



IT for the C-Suite - Quick Read Series

Modern Business Technology Education for the C-Level Executive

By David Moorman - President, DynaSis

What You Need to Know About IT Network Support

With businesses of all sizes hard at work adopting new cloud-based technologies, managed IT network support is becoming ever more important in enabling these companies to safely and properly use these technologies to drive growth and profitability. New business models are being developed as these technologies evolve and they are being used to create all types of new products and services. Cloud technologies also allow businesses to differentiate themselves by using operational intelligence derived from the huge volume of data being generated, then stored, manipulated, and analyzed.

To be a truly effective business leader today, one must understand the need to benefit from these virtual technologies in order to remain competitive on today's playing field. The business leader should not be overly involved in the management of applications, the maintenance of a virtual infrastructure, or the running of a highly secure data center. Their time needs to be spent on running the business, not its IT. To most effectively leverage cloud and today's virtual technology, many company owners and executives quickly come to the realization that they need the assistance of a [managed IT support](#) provider (MSP) for IT network support.

Making the right selection of an MSP can be a critical business decision, often determining whether the company will succeed or fail. It is important to know that your managed IT support partner knows how to deal with difficult and complicated regulatory, PCI, HIPAA (where appropriate), and other issues that will dictate the ultimate financial health of your business.

Additionally, as we see in headlines regularly, security is becoming an ever larger, ever more challenging issue.

The question arises, how do you select an IT network support provider that can run the highly secure, highly compliant, yet totally functional infrastructure we need? Below are a number of attributes we believe you should be looking for:

Attribute 1: Complete & Comprehensive Technology Solutions

Your business is unique. So is every other business. One-size-fits-all doesn't work well in today's ever-changing technology environment. In order to meet its clients' needs, an IT network support provider needs a broad set of solutions that meet not only current needs, but the inevitable changes coming along sooner rather than later. Among these are scalability, so your

business doesn't get caught short as you grow. Another is flexibility – the ability to quickly adapt to new developments, especially as they affect security. In today's environment, your business is likely to become ever more dependent on cloud and virtual technologies, and you will need support in these areas.

A properly configured managed IT support company will provide support in:

- > Virtual Infrastructure
- > Data Storage
- > Colocation
- > End User Computing
- > Application Management
- > and more

Their Service Level Agreement (SLA) will include all levels of support starting with applications and will include everything up through your technology stack. They will be able to support your business whether your applications operate on a single platform or on multiple systems. It is critical that they can work with a wide range of applications and systems.

Attribute 2: Customization

As we stated above, today's technology does not support a one-size-fits-all model. You may think of your business as small and simple, but where you are today may not be where you will be at in a year or two. Setting proper customization today is a big step towards not being left behind as new competitors rise up or old ones gear for the future. "[Digital disruption](#)" is not only the

wave of the future, it is helping some businesses today become "predators" while others become "prey". Customization needs to be incorporated during infrastructure design, or redesign, as the case may be, and your IT network support company should be one that understands and encourages preparation for the future.

Critical to customization is your provider's partnership network. You not only want your MSP to provide comprehensive and creative solutions, you also want them to have access to the products and services offered by the best and most current developers. This set of partnership relationships goes a long way towards ensuring that you are the beneficiary of the best solutions on the market.

Attribute 3: Best Practices

Onboarding, the process in which your newly selected IT network support partner takes over the monitoring, management and maintenance of your IT network, should follow best practices for a smooth transition. This includes the virtualization of your physical machines, unlimited and comprehensive support during transition, and establishment of easy-to-access procedures for ongoing technical support.

Attribute 4: Customer-Centric Attitude

Your new Managed IT Support Provider should embody the core values of a customer-oriented organization, beginning with your dedicated Technical Account Manager. Except perhaps when needing technical support from your provider's help desk, if you opt-in for this service, this individual should be your primary

To most effectively leverage cloud and today's virtual technology, many company owners and executives quickly come to the realization that they need the assistance of a managed IT support provider (MSP) for IT network support.

Breaches have become commonplace because cyber-criminals are hard at work day and night to figure out how to find their way into the networks of companies both large and small. You may believe you are safe because you don't have a national presence. Not true.

point of contact and should be readily available, giving your issues attention, necessary escalation, and resolution.

Great attitude is important, but you need your provider to also have the capability, technical know-how and experience to be able to swiftly resolve issues 24 x 7 x 365 when necessary.

