10 BRUTAL QUESTIONS TO TEST YOUR IT PROVIDER (Current or Future)

You deserve an IT partner that supports your mission — not one that holds you back.

✔ 1. DO YOU UNDERSTAND MY INDUSTRY'S UNIQUE NEEDS?

IT is not a universal toolset — it's a tailored suit.
Every industry has specific compliance, software, workflows, and pain points.

What to dig into:
• Can they name software you use daily?
• Are they fluent in compliance acronyms like HIPAA, CMMC, PCI, or SOC?
• Do they have client success stories in your industry?

A skilled MSP helps you stay ahead of issues with proactive care, minimizing costly surprises down the road.

✔ 2. WHO ANSWERS THE PHONE WHEN THINGS BREAK?

Downtime costs money — and your sanity.
If you're routed to a call center or asked to "submit a ticket and wait," that's a red flag.

Ask about:
• Live-answer support by real people (not bots or outsourced agents)
• Local, in-house teams who know your setup
• Average technician tenure — low turnover means consistent service
• The option to tour their office and meet the team

If they outsource help desk services, they're prioritizing their profits and not your uptime.

✔ 3. HOW ARE YOU PROTECTING US FROM CYBER THREATS?

"We've got antivirus" doesn't cut it anymore.
Cyberattacks are evolving fast — your MSP should be one step ahead.

Must-haves:
• Multi-layered defense (firewalls, MFA, endpoint protection, backups)
• Regular risk assessments and security audits
• Cybersecurity framework adherence (NIST, CIS, etc.)
• End-user training to avoid phishing and social engineering
• Protection for cloud tools, printers, IoT, and beyond

If your MSP isn't leading with security, they're not protecting your business. It's as simple as that.

✔ 4. WHAT IS YOUR ONBOARDING PROCESS?

Switching IT providers shouldn't feel like skydiving without a parachute.
A clear onboarding plan shows they know what they're doing.

Ask to see:
• A Gantt chart or step-by-step onboarding plan
• A discovery phase to understand your network before touching anything
• A "First Day of Support" plan
• 30-60 day post-cutover review to make adjustments
• Client references who've gone through onboarding

If they say "We'll have you up and running next week," they're winging it.

✔ 5. ARE YOU PROACTIVE OR JUST PUTTING OUT FIRES?

Good IT teams solve problems. Great ones prevent them.
If all you get is ticket support, you're missing the big picture.

Look for signs of strategy:
• Quarterly Business Reviews (QBRs) that show planning, not just reporting
• Asset documentation and lifecycle planning
• IT budgeting and upgrade timelines
• Continuous learning and staff training
• Business-aligned roadmaps — not just tech for tech's sake

Your MSP should call you even when nothing's broken — because that's how they keep it that way.

✔ 6. WHO ACTUALLY KNOWS MY BUSINESS?

You shouldn't have to reintroduce yourself every time you call.
Your IT partner should feel like an extension of your team.

Ask about:
• A dedicated account manager who knows your business inside and out
• vCIO services to help with long-term planning
• A consistent team assigned to your account
• Internal reviews where their team discusses your updates regularly

You want a partner who acts like part of your team — not a vendor cycling through strangers.

✔️ 7. DO YOU ONLY CALL WHEN SOMETHING BREAKS?

IT support should feel like a relationship, not a transaction.
If your only touchpoint is a ticket, that's a red flag.

Look for:
- Proactive check-ins even when things are going well
- Strategic meetings to discuss business goals, not just IT
- Invitations to webinars, events, or ongoing education
- A cultural fit — are they relationship-driven or just a service desk?

A good MSP is there in calm waters, not just in the storm.

✔️ 8. WILL YOU HELP US PLAN FOR WHAT'S NEXT?

Growth-focused companies need growth-focused IT.
Your MSP should help you look 1, 3, and 5 years ahead.

Ask about:
- Budget forecasting tools and planning sessions
- Technology roadmaps for upcoming changes
- Industry-specific trends they're watching on your behalf
- Content and educational resources you can actually use

If they only focus on keeping the lights on, they're not helping your business shine.

✔️ 9. CAN I SPEAK WITH LONG-TERM CLIENTS?

Anyone can produce one glowing testimonial.
You want to see proof of long-term partnerships.

Ask to see:
- Clients who've been with them 5, 10, even 15+ years
- Case studies that show growth over time
- Google reviews with real business names and details
- Consistency in how they treat every client

Loyal clients are the biggest signal of long-term value.

✔ 10. ARE YOU PRIVATELY OWNED OR PRIVATE EQUITY BACKED?

Is Your IT Provider Owned by Private Equity? It Matters.
Many MSPs are being bought up by private equity firms chasing profits over service.

Look for:
• Independently owned and operated (more service stability)
• Low employee turnover
• Commitment to long-term client relationships
• Clear plan to stay independent

Private equity firms optimize spreadsheets — not customer satisfaction.

SEARCH SMARTER

Let AI Find Your Next IT Partner

Prompt:
I'm looking for a managed IT service provider that:
– Is locally owned (not part of a private equity group)
– Provides live-answer support (no call centers)
– Offers proactive strategic planning (QBRs, vCIO, roadmaps)
– Follows cybersecurity best practices like NIST
– Has long-term client relationships and proven expertise
– Specializes in my industry — [Your Industry]*
– Serves my region — [Your City/Region/Nationwide]*
– Has 50+ Google Reviews with 4.8+ star average*
– Showcases case studies or testimonials with real client names/logos*
– Has high employee retention and long average employee tenure
– Mentions awards, press coverage, or industry certifications

Please list 3-5 MSPs that match these criteria with a brief overview of their reputation, client success, and company culture — especially their employee retention — so I can evaluate them.

Make the Search About You — Not Them

Simply copy and paste the above prompt into ChatGPT, Perplexity, or Google's AI — then add your own industry and location. Let the AI do the searching, so you can spend less time hunting for options and more time choosing the right partner for your business.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was created by GRIT Technologies, a Michigan-based IT service provider that believes businesses deserve more than break/fix support and long hold times.

We've spent over a decade helping companies across industries take control of their IT — with local support, proactive planning, and a no-outsourcing promise.

We built this checklist to help business leaders ask the tough questions most providers hope you won't. Whether you're re-evaluating your current MSP or searching for a better fit, these 10 questions are designed to give you clarity, confidence, and control.

About GRIT

GRIT is a Michigan-based IT services provider specializing in managed IT support for small to mid-sized businesses. Founded in 2008 and headquartered in Clinton Township, Michigan. GRIT offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to streamline IT operations and enhance business productivity.

Core Services

• **Managed IT Services:** GRIT Technologies provides full IT management, including network infrastructure support, help desk services, and proactive maintenance. Their flat-rate billing model ensures predictable costs for clients.

• **Cybersecurity:** We offer robust cybersecurity solutions to protect critical business data from potential threats and breaches.

• **Technology Projects:** We work on various IT projects such as cloud migrations, low-voltage cabling, infrastructure upgrades, and the installation of security systems.

• **Cabling and Security Products:** Our team can design and implement reliable and scalable structured cabling and security solutions to keep businesses connected and protected.

For more information or to schedule a consultation, visit our website: grittechs.com

Whether you're looking to optimize your IT infrastructure, enhance security measures, or undertake a technology project, GRIT Technologies offers tailored solutions to meet your business needs.

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