



The 2027 IT SERVICES BUYER'S GUIDE

*An easy-to-follow guide
showing you how to pick a
new IT support partner.
Discover what to look for,
what to beware of and the
right questions to ask.*



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The 2027 IT SERVICES BUYER'S GUIDE

Page 5 - Chapter 1:

The 5 big technology revolutions affecting businesses like yours

Page 11 - Chapter 2:

You've got a business plan. Do you have an IT strategy?

Page 15 - Chapter 3:

Why business owners & managers switch IT partners

Page 23 - Chapter 4:

Protect the most important thing in your business

Page 27 - Chapter 5:

Why you should be highly skeptical of all IT support companies

Page 33 - Chapter 6:

What every IT support company wishes you knew about IT

Page 37 - Chapter 7:

How to help your internal IT people, if you have them

Page 39 - Chapter 8:

Don't take our word for it: Here's what our clients say

Page 42 - Chapter 9:

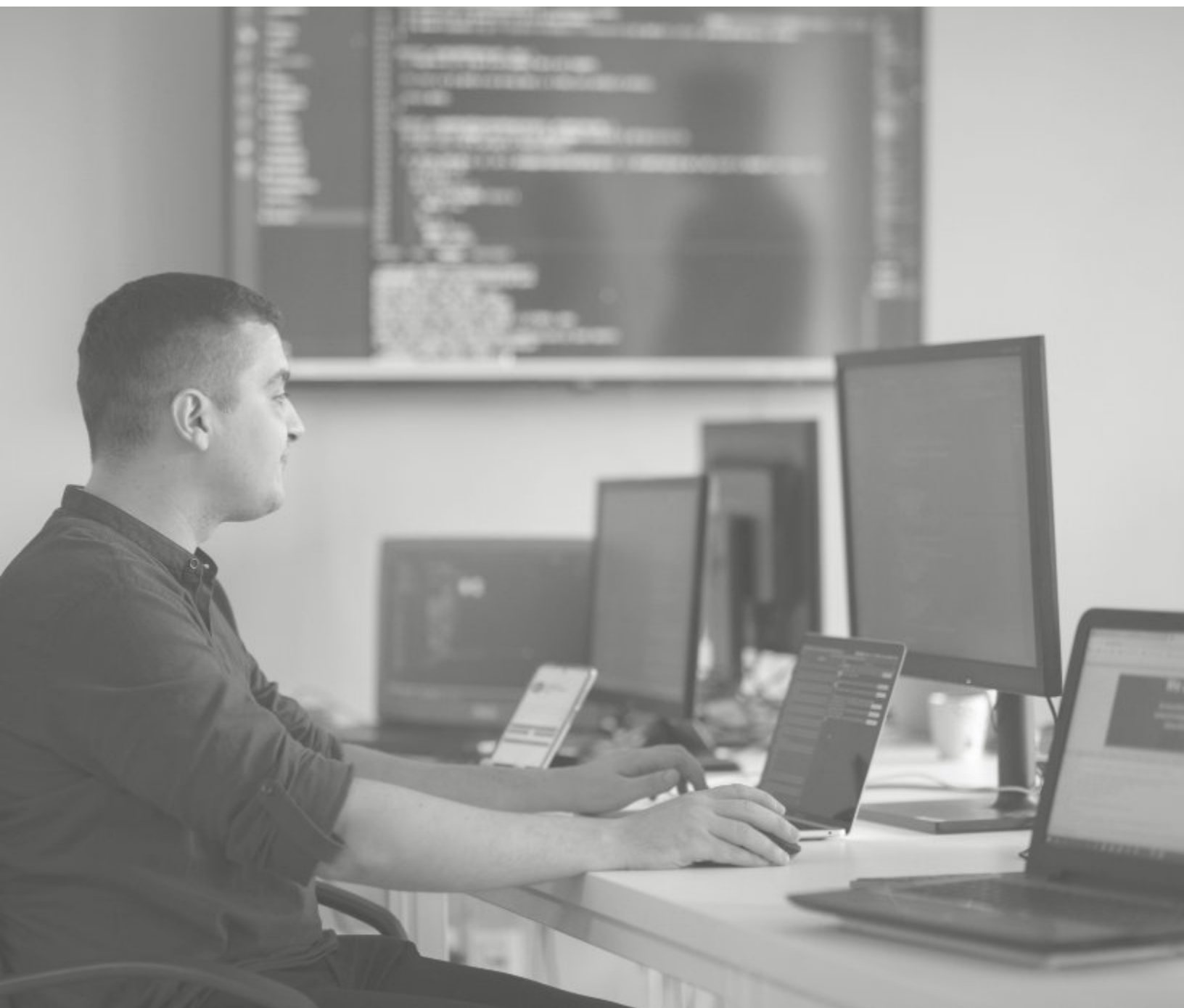
About us

Page 45 - Chapter 10:

What will happen during your first 90 days

Page 47 - Chapter 11:

What to do next



Chapter 1:

The 5 big technology revolutions affecting businesses like yours

Hello, my name's Arthur Gaplanyan, and I'm the Co-Founder and President of Xentric Solutions.

It has been a hard few years for business owners and managers like you and me.

Whether you're doing well today or fighting for every bit of new business, you have seen how fast the technology we all rely on is changing.

I believe we're in the middle of a series of large, interconnected technology revolutions. **There are 5 areas that I see are directly affecting the businesses my team and I look after:**





Revolution 1) AI

Go back to late 2022. For most people, AI still sounded like science fiction, something that would happen “in the future.” Then ChatGPT was released to the public and the AI race started.

AI tools had been in development for years. What changed is that anyone could suddenly reach them through a browser.

If you use Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT or Google Gemini, you're in good company. Most businesses use AI in some form now, even if it is only built into tools they already own.

You might use it for research, to generate images or to draft documents. You might use it to turn calls into notes and pull together meeting records. Plenty of people get that benefit every day without thinking of it as AI.

The next stage is already starting:

AI that works out what needs to be done and does it without being asked. This is called agentic AI. It is like giving a smart robot its own task list. It decides what steps to take and gets the job done without waiting for help. I would find out which of your tools can act on their own and what those tools can reach before your people switch those features on.

How would that change the way your business works?



Revolution 2) Hybrid working

The shift in 2020 sped up something already growing: people want the option to work from home, from the office or from Starbucks.

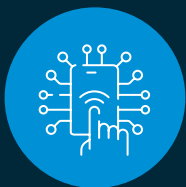
Technology makes that easy. A manager at home and a team member at the office should be able to join the same call and open the same files without phoning the help desk. That only works when it is set up properly, so I would make sure someone is watching the security side and reviewing your collaboration tools regularly.



Revolution 3) The cloud

Working anywhere, any time, on any device is easy because of the cloud. You may remember when you couldn't reach your data unless you were in the office.

That freedom raises your exposure to crime. I will cover that in chapter 4.



Revolution 4) Internet of Things

The day refrigerators went online, it was clear that eventually everything would be. Forecasts put the number of devices online at nearly 40 billion by 2030.

That's handy when you want to check how many eggs are left. It also matters for security. Every connected device is another way in, so I would keep a list of what is connected and who is responsible for each one.



Revolution 5) The greatest security risk ever known

This revolution runs through the other four, because every change gives cybercriminals an opening, and change is constant right now.

