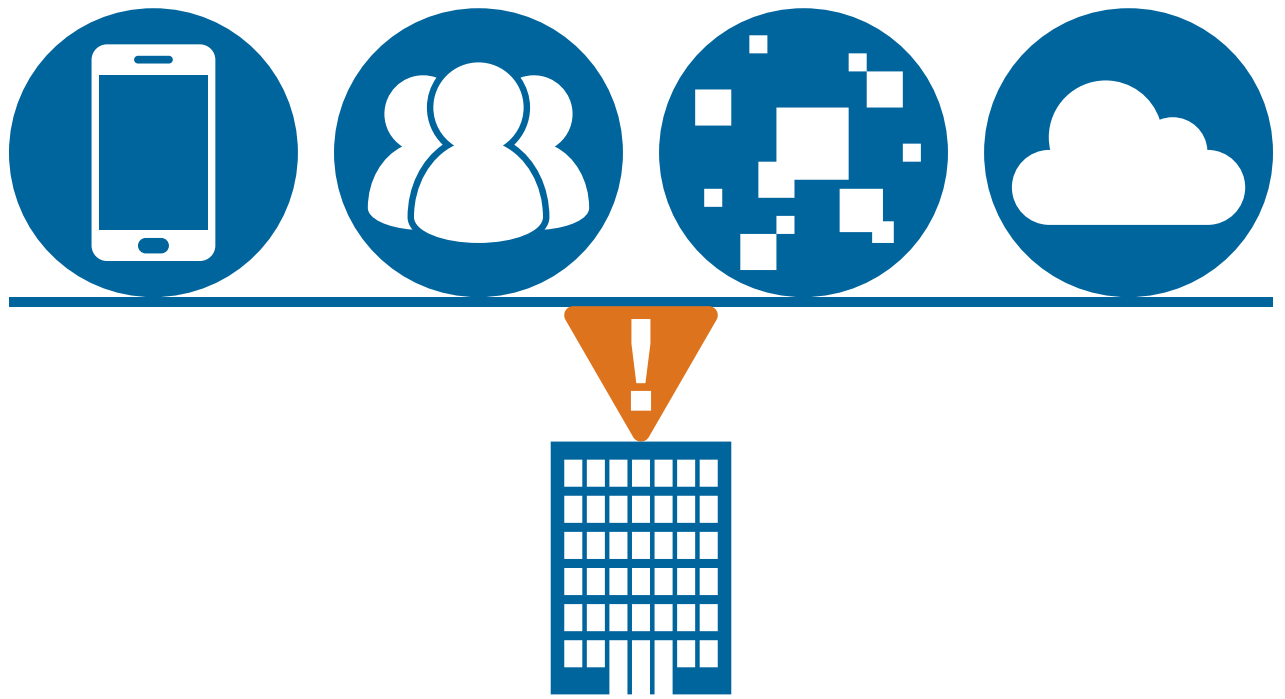




# Top 10 tips for selecting a managed services provider

# Technology is more complex.

Despite the proliferation of new technologies, many enterprise IT infrastructures can't fully meet the demands of mobile, social, big data and cloud.



# Pressure on IT will persist.

Everyone's looking to IT to create business value and innovation. But you're short on skilled resources to manage your hybrid environment. How do you pull that off? A cloud and managed services provider can help.

The right vendor should show you that it can provide skills, processes and resources that exceed your in-house capabilities. Does it have what it takes to help your business transform?

To find the answer, look for 10 key criteria.



**On-premises**



**Private cloud**



**Public cloud**

# Before you choose, **check.**

Make sure the managed services provider:

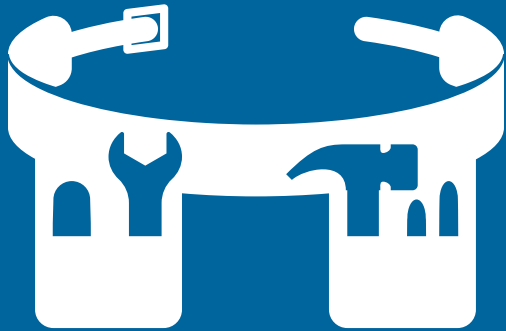
-  Has deep skills and experience
-  Delivers globally and locally
-  Uses the latest technology
-  Commits to service level agreements
-  Follows industry best practices
-  Offers a broad portfolio of options
-  Employs consistent processes
-  Supports your transformation and business goals
-  Supports multivendor environments and strong relationships
-  Is reliable — and can prove it



## Has the latest skills and experience

A managed services provider should have skill levels related to delivery models and managing change, virtualization, high availability, middleware and databases, network technologies, cross-platform integration, mobility, security and of course, cloud technologies. Go beyond basic questions about certifications and headcount.

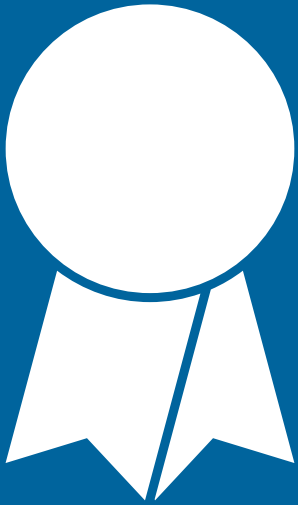
**Ask about** how the provider will help you achieve an integrated multi-sourcing strategy — in-house, managed services, outsourcing and cloud — structured to meet your needs.



## Uses advanced technology

Determine whether the services provider emphasizes problem prevention and continuous improvement. It should employ sophisticated back-end technology across all offered managed services.

**Ask to what degree** the services provider uses automation to reduce human intervention and improve quality and productivity.

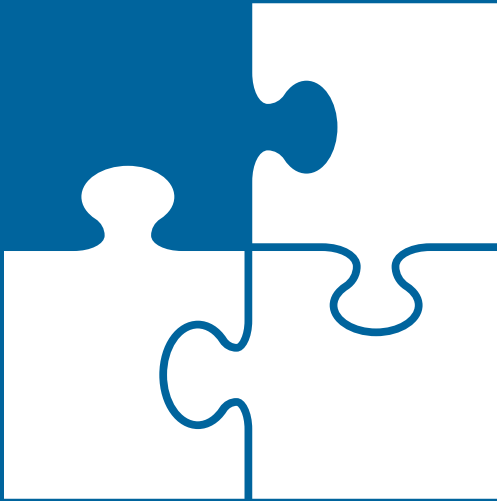


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## Follows industry best practices

A key to achieving a more reliable, highly available infrastructure is to optimize IT management. A provider should employ industry best practices and align with the ITIL approach to IT service management.

**Ask about** best practices for transitioning from in-house to the provider's management system.



## Employs consistent processes

Your services provider should be willing to explain how it replicates policies and processes across multiple delivery centers. Also important is the means by which the vendor gives you visibility into the health of your infrastructure and the performance of your managed services.

**Ask whether** the provider has a security-rich, web-based portal that consolidates related services into a single dashboard with access to real-time service visibility, online tools for managing services and flexible reporting capabilities.





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## Supports multivendor environments and strong relationships

A truly vendor-neutral provider has proven experience working with multivendor environments—and relationships that help ensure availability and visibility into product evolution paths and emerging technologies.

**Ask how** the services provider plans to be your trusted advisor to help you select the technologies that provide the best fit for your business.



## Delivers globally and locally

Global delivery capabilities offer many advantages, including:

- Rapid implementation in new locations
- Ability to effectively manage projects that span operations in multiple countries
- Local-language support for branches or subsidiaries
- In-country location of resources and data to address regulatory and legal requirements

**Ask whether** a services provider employs standard delivery processes across all locations and how multilocation teams are organized.



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## Commits to service level agreements

A significant advantage of managed services is that responsibility for performance rests with the provider. Focus on **what** the provider delivers rather than **how** it performs the service.

**Ask whether** the services provider will commit contractually to meeting your service-level requirements—and will back up those commitments with financial penalties or other agreed terms if those SLAs are not met.



## Offers a broad portfolio of options

You want the flexibility to add managed services without adding cost and complexity to your sourcing strategy. Look for a provider that offers options, such as pay-per-use, allowing you to scale to match requirements.

**Ask whether** a provider will give you the option to retain your existing infrastructure and, where it makes sense, your current processes.



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## Supports your transformation and business goals

Consider the impact sourcing relationships can have—not only on outcomes but also on your core business model and corporate culture. If innovation and transformation are critical components of your strategy, how can a managed services provider contribute?

**Ask:** Does it have proprietary insights or experiences that can shed light on future technological or market shifts? What competitive advantages could you gain from access to the provider's research and development function? How can the provider's expertise, assets, reach and collaborator network help you develop new business models or expand into new markets?



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## Is reliable—and can prove it

Financial stability is crucial. Today, a services provider's length of time in the market is no longer a reliable predictor of future longevity. Research annual reports, financial statements and opinions offered by industry press and analysts.

**Ask** potential providers to back up their claims with customer references and quantified success metrics.

# You can do more with less... starting today.

Click [here](#) to read the IBM white paper “Top 10 criteria for selecting a managed services provider.”

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