Attribute 5: Network Security

The need for IT network security is unquestionable. We see manifestations of this almost daily to the point where it has become routine. Breaches have become commonplace because cyber-criminals are hard at work day and night to figure out how to find their way into the networks of companies both large and small. You may believe you are safe because you don't have a national presence. Not true. The vast majority of cyber-attacks these days are against small to mid-sized companies. Why? The "bad guys" know that large companies have spent millions of dollars on security, so they come after the smaller but easier target. They steal your customers' personal information, open credit cards in your name – maxing them out quickly, raid your bank accounts, and lock your files and demand ransoms to release them...and sometimes after collecting the ransom, they disappear without unlocking the files, leaving their victims poorer in more ways than one. Fact: The majority of companies that suffer a major security breach close with a year.

One of the key points in selecting your IT network support partner must be the determination that it is at the forefront of network security. Simply put, as a small business owner/ executive, you cannot afford the level of infrastructure security on your own that a quality MSP can provide. Depending on your needs, they may need to provide redundancy that might include multiple data centers (colocation) for redundant file

storage, although top-rated data centers are rarely susceptible to downtime caused by natural disasters.

Because of the dangers of cyber intrusion today, cyber security must be deeply embedded into every aspect of your MSP's operation. They must employ both the personnel and tools necessary to protect your infrastructure. Knowing that employee error is a leading cause of cyber intrusion and the multiple problems it can lead to, they should have employee training materials always updated and available, and make employee training an ongoing endeavor.

Listen to Good Advice: Nothing your MSP recommends works if you don't listen to their advice; whether it involves suggestions for improvements you can make yourself, or improvements they want to make for you. Two mid-sized businesses were attacked by the same malware on almost the same day. The only difference is that one listened to their IT network support company and was prepared for the attack, and one did not.

Attribute 6: Size Matters – Find a Provider That Understands a Business of Your Size

There are MSPs that are major national players specializing in servicing large "enterprise" sized companies. They may try and sell you on the breadth of their service, but the reality is that unless you are an enterprise sized company, you are likely to be a small fish in a big pond. You truly risk being served in a less than customer-centric manner. Then there are small service companies that service businesses in the 1-10 employee range, and that work primarily on a break and fix model. In other words, when something breaks, you call them to fix it. The more it breaks, the more they fix, the more money they make. There is little in the way of preventive maintenance or monitoring.

Additionally, chances are that this company won't have the diverse experience and expertise you need when problems pop up that are not run-of-the-mill.

The best IT network support provider for your company will likely be one that is large enough, with certifications and expertise across a wide range of technical subjects, so they can provide the support you need, while small enough to truly value your business. You want a company experienced in working with companies your size and that can adapt its services to your needs, not the other way around. In other words, you are entitled to receive personalized service and attention crafted to fit your needs.

Benefits of a Managed IT Support / IT Network Support Company

Cost Control: Variable costs that can rise and fall significantly turn into highly predictable fixed costs. Hiring, training, and maintaining an in-house IT team can be very expensive and your people may not have the diverse expertise you may find you need.

Experience: "Qualified" does not equal experienced. Your IT person/people will only experience the situations arising within your company, while an MSP's people gain experience every day.

New Technology: The right MSP will have the personnel necessary to implement new technologies, and they will likely become aware of these improvements earlier than your in-house people.

Corporate Focus: By having a whole team behind you that you can rely on for IT maintenance and security, your executives can focus better on your core business.

Risk: Your IT network support provider will assume much of the financial risk of your IT infrastructure. Most importantly, they will limit your cyber-security risk by keeping your security tools up-to-date and by monitoring your system 24 x 7 x 365.

Leveling the Playing Field: Your small to mid-sized business simply can't afford the same level of in-house expertise and security as the big guys. Having a well-qualified MSP allows you to take advantage of the economy of scale that would otherwise not be available to you.

Compliance: PCI, HIPAA, Audits, etc. Depending on your business, there may be multiple levels of compliance you need to deal with. For example, there are many more ways to collect payment these days, which makes business easier in some respects, but more complicated in others. Your MSP should understand the criteria in all compliance matters that affect your business.

There is a lot to consider, but in the final analysis, by outsourcing your IT network support to the right managed IT support provider, you can be pretty much assured that your costs will be the same or even be reduced, your level of security will increase, chances of a major problem will decrease significantly, and your executive team can better focus on running your business. In fact, once you look into the MSP option thoroughly, we believe you will be hard pressed to come up with a single advantage of not moving forward with the transition.

Here at [DynaSis](#), we have been providing managed IT support for small to mid-sized companies just like yours, across a wide range of industries, for more than a quarter century. The first step is to call us so we can discuss your options and possibly schedule a complimentary IT assessment, after which we will suggest a plan to move forward. Give us a call today at 678.373.0716.