I have never seen as many threats to normal businesses like yours as I see today. Cybercriminals use automated tools to go after all businesses, all the time. It takes one person clicking one bad link in a fake email to let them in, and you may not know they're there for hours or weeks.

There is a clear security best practice that everyone on your team should follow, and I'm constantly testing new cybersecurity tools to keep my clients safe. I'll tell you plainly which ones I think are worth your money.

It is easy to feel you're falling behind. Even as technology experts, my team and I work hard to stay on top of it. The strategy I recommend you focus on is Defend and Invest.

Defend protects your business from cybercriminals.

Invest makes sure technology is powering your business forward, not holding it back.



It is easy to feel you're falling behind. Even as technology experts, my team and I work hard to stay on top of it.

Let me make it easy for you with a simple technology strategy I believe you should focus on:

Defend and Invest.



Defend is about protecting your business from cybercriminals



Invest is about making sure technology is powering your business forward, not holding it back

I suspect you're reading this guide because you're not 100% happy with your current IT support company and are thinking of changing.

Of course, I'd like you to switch to us!

I wrote this guide to show you what good IT support looks like and how a trusted partner behaves.

I will explain why we partner with our clients rather than act as a supplier, and why I believe your IT strategy and data security belong at the core of your long-term planning.

If you're ready to talk before reading further, jump to chapter 11 to arrange a conversation. **Let's see how we can partner to help your business.**



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Chapter 2:

You've got a business plan.
Do you have an IT strategy?

When did you last update your IT strategy?

If you don't have one, or you have not thought about it in the last few years, now is the time to build one. If you already have one that has served you well, it is a good starting point.

If you use any technology in your business, whether that is a cash register or a network for five locations, a proper IT strategy is the foundation for growing. Without one, technology decisions get made one at a time by whoever has the problem that week. That works for a while. Then you look up and find systems that do not talk to each other and spending nobody planned.

A strategy can decide whether you simply survive a period of uncertainty or come out ahead of it. I'll be honest with you: I'm biased. I still believe a well-thought-out IT strategy matters for any successful business.

Your IT strategy should sit alongside your business plan and show how technology will move you toward your goals. It should cover short-term and long-term targets and leave room to change.

It is called an IT strategy, but it is about your business more than your technology. You will have plans for the devices and software you use now and the ones you want later. The point is how technology helps you reach what you want in the simplest way possible.

A great starting point is to look at your current IT infrastructure:

- What works well?
- What would you like to improve?
- As your business grows, will your technology grow with you, or will you need to look at new software, networks, and even phone systems?



Ask your people what works well and what they would change if they could. Find out which parts of your infrastructure hold them back. Find out whether they would save time with different software, or if one application could talk to another.

A proactive IT partner helps you choose the right hardware and software based on how you work and how you want to work. They should spot problems you have not noticed and suggest simpler ways of doing things.

A technology roadmap, built into your strategy, lets you budget and see what to invest in and when. It stops surprise costs and invoices you were not expecting. Building one yourself can feel complicated, which is why your IT partner should be involved.

Every dollar you spend needs to be justified right now, and every investment needs to work for your business. Set up a few metrics to track how well your infrastructure is paying off.

For instance, you might track how many support requests come in each month, how quickly each one is resolved and how much time your team loses to technology problems. Your team may like the way a system works, but if it's not delivering a return, it is not working as well as they think.

Your IT partner should also join regular strategic reviews. How often is up to you, and what your business requires. Look at what is going well and what is taking longer than you would like. Bring your plans for the next year too, such as hiring, a new location or a new service, so the roadmap stays tied to the business.

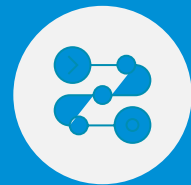
This is why I keep saying partner. Not an IT support company, not a provider. **A partner.**

Imagine an office building with a janitor who comes in every evening and cleans up the mess people made. That is how a lot of IT support companies work. They clean up the mess. The janitor is useful, but if the janitor is the only person you have, nobody is looking at the building as a whole.

We prefer to work as the facilities manager. That person is always thinking ahead, schedules the maintenance the building needs, and looks for ways to stop it falling into disrepair. There is still some managing of the janitors to make sure the job gets done, but a facilities manager prevents most problems from happening in the first place.

That is the proactive approach we take. We do as much as we can in the background so things don't go wrong. Some things will still go wrong, because fast-moving technology and data make that unavoidable. That is when the clean-up happens and things get fixed. All the proactive work means we have far less to clean up than a company that doesn't work that way.

What my team and I like to do for our clients is to create ongoing technology roadmaps. It means that both you and I know exactly:

