GUIDE TO CHOOSING AN IT SERVICES FIRM

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CHAPTER ONE

The Preparation

The Preparation

Determine your needs. Create a list.

Your first decision has been made, you are looking for an IT Services firm to help with your IT projects. Now you need to define your needs and create a list of your requirements. This list you will use to help you determine which IT Services firm best fits your companies needs.

Your list should include the following items:

- **Project Specifics:**
    - What type of project are you looking to perform? Infrastructure upgrade, move to a hybrid cloud, etc. This will help you limit the search to firms with the necessary skillsets for your project.
    - What is the time frame for your project?
    - Will internal personnel be involved and to what degree?
    - Will you require multiple vendors to accomplish the project?

These are some of the basic questions that will help you define your needs. There will obviously be more. So focus your thoughts and create a list. This list should be your ideals in a perfect world. Let it sit for a day and come back and modify your list. Look at the list and rate each need or requirement as a “must have” or “could do without”. This will help you when vetting potential partners against your list of ideals. You may never be able to reach all of those ideals so know what your ultimate priorities are when trying to find a partner to match your requirements. Then start your next step, the search for the right partner.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SEARCH

THE SEARCH

How do you find that right fit ?

Now that you know what you need and what you want it is time to locate a partner that can meet and hopefully exceed your needs. Use your list and as you gather information from potential candidates, eliminate the ones that don't meet you list requirements.

Your search should include the following methods, yet there may be other ways to meet your potential partner:

- **The Internet:** Search for what you need online. Be specific with your word choices and think about including the geographic area in your search.
- **Trade sources**: Ask for a referral from a trusted vendor, colleague or customer. Then look up these company's on the web before you reach out to them to first see if they would be a good fit.
- **Industry references:** Many IT vendors have a partner locater that you can access. Microsoft, Vmware and others can provide you a contact for one of their partners. Do be careful, as these partner locaters are not a method of vetting but rather just awareness. It should mean that the referred partner does have the skillset you need but don't trust that simply because they were found from an Industry giants partner locator. You must still perform your due diligence in vetting the potential partner.

Start with collecting information from the internet, phone calls to potential partners and direct references. Narrow your selection down based on the information gathered and how this information matches the list of your needs. Pick no more than 2 or 3 candidates for a face to face meeting.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INTERVIEW

THE INTERVIEW

You will need to meet your potential support company

After you have narrowed your list. Ask that your potential partners come and meet with you. Be prepared, stick to your list. Don't be afraid to ask direct questions. Many potential partners will attempt to steer you in their sales process. A good fit will be a partner that listens more than they talk. When you ask them questions let them answer fully. Ask them leading questions and drill in. For example, How many projects similar to ours have you performed. Whom did you work for? May I speak with them?
You might ask how they are structured and how many people they have working for them. Keep to your list. Get a feel for the person you meet. This is their ambassador, they should be representative of how the company will work and communicate with you.

- **Check your list:** Do they meet your needs? Stick to your script.
- **Check their references:** Do call their references. This is important. If they can provide reference, call them. Be ready to ask them questions like, Why do you work with "Potential Partner"? How have they helped your company? Etc.
- **Visit their offices**: If you are able, visit their offices. You will be able to meet their people, see how they live, how well they are organized and many other things. This will provide you some intangible information, like how is their company culture and so forth. This can be invaluable information for making your final choice.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHOICE

THE CHOICE

By now the choice should be clear.

By this time, you likely have a good idea whom you would like to work with for your project. Before you make a final choice get some quotes. This will also provide that final information on how they price their products and services. You should have enough information to know that the partner can execute the project they have quoted. They have the resources you need and are trustworthy and capable of completing the project. So make your decision and move forward with confidence.

Your part is not over however:

- **Manage the project:** You will need to hold the new partner accountable. Assure there are reasonable deadlines. Communicate regularly throughout the project to make sure all is well.
- **Review the project when it is complete:** How well did the project succeed at meeting your goals? Did it come in at or under budget? What if any maintenance on the new systems installed is necessary?

For more information on successful project implementations see our ebook on Project Implementations

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Jack Prager, CEO
Systech Information Services, Inc.

START A RELATIONSHIP

Let’s have a meeting and see if we are a good fit for each other. If you value honesty, technology, and the experience we bring then we want to work with you.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROJECT