you on the fees. And what are you going to do when they get 5-6 hours into a repair or project and then spring on you the news that it will take even longer than they anticipated to fix, costing you MORE money?



Always, always, always make sure you get a flat-rate, fixed fee quote in advance, so you don't end up getting burned – and NEVER take a phone quote!

5 More Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing an IT Consulting Partner

1. **Choosing a firm based on a single phone call.** We recommend you have a Teams call or invite them into your office for a discovery of your IT needs. Be clear on what your expectations are and what type of problems you want them to resolve. Provide them with as much detail as possible and ask them for a written proposal addressing the objectives you've outlined for them. If they provide pricing without first understanding your needs, it's a clear red flag.
2. **Choosing an IT company that doesn't have a written money-back guarantee.** In our view, a good IT service provider should be accountable for their services and fixing things RIGHT. If you aren't pleased with the job that was done, they should make it right for free; and if they simply cannot resolve an issue to YOUR satisfaction, you shouldn't get stuck with the bill.

Plus, the fact that they stand behind their work with a money-back guarantee shows they have confidence in themselves to make you a happy client. And don't fall for the, "We don't offer one because people will take advantage of us," routine. In our experience, MOST people just want an honest service at a reasonable price. We offer a money back guarantee because we stand behind our work and want clients to be happy. We find offering this builds trust and confidence of the many clients who just want their problems fixed right.

3. **Choosing a computer consultant without speaking to several of the current clients.** Check their references! Don't just take the sales guy's word that they are good – ask to speak to at least 3 or 4 clients that are like you. If they hesitate or cannot provide you with references, don't trust them!

Another good sign is that they should have multiple client testimonials and success stories posted on their web site and throughout their marketing collateral. A lack of this may be a sign that they don't HAVE clients who are happy enough to provide a good reference – again, a warning sign.

4. **Choosing an IT partner who cannot remotely monitor, update and support your network.** An IT service provider who doesn't do this is living in the stone ages. You want someone to do this because it will dramatically increase your network's security and enables them to respond faster. That's not to say they shouldn't come onsite; but remote monitoring and



support makes fixing problems FASTER for YOU and helps PREVENT problems from cropping up in the first place.

5. **Choosing an IT consulting firm who isn't Microsoft Certified.** IT providers with this designation have proven to Microsoft they understand the needs of small businesses, and how to provide them with big business technology on a small business budget. They are firms who have a presence in the SMB technology community nationally, which allows them to leverage resources from peers and vendors across the country to solve YOUR IT challenges.

A Final Word...

I hope you have found this guide helpful in shedding light on what to look for when outsourcing the support of your company's IT infrastructure. As stated in the opening of this report, our purpose in providing this information was to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by the many inexperienced firms that have been popping up offering these services.

If you have any additional comments or questions, we welcome them! Have an idea to make this guide even more helpful? Let us know! And of course, if you are looking for someone you can trust to take over the care and maintenance of "all things digital" in your office, we'd love the opportunity to EARN your business.

Below you will find information on how to request a FREE IT Health Check and Diagnosis. This is, of course, provided for free with no obligations and no expectations on our part. We want to be clear that this is NOT a bait and switch offer or a trick to get you to buy something. Our reputation for being an honest and trustworthy business is something we hold very dear. We would never jeopardize that in any way. So why are we offering something like this for free?

Two reasons:

1. We are simply offering this service as a risk-free "get to know us" offer to people we haven't had the pleasure of doing business with. Again, our goal is to allow you to make an informed and confident decision and offering this is one way we can help you better evaluate us.
2. This will allow us to determine if we even CAN help you. Obviously we can't help everyone, and our services might not be a good fit for you. Conducting this Health Check enables us to do a small project for you to help you evaluate whether we're the right company for you without risking your money.



Looking forward to your call!

The Team at Anchor Network Solutions

Phone: 303-904-0494

Web: www.anchornetworksolutions.com

FREE IT Health Check For All Prospective Clients Who Want to Put Us to The Test!

As a prospective customer, we would like to offer you a FREE Network Health Check and Diagnosis (\$995 value). During this health check we will perform a comprehensive 8 point audit of your entire network to look for potential problems, security loopholes, spyware, and other hidden problems that will cause the computers on your network to run slow, act funny, crash, and lose data.

We will:

- ✓ Review your system backups to make sure they are working properly, and CAN be restored quickly in the event of a disaster.



- ✓ Perform a Dark Web scan of your domain to see if any company credentials have been involved in a breach.
- ✓ Check for security updates and patches to validate that your network really IS secure.
- ✓ Review your firewall and security settings.
- ✓ Check the integrity of your server hardware (Side Note: Did you know that hardware failure is one of the leading causes of data loss that CAN be detected early and avoided with proper monitoring?)
- ✓ Review the security tools in place protecting your network.
- ✓ Conduct a visual scan of your server room and cabling to make sure your network is PHYSICALLY safe and set up properly.
- ✓ Check your overall system performance, space, and settings to see if your network is running as fast as it could be.

Why Should You Care About This?

Because there are literally dozens of ways hackers and bad actors can access your network—undetected—to remotely control your network, corrupt your data, and use your network as a conduit for conducting other nefarious cybersecurity scams.

There are numerous system checks and updates that should be done on a regular basis to ensure maximum speed, performance, and security. Ignore them and your system will get progressively slower, more unstable, and increasingly susceptible to cybersecurity threats.

File level backups may not be enough in the event of a disaster. Do you have the right backup in place for your recovery time and recovery point objectives? You don't want to find out the current solution doesn't meet your objectives the day after you had a system failure.

How To Request Your FREE IT Health Check:

Requesting your FREE IT Health Check is easy. There are three ways to get in touch with us:

Phone: 303-904-0494

Email: sales@anchornetworksolutions.com

Website: <https://www.anchornetworksolutions.com/about-us/contact-us/>



Read on To Hear What Our Clients Have To Say:



PATTI WARREN The Club at Rolling Hills

Our staff does nothing but sing your praises! Please let everyone on your team know that partnering with Anchor has been our best decision and truly life changing. We no longer dread solving IT issues! Your team is so friendly and competent everything has just been a breeze. We truly appreciate each and every one of you. You have built an amazing culture and team and it translates into a great experience for us.



SARAH RICKENBACKER Mountaingate Capital

We have been working with Anchor Network Solutions for many years and they have always been a consistent partner in assisting our firm with IT needs. Their team goes above and beyond to communicate, solve our issues and follow up. From large projects to small, they help us find the solutions we need to keep business moving and without interruption.



STEVE HAUGEN Haugen Consulting Group

Our experience with Anchor Network Solutions over the past 3 years has been outstanding. Our IT world revolves around Microsoft 365 so it is reassuring to know that we are a call or click away from reaching an expert at Anchor. Their staff go above and beyond expectations to meet our IT needs. I highly recommend Anchor Network Solutions for IT service and support.