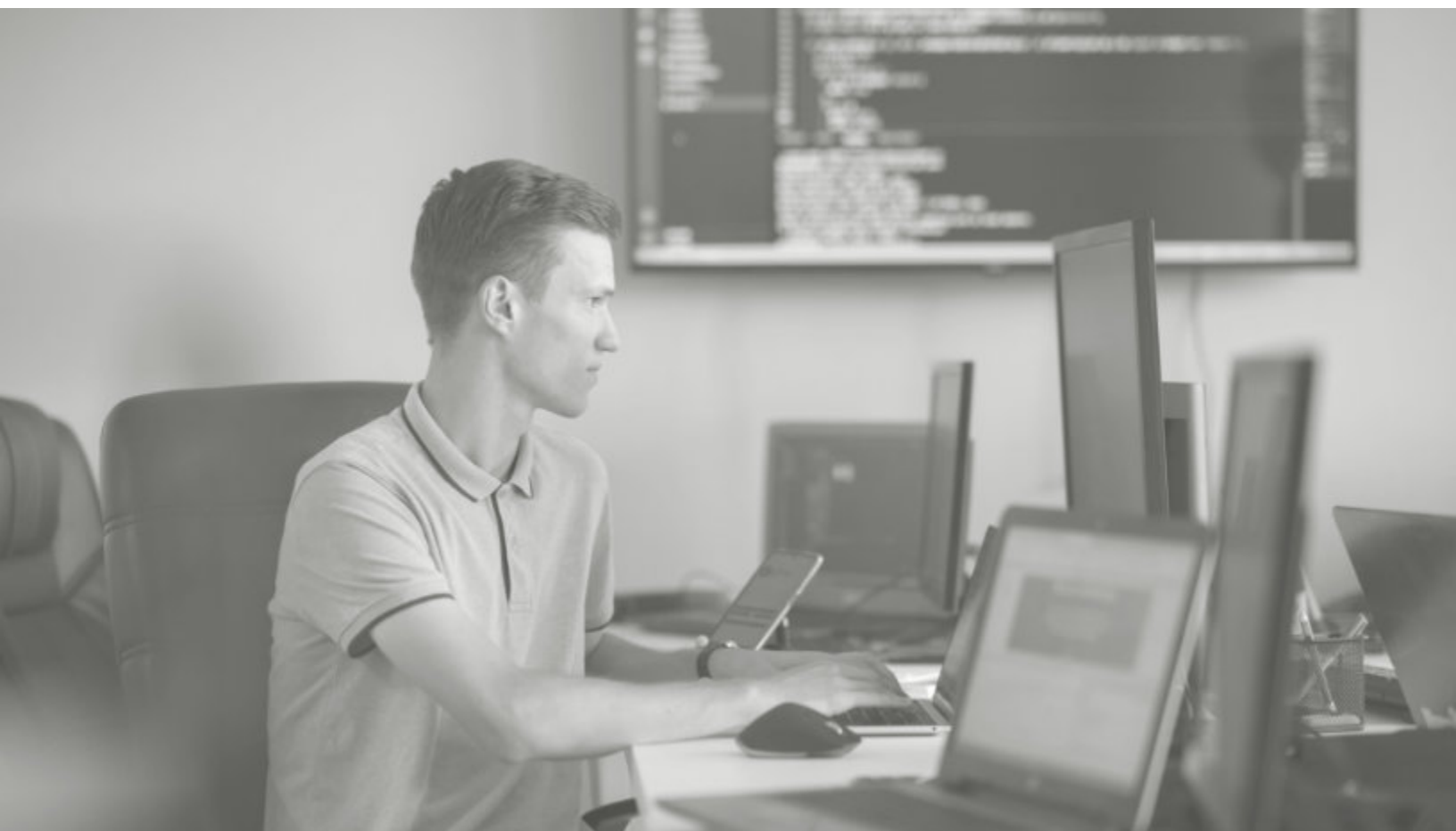


- What will be happening over the next 2 to 3 years
- What technology investments you need to make

There are no surprises. It is all planned around regular strategic reviews so we keep moving in the right direction, and within budget.

The roadmap also shows what can be delayed if there is a problem, what is critical and, if you're ahead financially, what can be brought forward. It doesn't have to happen all at once.

That kind of planning depends on the partnership. We become an extension of your company. We get to know your business as if it were our own, and we keep learning about you and your team. Because we know where your business is going as well as you do, it is easy for us to help.



Chapter 3:

Why business owners & managers switch IT partners

I hear from a lot of businesses that are unhappy with their current IT support provider. I'm sure yours does some things well. If a few of these sound familiar, though, it is worth asking whether you have the right fit.

These are the top 10 reasons people want to make the switch to a new and improved IT support partner:



#1

Reason to switch 1) You're not seeing business results

Return on investment is everything. Especially right now. You need to be able to see immediately exactly how hard your IT partner is working for you, and what benefit that work is bringing to your business.

An IT support partner should not only provide a detailed IT strategy for the long and short term, but they should also give you a set of metrics which you can measure results by.

And these metrics should be relevant and important to your business. Not a standard set issued by the IT support partner, not made difficult with jargon. I've heard too many stories of IT companies providing vague metrics that are impossible to decipher. Avoid!

#2

Reason to switch 2) Poor communication

This can cover a whole range of issues... from taking too long for them to acknowledge problems... to them not telling you when updates are taking place... or not getting back to you when they say they will...

If we were talking about any other kind of supplier, these gripes might seem petty. But as we know, without working technology, your business can't run as it's supposed to, and these little gripes become huge issues.

Again, this is another way for you to distinguish an IT support provider from an IT support partner.

You need a responsive IT support partner who:

- **Acknowledges issues in good time**
- **Keeps you in the loop of everything you need to know, and**
- **Does what they say they'll do, when they say they'll do it**

Just as your success is their success, your failure is their failure. So, the faster an issue can be resolved, the better it is for both parties.

#3

Reason to switch 3) They don't take data security seriously

Yes, you read that correctly.

There are some IT support providers – whose job is to keep your data safe and secure – that don't do the same thing within their own business.

They don't make it a priority to keep themselves educated on the latest scams and threats. They can't keep you fully protected.

And they won't go out of their way to ensure every part of your data is as safe as it can be. Or that your software is 100% up to date all the time.

I know... this scares me too...

Is this really a company you'd want to be responsible for keeping your business safe from the growing number of attacks and data breaches?

#4

Reason to switch 4) They won't go outside of their contract

"Sorry, we don't cover that."

Ever heard that from your IT support provider? Lots of businesses have. But so long as the request relates to your technology, it should be a red flag.

"We don't cover that" suggests a real lack of concern for your business, and that's not how a partner behaves.

A partner actively spends time looking at new ways to improve your network, your data security and your infrastructure. They won't be working rigidly to a one-size fits all contract.

And that's the point. One size doesn't fit all, because every business is unique. Even two businesses in the same street, selling the same product or service will have a different way of working. They'll use different software and devices, have different people working with them and, importantly, have different goals.

You need an IT support partner who will take your goals as their own and do as much as they can to help you reach them.

#5

Reason to switch 5) Things take too long to fix

Some problems can't always be fixed immediately. Now and then issues take a while to get to the bottom of. Other problems are rare and may demand more diagnostic work.

But in these situations, good communication is key.

It might take a while to see a resolution. But if your IT support partner is keeping you updated at each step, you're confident it's in hand.

Whereas if your support request is still waiting for a response three days later... you've got a problem.

And what if some issues never get fixed at all? Or one thing gets fixed only to break something else?

This *is* technology we're talking about. It goes wrong. It doesn't always work the way we want it to.

But you absolutely should not be facing issue after issue, waiting days to have problems resolved. You should not face silence when you need help.

All that waiting means downtime for your business. Where's the value for money in that?



#6

Reason to switch 6) They never accept responsibility

When you take on an IT support partner, it's vital that both businesses take responsibility for their side of the agreement.

Failing to do so causes a huge lack of trust. And means the relationship is going nowhere.

I've heard from business owners who have reported an issue to their IT support provider, only to be told that it's their fault that the issue arose!

(despite them following advice and instruction from that company)

I've also heard from business owners who reported issues to their IT support provider, only to be told that they need to contact someone else (such as a software supplier) about the problem.

The idea of an IT support partner is that you trust them to deal with their area of expertise, while you get on with yours. If they're passing the buck when you face a problem, you're not getting the benefit of a support partner at all.

#7**Reason to switch 7) They confuse you with tech talk**

If technology wasn't complicated, everyone would be able to take care of their own business infrastructure without a problem.

However, the truth is quite the opposite. It's full of strange words and concepts, and everything changes every 7 minutes! (it seems that way anyway).

It's a minefield if you don't know what you're doing.

The hallmark of a good IT support partner is that they take this complication and make it look easy. Better still, they make it sound easy. They explain things to you without sounding like they're speaking a foreign language.

Again, it all comes down to your connection as partners. If you can't communicate properly with each other, how fruitful is this relationship really going to be? The likelihood is that it'll leave both sides frustrated, and your business won't be able to make the most of the technology it has.

#8**Reason to switch 8) You're not learning**

We're not expecting your IT support partner to teach you their job. You don't need to be an expert in IT – that's what you're paying someone else for. However, there should be an element of learning when you partner with an IT company.

For example, you need to learn about cybersecurity, how to avoid scams, and how to protect your data.

If you're told "let us worry about that", it should ring alarm bells. You can't expect to keep your organization safe from a data breach or data theft if you don't know what you're trying to protect yourself from.

It's also important that your IT support partner explains what they're doing. You want to have a basic understanding of how your infrastructure works or is set up for you. This will help you to help yourself when a minor issue occurs.

#9

Reason to switch 9) They're always pushing new hardware

Some of our clients complain that their previous IT support providers spent more time pushing new equipment than they did on the fundamentals.

Of course, there's nearly always a genuine upgrade on the cards... an operating system that's had it's day, or tired old hardware that can't keep up. So for some, a hardware refresh really is overdue.

