15 Questions You Should Ask Yourself About Your IT Company

1. **Is the network consistently down?**

   Does your network constantly suffer from downtime? If you are plagued by a lack of internet access, or even internal access, you should seriously consider if your provider is able to give you the kind of service that your organization requires to run efficiently.

2. **Do they provide reports to you?**

   You should know what is going on with your system. You should be aware of all of the parts, their basic functionality within your system, and any updates that have been made on your network. Not only is it a proof of work, but it keeps you on top of what is going on with your infrastructure.

   Before you hire an IT professional, ask what kind of reporting system they employ to keep their clients aware of changes to the system.

3. **Do you own your own system?**

   Many IT companies will want to house all of your equipment. They hold the keys to your system, and do not make any reports about your equipment or software. This always *sounds* like a good idea. "We take care of everything." Sometimes, they'll say, "We only come to you with problems that we can't solve without a decision from you."

   As nice as that sounds, the underlying truth is, "if you want to cancel our services, it will hurt you." Having an IT company that is ready and able to hand you control of your devices is crucial. You own the system, you pay for the system. You should have custody of the system.

4. **Does your IT professional pick up your phone calls?**

   You've probably been there. Your computer is down, your network is down, something strange is happening with your computer. You call your help desk. You get a machine, an automated system, or worse – you have to submit your ticket online and wait for an answer.

   You have the right to expect your IT professionals to respond to your calls. Imagine having an in-house technician that would not answer the phone. Having an external company do the same is no more acceptable. While an answer may not be immediately available, help should be.

5. **Do they have answers, or are they always "finding a solution"?**

If your helpdesk is constantly putting you off – chances are, they don't have the answers. A help desk staff that is Googling the answers to your computer problems can make your problems worse than they need to be. Even a company with experienced technicians needs to have a competent help desk staff.

6. **Is your helpdesk speaking English fluently?**

No. It shouldn't be a novelty. Outsourcing a helpdesk means putting language barriers in between your employees and their solution. Having a helpdesk staff that understands your needs, and doesn't frustrate the problem, can be the difference between an agitated staff and a satisfied one.

7. **Do they use "Geekspeak?"**

If you have a helpdesk that is constantly battering you with technical terminology, don't hesitate to ask them to explain it. Using industry jargon can exclude you from your own business.

8. **Are they able to explain things to you, or do they always skirt around direct questions about your network?**

9. **Are they ever rude to you, or does the helpdesk seem exasperated to take your call?**

You are paying for your managed services. Like any employee, you should be able to expect that they treat other employees with respect and courtesy.

10. **Are problems always cropping up?**

Consistent problems usually hint at an underlying problem that isn't being attended to. How many calls does your organization put in to your helpdesk every day?

11. **Do problems continue to repeat themselves?**

Related to the problem of "many problems cropping up", you have to worry about the same problem cropping up. "Restart your computer." If someone says that to you a few times in a row for the   same problem, you are being given a "band-aid." In other words, it doesn't make the problem go away, it simply stops it from being a problem at the moment. These solutions can cause headaches down the road.

12. Nickel and Dimed

If you have a network provider that is constantly providing you with the latest update, you may feel like you are being nickel and dimed to death. Having a provider that develops a turnkey solution that will manage all of your IT is essential for your company's budget.

There will still be unforeseen changes, new technology, and expansion that can change that solution, but if your provider executes your IT from a holistic point, you will receive changes that make the most sense for your company, on a timeframe that makes sense.

13. Trial and Error

There are a few simple steps that should be taken for certain system issues. However, if you continually have a computer technician that says, "well, let's try this," without any clear answers, you may be putting your system in jeopardy.

14. Putting You on Hold?

Do you call your helpdesk, only to be put on hold while the answer is delivered? One of those common-sense things, keeping you on hold once the problem is being dealt with is simply wasting everyone's time.

15. Do timelines get infinitely larger?

It was supposed to be done in March, right? Then it was supposed to be done in April. Nothing is changing on your end, but for some reason, the timeframe keeps getting pushed off. Whether it is incompetence, a lack of organization, or simply not making your organization a priority, this is a clear sign that you need to have a talk with your IT professional and find out what is going on.