And it's nice to have the very latest technology in your business. But it's certainly not vital. There are lots of other things to consider before upgrading equipment and devices. Especially today when you expect value for money and a return on investment.

Yes, your business will need a certain level of equipment for you to operate the way you need to, but you probably already have most of the technology you need. I find that for most businesses, it's far more important to get the infrastructure right before we consider your hardware. Additional devices, for example, are sometimes nice to have rather than crucial.

A good IT support partner will help you create an IT roadmap, which should detail when in the years ahead you need to budget for upgrades or additional devices.

#10

Reason to switch 10) You've outgrown them

This last one isn't necessarily a bad reason to switch IT support partners. Sometimes, your business just grows too big for a smaller IT company to deal with.

That's great news for you. The difficult part can be knowing when to make the switch. Especially when you're working with a company that you like.

It's worth keeping in mind that:

- **If your support requests aren't being responded to as quickly as you need them to be**
- **Or the recommendations on how best to use technology to grow your business have stopped**
- **Or you need a higher level of support**

... it's in your best interest to find a new IT support partner.

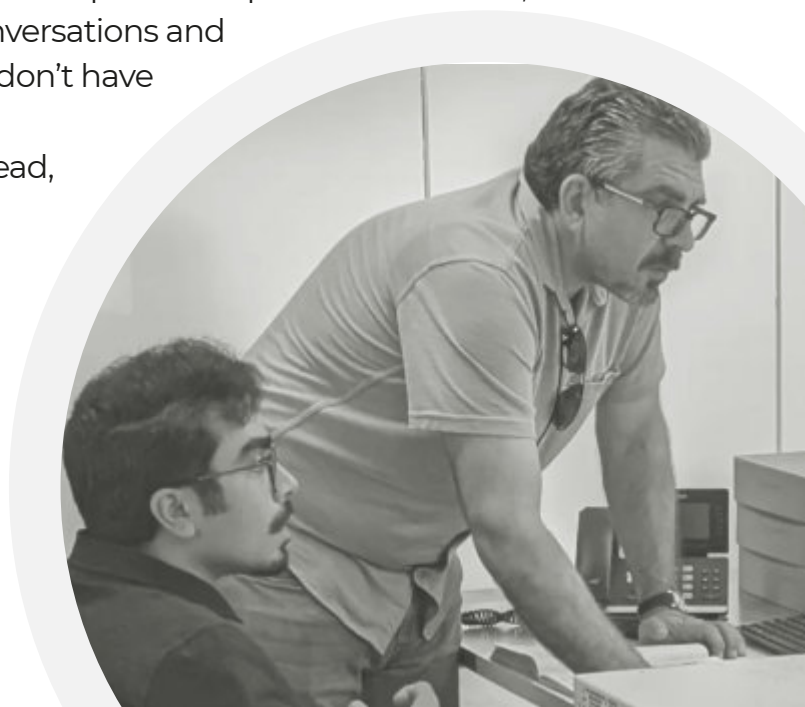
If you've noticed you need more support, your IT support partner has probably noticed too. In fact, if they're good partners, they may even discuss this with you first. Trust me when I say there will be no hard feelings. No company wants to be out of its depth with clients.

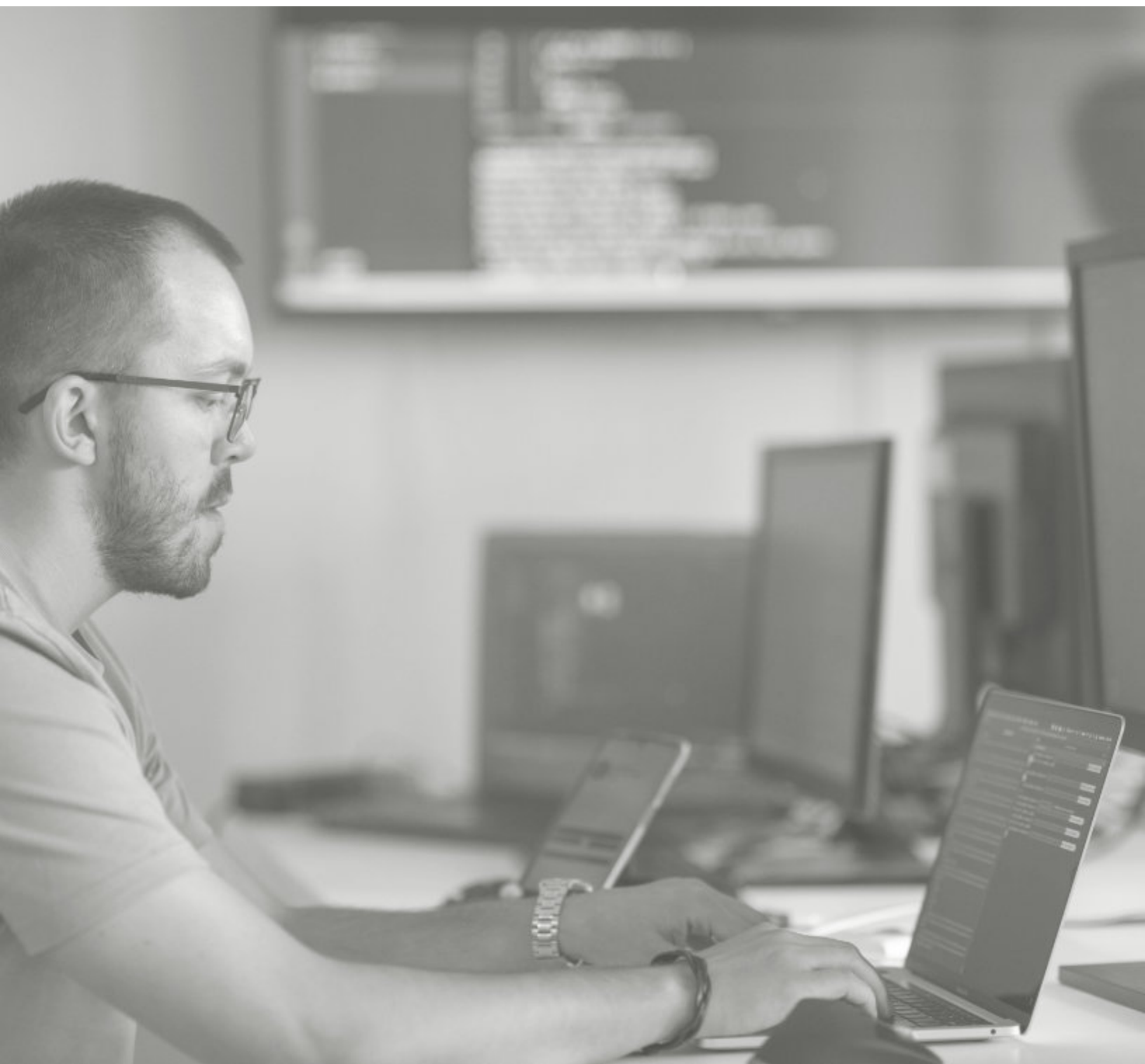
If you've ever felt any of these issues, maybe now is the right time for you to make the switch too?

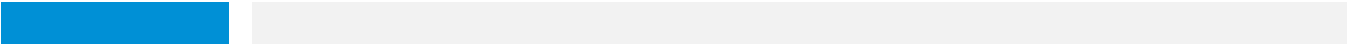
When you place your technology at the heart of your business growth strategy, you see why it's important to have a partner you can trust.

No business is perfect. Inevitably we get some things wrong for our clients some of the time, because we're human too.

But because my team and I have partnerships with our clients, we're able to have adult conversations and change course quickly. We don't have to spend unnecessary time repairing relationships. Instead, we can set the correct expectations and resolve issues quickly.







Chapter 4:

Protect the most important thing in your business

As the past few years have shown, being able to work anywhere, any time, on any device is liberating. Working flexibly lets businesses reduce costs, attract the best candidates and keep a happier workforce.

Our devices are also getting smarter, more powerful and more disposable. You can do most things on your phone now, and most of us lose or break one eventually. Because everything is stored in the cloud (huge servers that keep your data in multiple locations around the globe), losing a phone is no big deal. You get a new one, restore your files from backup and the new handset has everything the old one had. A lost phone is now a minor inconvenience and a small cost. Tablets and laptops work the same way.

That flexibility comes with a risk. Any time a device leaves the office, your data is potentially open to anybody, and many cybercriminals are working hard to get at it and even take it from you. A backup protects you from a lost phone. It doesn't stop the bad guys from logging in with a stolen password.

You have probably heard of **malware**. Malware, short for malicious software, is code placed on a device or network to infect, steal or corrupt your data. Once it is inside your network, a hacker can make it do exactly what they want, such as quietly copying files or recording what people type. It can take you a while to notice, and it is difficult to remove.

Ransomware is worse, and it is the fastest-growing cybercrime right now. Ransomware is malicious software that encrypts your data so you cannot reach it. The hackers then demand a fee to give access back. For instance, they might ask for \$10,000 in cryptocurrency within three days. If you don't pay, the fee doubles, and if a week goes by you can lose your data for good. Paying does not guarantee you get it back either.

Anyone can become a victim, but small and medium-sized businesses are the usual targets, because cybercriminals know this group typically doesn't spend enough time or money on cybersecurity. The attackers work at scale with automated tools, so a 25-person company is a more likely target than most owners expect. I do not want to bore you with statistics, but up to two thirds of businesses have been hit with ransomware, and the attacks get more sophisticated every year.

The most common way ransomware gets onto a device or network is someone clicking a link in a suspicious **email**. It is easy to wonder how anyone, especially someone in your own business, would fall for that, until you see how convincing these emails have become. AI has changed things for scammers too. It now writes phishing emails that are close to impossible to spot, and voice and video deepfakes (fake audio or video of a real person) are being used to impersonate people you know.

Imagine one of your managers gets an email that looks like it is from your bank, the IRS or another department in your own company, sent from an address that is a near copy of the real one. It asks for something simple, like clicking to update their details. A common version asks someone in accounting to change a vendor's bank account information. Even with a suspicious eye, it is hard to see that anything is wrong. What your team does next is the part you can prepare for.

Once attackers are in, they don't always strike straight away. Sometimes they move within hours. Other times they sit inside your network for weeks, even months, waiting for the right moment. The

longer a hacker stays, the harder they're to detect. Hackers usually enter through one connected device and then look through your network for other weaknesses, because the more devices they control, the better for them. By the time the attack starts, it can be virtually impossible to push them out. That is what makes ransomware so hard to deal with, and it is why catching a problem early beats cleaning up after it.

You need to be aware of the signs of a hacker in your network. Both you and your IT support partner should look out for:



- Unexpected new administrators appearing on your network
- Software being disabled
- New software being downloaded
- Remote access sessions lasting for days at a time

A good partner will recommend regular cybersecurity training for everyone in your business. Your people are your first line of defense, and software alone will not give you a good level of protection. You need software and people. Training works best when it is short and regular, so people remember it on the day a suspicious email

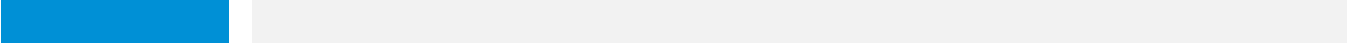
actually arrives. You can also send your team a harmless practice phishing email, see who clicks and use the results to decide what to cover next.

I'll be honest with you: you can never be 100% protected from malware, ransomware and other attacks. The criminals keep inventing something new, and data security has to catch up. It is possible to reach 99.99%, but we do not always agree with going that far. When you lock everything down, you frustrate your staff. They have extra layers to get through, more steps in a busy workload and more to remember, so they skip steps and look for ways around security. That puts your business at greater risk.

Security is always a balance with convenience. Picture the door to your office with seven big locks and a biometric scan. Eventually people get frustrated and prop it open.

To remove that friction, we use what is called blended security, a layered approach where several products and services work together. Antivirus alone will not protect you, so the layers cover what the others miss. If your current provider already has antivirus and backup in place, that is a good foundation. What I would ask is what covers your email, your people and your remote devices on top of it. Your people have fewer codes and passwords to deal with, and your data gets better protection. Every blend is different, depending on the business, so we can fit security to each client's requirements. My recommendation is to start with the protections that cover your most likely risks and add layers down the road. It doesn't have to happen all at once.





Chapter 5:

Why you should be highly skeptical of all IT support companies

You probably don't know what you don't know about IT.

Does that I think that is a fair assumption for me to make, and I don't mean it as a criticism. You have no reason to follow the latest tech news, software and support updates when you're busy doing what you do best.

You probably read your industry magazines and blogs, visit trade shows, go to conferences and attend training. You're an expert in your field, and you do not have time to do all of that for IT as well. You would not expect your clients to know as much about your area of expertise as you do, which is why they hire you. The same goes for us.

We immerse ourselves in the technical, fast-moving world of technology. We love it, and we pride ourselves on a level of expertise most people don't have. You would be surprised how many people call themselves IT experts because they know their way around a computer. Great IT partners work at a different level, with better knowledge, tools and systems.

The biggest problem with IT support is that it is an unregulated industry. No governing body decides who can call themselves an IT support company, there is no industry standard to meet and there are no guidelines on how a business must operate. Literally anybody can set up and say they're an IT support company. There are many excellent companies out there. It means the checking falls to you.

That is why I say you should be highly skeptical of all IT support companies. Without asking the right questions, you do not know whether you're trusting your business data to a reputable, honest company or to someone working alone from a spare bedroom. I call those folks bedroom warriors.

Do not get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with bedroom warriors. Everyone starts somewhere, and if you're a one-person business with minimal IT needs, that could be the most cost-effective option for you. If you own or manage an established, growing business with staff and more than one computer, you need more than one person in a bedroom can provide. If you're not sure which side of that line your business sits on, ask a partner to look at what you have today. What you do with the answer is up to you.

To avoid the wrong IT support company, start with solidity. Check that they have the right qualifications, accreditation and experience. Ask which certifications the team holds, which vendors they partner with and how long they have supported businesses your size. It is an unregulated industry, so do the research.

Next, ask them some difficult questions. You don't want to see your potential partner squirm, but you do want to know they will deliver what you need, and difficult questions are the only way to be sure. Ask every company the same questions so you can compare apples to apples.

Ask them: “How quickly will problems be fixed?”

The answer depends on the scale of the problem, but you need time frames based on severity. Find out how long it takes them to acknowledge your issue and how long until someone is working on it. Get the answer in writing, because a company that has thought about response times will have them documented. Ask who decides what counts as urgent, because that decision sets how long you wait.

Then look at specific scenarios. If you can't access your software, how long should it take to get you logged in? Ask how long it would take to get your business running again after a ransomware attack.

Ask about their approach too. Find out whether they follow processes and procedures when issues come up, or whether they're winging it. Ask them to tell you about the worst problem they have dealt with and how they handled it. You're judging how they responded, not the problem itself. That tells you a lot about their professionalism, knowledge and ability to stay calm in a crisis.

Ask them: “What do you do proactively, to make sure my team has fewer interruptions?”

Downtime costs a business more than people expect.

You have seen it in your own company or one you worked for. The internet goes down, and people cannot reach the software they need to do their jobs. The office descends into chaos. Even people who do not rely on the internet stop working, the coffee machine goes into overdrive and everyone takes an unofficial break.

When things come back up, nobody gets straight back to work. Conversations get finished, systems reboot and people need time to refocus. A 15-minute interruption can cost you 90 minutes of work, and that is from a minor problem.

So what does your partner do to reduce downtime? A good answer is specific: what they monitor, when they install updates and what they do when something looks off. Ask what they do in a normal week that you would never see. They should be working in the background, running the checks that stop most small problems before they start, and doing most updates and maintenance outside working hours. They should also have other solutions that keep your business productive while essential work is going on.

Ask them: “Tell me about the specific people who’ll be looking after us.”

Many businesses overlook this one, and it matters. You will be talking to these people during the worst afternoon of your year, so it helps to know them before that.

Find out how the company assigns your account manager, and whether account managers have sector expertise. Some companies match you on how your personalities will work together. Others give you whoever has the smallest workload.

Ask whether you will always speak to the same person and what happens when that person is on vacation or sick. Ask who will run your strategic IT reviews and build your technology roadmap, and who you talk to if you’re not happy.

The answers tell you about the company, and whether their people are the right match for yours.

Ask them: “Can you explain something deeply technical to me in a way I’ll understand?”

I’m not suggesting you learn how to build an IT infrastructure from the ground up. This question shows whether they can explain things in plain English instead of tech-speak.

For instance, ask them to explain how backups work, or why they want multi-factor authentication (the second code or approval after your password) turned on, and listen for whether you could repeat it to your team.

Watch how they react when you ask a lot of questions. Some people get frustrated, or brush you off with “you don’t need to know the technicalities of that.”

If you’re partnering with someone, you need to communicate clearly, without confusion. The question also shows whether they can teach you about the things that matter.

Ask them: “How will you keep on top of the constant changes in my business?”

Successful businesses deal with constant change, from new staff to tweaks in the product or service you offer. That is how we grow. Your business probably looks very different now than it did 12 months ago.

Find out how your potential partner will keep up, how much they need to know about those changes and whether it will affect what they do for you.

It should.

You’re looking for a partner, not just another supplier, and part of their role is to recommend better software, a smoother network and more appropriate security based on how you work.

For instance, when you hire five people or open a second location, your IT partner should hear about it before the new laptops arrive. I would also ask how they hear about changes: a form, a call or a regular meeting.

If they can't track how many people work for you or how you deliver your service, they cannot suggest ways to grow or stay secure.

Look for a partner who takes an active interest in the changes in your business, and arrange regular catch-up sessions to keep them current.

There are lots of other questions that you should be asking. But I feel these are the 5 that tell you the most about your potential partner.



Chapter 6:

What every IT support company wishes you knew about IT

Before you flip past this chapter,

I will say up front that I'm not going to bore you with jargon.

These are the basics that, if every client knew them, would make everyone's life easier.



#1

Your setup needs constant monitoring and maintenance. It's not a one-off job

Computers and other devices ask you to update them all the time. And that's because things are constantly changing.

The same applies to your network and infrastructure. Software is always changing, operating systems are being tweaked, and hardware deteriorates. It never ends!

It's virtually unheard of in professional IT circles that an IT setup isn't constantly monitored and maintained. If you're not offered 24/7 monitoring and maintenance as part of your IT contract, run a mile. You will start seeing issues before the ink on the contract is dry.

Most IT support companies do it all in the background and you never hear about it. In fact, a great IT support partner will spend a lot of its time monitoring what's going on within your system, and fixing issues before you know you have a problem.

You'll never notice its going on. And really, that's exactly what you want; monitoring and maintenance you don't notice.

#2

The support triangle is like the hardware triangle

This is a fun concept to learn about buying hardware.

Picture a triangle in your mind. The three equal sides of the triangle represent quality, speed, and price.

If you make one side longer, then all the sides will lengthen to keep the triangle together. For example, if you pick a faster computer, typically the quality and price will also increase.

IT support has an identical triangle with the same three sides: Quality, speed, and price.

If you buy cheap IT support, it'll be slow and lower quality. And vice versa.

Ideally, you'll look at what you can afford to spend on IT support and go with the top of your budget. That's because you understand IT support is an investment in your business. Get your IT setup and your business IT strategy right, and it makes hitting business goals so much easier.

#3

Beware the bedroom warriors

Let's go back to them for a moment.

Picture a guy, sitting in his bedroom, carrying out your IT support service. He hasn't got the overheads we have, so of course his service will be a lot cheaper.

But remember the triangle; his speed will be slow, and he won't have access to the professional IT tools, because they're expensive.

If you choose a bedroom warrior to provide your IT support, doing everything himself, that's fine. Providing you're his only client. One person should be able to carry out the IT support, maintenance, and monitoring that a business like yours requires.

But what happens when he gets another client?

And another? And then realizes, because he's cheap, he needs even more clients just to make a decent living?

The quality of the service you receive falls, as does the speed in which he reacts to your problems. It's possible he'll stop doing the proactive work for you, because one person cannot service many clients properly.

Yes, you pay more for a larger business with an office, team and all the tools. But you also know that they're set up to keep service levels high, no matter how many clients they take on.

#4

We ask for a long-term partnership to protect you more than us

We don't want to work with people short-term.

We refuse to do ad-hoc work, and one-off crisis management.

We only work with businesses as part of a long-term partnership.

Why?

Well, obviously, it's good for us to build our own business around long-term clients. It's a great business model, if we're honest.

But the real benefit of long-term partnerships comes from the investment we're able to make in our clients, so that we know you inside out. It means we can:

- **Work more closely with you**
- **Learn about your priorities and take an active part in getting you closer to your goals**
- **Customize your infrastructure and IT strategy around where you're heading, rather than where you currently are**
- **Build an infrastructure that grows with your business**
- **Keep you better protected, because we can take an honest and strategic approach when we work in a trusting partnership**

When you work with someone on a short-term basis, it's impossible to do this.

A long-term partnership means we'll be as invested as you will be. Because we genuinely care about your business. If you're doing well, we are too.

#5

Outsourced is better value for money. And helps you access better expertise than the same spend in-house

As you're reviewing your IT support, it's probably crossed your mind that you could hire an in-house employee.

There's a big downside to be aware of. When you have an in-house person, you're asking them to do several different specialized jobs, and support a huge number of people, all at the same time.

Someone who can do that without having some kind of breakdown would be hard to find! Certainly, they'd soon learn to cut corners, just to get home on time each day.

When you outsource this work, you might pay a little more than an in-house person. But you're gaining access to multiple people, with a broad range of skills and specialties. And they don't go home until the work is done.



Chapter 7

How to help your internal IT people, if you have them

Sometimes, the businesses we work with have internal IT people. And a senior member of staff who takes on responsibility for the IT, without having a background in IT themselves.

If that's you, then you should be scared. Terrified in fact.

Not because you don't have the skillset, but because if your IT goes badly wrong – I'm talking ransomware attacks or similar large-scale problems – the responsibility rests with you.

Luckily, there is a solution to protect both you and the business. It's called co-managed IT support.

You retain your in-house IT people. And we help them with whatever support they need, at whatever level.

The best way to describe our help is to imagine a donut, with your internal IT person in the middle.

Yes, it's a big donut!

They benefit from support all round:

- **At the bottom:** Help with handling the low-level stuff that's important but can be overwhelming, such as being the help desk for your staff, monitoring the network, rolling out updates
- **At the sides:** Support at their skill level to help them cope with their workload, and to have direct access to an experienced IT team to bounce ideas off
- **From above:** High level strategic advice and long-term planning



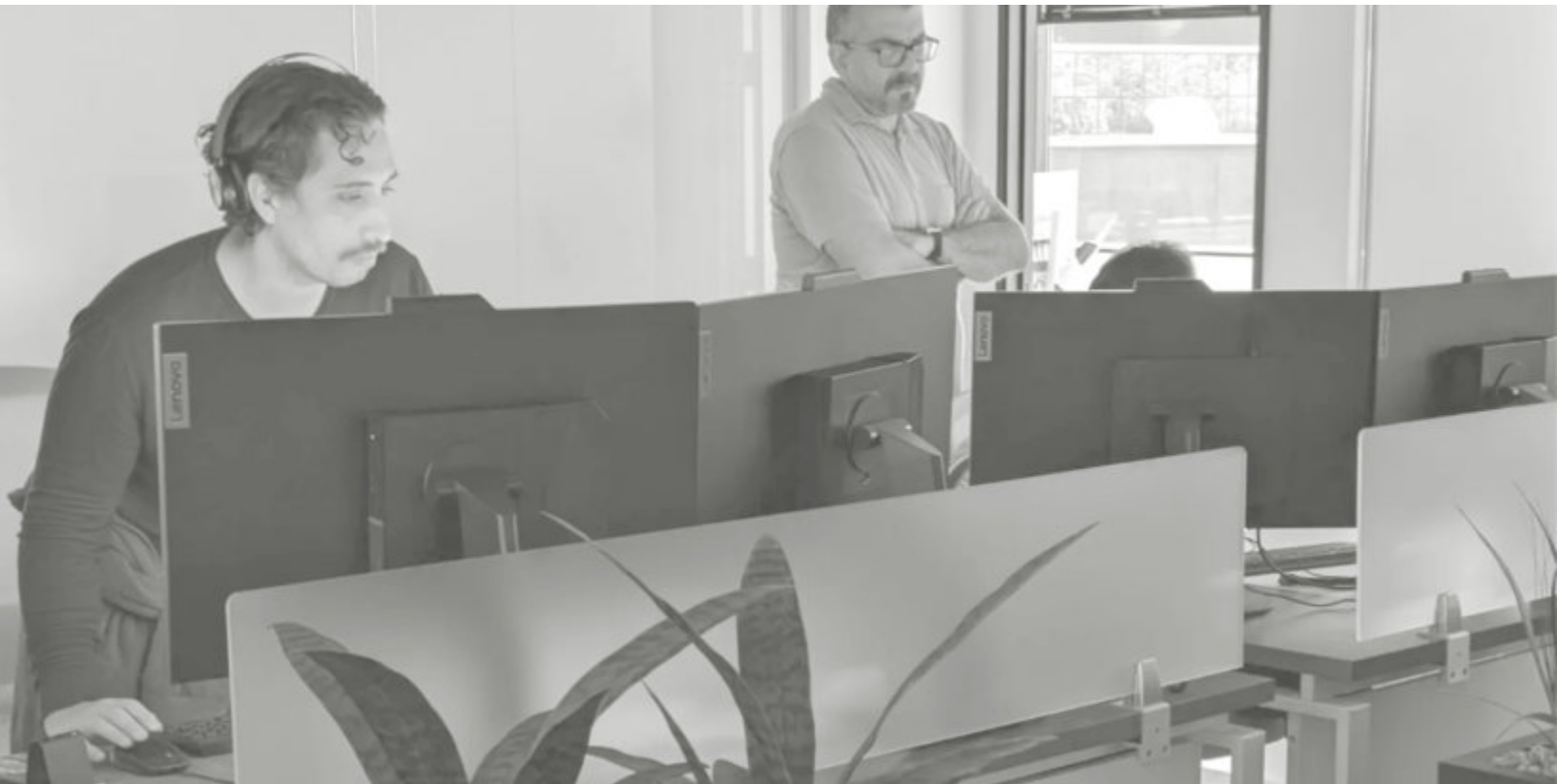
Our job is to complement your internal IT people, adding in the partnership and strategic overview. So, there's plenty of high-level thinking and support on tap.

This gets the most out of your internal resource, and fully protects you, as the person with ultimate responsibility.

Some IT managers see outsourced IT support partners as a threat.

→ We are *not a threat* ←

Our job is to make you, and your internal IT people look great and operate seamlessly. When you look great, so do we – everyone wins!



Chapter 8

Don't take our word for it:
Here's what our clients say

I've spent a long time in this guide educating you how to buy an IT support service. I've covered all the bases. And by now you should know what you want and need in your IT support partner.

But of course I'm going to tell how partnering with Xentric Solutions can change your business. I own the business after all. So instead, it's time you heard from some of my clients about the reality of working with us.

This is just a sample. We quote our customers on our website, but make sure that the original testimonials are on third party sites like [Capterra](#) and [Google Business Profile](#) so you can see they are legitimate.

"I one million percent recommend Xentric Solutions! They know their stuff, work hard to provide the best customer service possible, and make themselves available when you need them most.

They are reliable, knowledgeable, and great to work with. If you're considering hiring Xentric, do it without hesitation."



Karla Waymire
Waymire Law Group



Talia Nicoghosian
KCNS Law Group

"Having Xentric Solutions as part of our team in our law firm has been nothing but an incredible experience!

They have taken care of all our IT needs for years now, including our phone systems. We have so much peace of mind knowing that we can reach out to them whenever we have slight hiccups with our systems."

"I would recommend everyone to hire Xentric.

They are professional, knowledgeable, courteous and capable of handling all issues with your business.

They have been a miracle for mine! Solid 5 Stars!"



Nikki Grigoryan
Grigoryan Law

"Not only has Xentric been a key trusted business partner and technology advisor, their knowledge in tech and business has been an integral part of my company's growth."

No question is too small, and no project is too big for these guys. They're always professional and super quick to respond. Best of all, they're constantly keeping an eye on everything so I don't have to lift a finger.

In the world of IT, if you want it done and you want it done right, hire the team at Xentric Solutions. You won't regret it!"



Trent Tribe
Grace Marketing
Company



Arthur O.
All For Health, Health For All

"I manage IT for a multi-location health care provider, so it's hard for me to oversee each location in real-time. Xentric Solutions has been a savior for me and my company. They provide support whenever we need and are always looking out for our best interests. Thank you Xentric Solutions."

"When a weekend flood emergency knocked our network offline, Xentric Solutions brought in replacement enterprise equipment, configured them and had us back up and running by 4 AM Monday morning."



Steve Davis
4 Star Electronics



Sarkis T.
Loyalty Auto Group

"We use Xentric for all of our business IT needs. They always provide excellent customer service and are very professional. Their staff is extremely knowledgeable and I highly recommend them to any business."



"As a small business owner, I am impressed with the competitive prices, excellent professional service, and quick turn-around time with Xentric Solutions for all of my IT needs."

Alex Tsimanis
Law Offices of Alexander Tsimanis

"Xentric Solutions respond quickly when an IT concern arises and get it resolved without causing my business's services to be down."

Arthur is knowledgeable, personable and conscientious of our budget. All my staff adore him for being there for us when we need tech help!"



Joy Kraft
Kraft Miles



"Xentric upgraded all my in-house computing from multiple physical servers to one virtualized server and switched us from traditional phone system to an internet phone system. They did all the work (planning, procurement, installation and support), ensuring that all 25 older workstations were upgraded and meshed with the new installation. Since then, Xentric has provided consistent, reliable support for all hardware needs."

Tim Cotter
Cotter Church Supplies

"Extremely knowledgeable in the field of cybersecurity for small businesses. They provide outstanding information and services at very reasonable rates. I cannot think of any other place to go. Very trustworthy. I am left with confidence that I am in good hands with Xentric Solutions."



Louis Teran
SLC Law Group

Chapter 9

About us



**I love our clients. They always have
such wonderful things to say about us.**

**Let me now properly introduce me,
my team and our business.**



Meet Xentric (pronounced zen-trick)

A Customer Centric Focus for business Growth and Security

Since 2014 we've been serving businesses and empowering them with technology.

A solid framework keeps them safe from cyber threats, and ensures productivity so they can improve sales, grow and scale, and accomplish their goals. source of constant frustration and confusion.

That's what we do.

Our roots

We've been administering tech for decades. Managing technology for organizations, keeping them streamlined to increase overall productivity. We have experienced what makes a business run efficiently firsthand, and how implementing the right technology can mean the difference between success and failure. Plus doing so through the massive highs and lows of things like Y2K, the dot com bubble, and the 2008 crash.

The Xentric journey started with doing tech favors for friends and family. We quickly realized that small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) lacked access to quality technology, and even when they had it, they didn't know how to use it effectively. It became clear to us that these businesses needed better support to compete with large enterprises, who had big IT budgets and dedicated teams.

Envisioned With Your Business In Mind

Xentric was created with SMBs in mind. We saw a gap in the market, where traditional IT consulting was often condescending, unhelpful, and didn't truly address the needs of businesses. We knew there had to be a better way, focusing on collaboration and customized solutions that align with each business's unique goals and values. It was this dawning that George said to Arthur:

"We should just start a company to do this right for them."

The Xentric difference

It's why our tag line is "Business Technology re-imagined." It's a different approach to technology. Thinking out of the box. Thinking about it as a needed tool for success rather than a utility. Thinking about it as a collaboration between businesses.

Xentric isn't just another team of IT guys. We view the relationship with our clients as partnerships. Our goal is to help you where you need it, to enable you to thrive. And you need to do your part too. We can't just come in and give you some cookie cutter solution. That would be a disservice to you. We need to work with you to know your unique business, your goals, your values, and then craft your technology to fit perfectly to your needs, bringing you the best service and value.

If that sounds like something you are on board with, we'd love to hear from you and see how we can partner for your future.



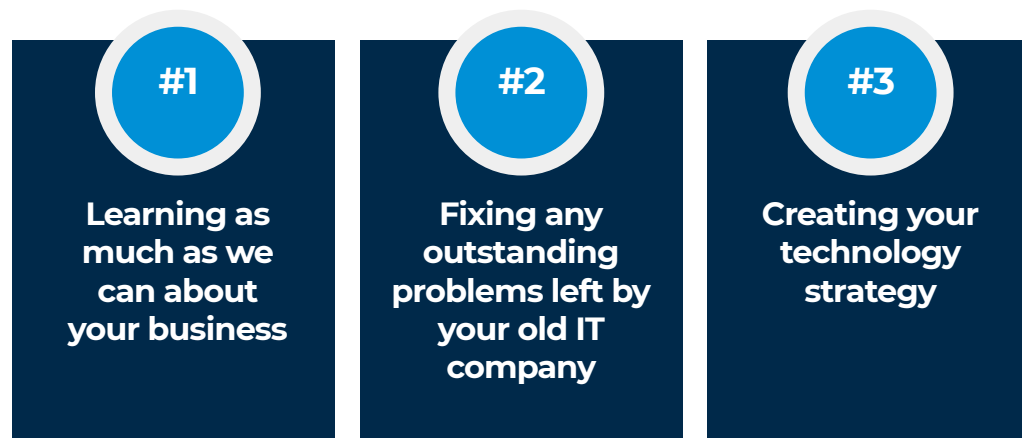
Chapter 10

What will happen during your first 90 days

If you're ready to explore working with us, here's some important information you need to know.

When we begin to work together, the first 90 days are the most critical.

My team and I will be working on three key areas:



I hope and expect to work with you for years to come in our partnership. So, my goal in these first 90 days is to set you up for success.

You'll know:

- **What we can and can't do, with realistic expectations**
- **What we need from you and**
- **How to be a great partner**

We'll survey everything and examine every tiny part of your current IT setup. The more we know the better. All the answers are fully documented in our secure systems.

We'll even ask about your website hosting and examine any specialist software you use. Even if we're not directly supporting these things, we still want to know how it works and who's supporting it. At some stage in our relationship, you're going to ask us about it, so, we need to know about every single service or third-party vendor you're currently using.

Of course, it will mean there's a little work for you and your team, but I promise it will be worthwhile. And you'll only need to do it once.

Once my team has all the information, they'll strategically analyze it to make sure they understand every aspect of your technology. Any IT support company that doesn't do this is not doing their job properly.

Then we're going to talk to your team. Every single person.

We'll find out what their existing IT problems are, what frustrates them and what makes their job more difficult. We'll also review anything your previous IT support provider told them couldn't be done, fixed, or created. There's no promise we can make it happen, but of course, we'll try.

Your first 90 days are going to reset everything. And then get your entire IT setup back up to the high level it needs to be (and where it will stay).

Then, and only then, you and I begin our strategic, forward-thinking work together. This is a unique process for every client. I can tell you more about it when we talk.

Here's what to do next.



Chapter 11

What to do next

I hope you've found this guide useful, and it's covered many of the questions you've had about choosing a new IT support partner.

Perhaps it's made you look at your IT support in a different way?

Good news – we're currently taking on new clients again. That's why I wrote this guide.

I'd really love to talk to you about your business.

If you're serious about working with a new IT support partner to improve your business and contribute to long-term growth, this is your next step:

Book a 15 minute, no obligation video call with me at xentric.com

You'll see my live calendar on that page.

Or just scan the QR code:



You and I can check that our businesses are a good fit and arrange a longer video call, or physical meeting (whichever is most appropriate).

Of course there's no obligation to buy anything, ever.

I'm looking forward to speaking with you and learning about your business.





This is how you can
get in touch with us:

CALL: 844.XENTRIC (844.936.8742)

EMAIL: hello@xentric.com

 Xentric.com
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