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FIELD GUIDE
To Choosing A Strategic IT Partner

FIELD GUIDE

(feeld-gahyd) **Noun**

A tool (or book) to aid in the navigation through an unknown landscape, using expert advice.
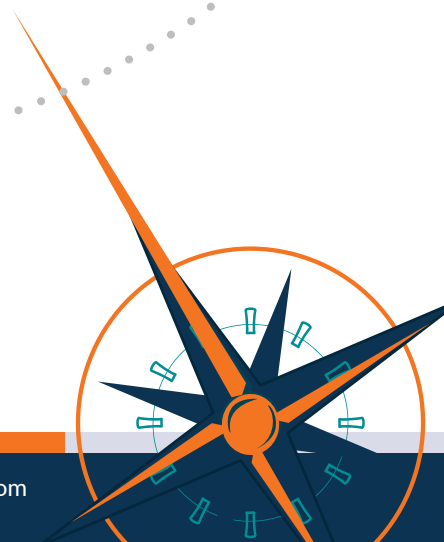
COMPASS

(kuhm-puh s) **Noun**

A tool (or device) that provides purposeful guidance and bearing(s) towards your objective

TOPOGRAPHY

(tuh-pog-ruh-fee) **Noun**

A overview (or mapping) of the terrain, to set an optimal course or trajectory

How to use this field guide

1   Add criteria that are unique and desired by your organization.

2   Go over each section and weight the important criteria.

3   Based on the categories and criteria you value most, select the most capable partners for final comparison.

4   Schedule face to face discovery meetings to get a better feel for their company and culture. Use this field guide to drive the conversation and drill into the criteria desired by your organization.

5   For each category and criteria, simply place a checkmark next to the potential partner that meets or exceeds your expectations and requirements.

6   Use the Selection Topography (See Page 10) to compile your findings and determine which partner(s) are the best fit.

7   Consider the next steps listed on Page 10 to help finalize your decision.

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People

Redundancy
If they have staff who are sick, on vacation... or win the lottery, would they still have the resources (or desire) to support your business?

Size
Do they have the staff to support your needs, as well as the needs of their other clients? How many other clients do they support? What tools do they use to track how well they support their customers?

Full-time
Are you being supported by locally based, full-time employees, who enjoy a full range of benefits, or are they sub-contractors, who may be pulled in too many directions?

Retention
What is the average tenure of the team members supporting your company? (Outsourced IT is notorious for high turnover.)

Local
Are the employees local and engaged in the community? Or, will you be supported by a team somewhere else in the country or overseas?

Leadership
Is the culture consistent from the top down? What are their company values? How do they practice and display those core values in their service?

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Cyber Security Experts
Do they have a strong discipline and knowledge base in cybersecurity, to ensure your data remains safe? Do they include unlimited support, or will you be billed separately, in the event of a breach or disaster?

Best of Breed
Do they have a wide range of partnerships to ensure you receive best of breed solutions in hardware, software and your vendors?

Tools: Monitoring & Reporting
What tools does the partner use to monitor the health of your network? Is monitoring limited to the tool, or do they have staff monitoring that data in real-time? How often do they proactively compile that data and provide specific and strategic recommendations for your organization?

Range of Skills
Is there a depth of experience to ensure questions are answered quickly and accurately? What technology is unique to your organization, and can they support your technology? No one is an expert at it all, so what services or technology are they not good at supporting?

Vendor Management
Do they manage all aspects of your technology infrastructure, or just the components they put in place? If phones, printers, software go down, will they orchestrate the solution with your vendors, or will they ask you to call the vendor and handle it on your own?

Teams: Project or Core Services
Is your dedicated tech, or dedicated team the sole resource for your organization? Do they have additional resources (people and technology) that can be engaged to make sure that service is uninterrupted when projects or major events occur?

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Reputation

Google Reviews
What is their reputation online? Do they have positive reviews from a reasonable number of sources?

Awards
What recognizable awards have they earned in the last few years? Ask about local, national, and industry awards.

References
Will they provide letters of reference, case studies, and connect you with existing clients so you can get candid feedback?

Years in Business
How long have they been serving clients in your community? Are they established and consistent, or are they in a startup phase?

Flexibility
Will you be forced to commit to a long-term contract, or do you have a 30-day out? Being locked in to out of date, or worse yet, low-quality service can kill an organization. Make sure the provider will care about you throughout the relationship as much as they do during the sales cycle.

Stable Ownership
Have there been ownership changes? Are owners involved in the day to day? Is private equity involved, and if so, what expectations does that include?

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Strategic Partner

Onsite
Will team members come on-site, or is everything managed remotely? Do they charge extra for coming to your location?

Proactive
Do they develop a true technology plan for you, or are they just there to fix problems when they pop up? How is the partnership and service built to allow for proactive support? Do they have policies and procedures in place to incentivize proactive support?

Unlimited Support
What's included, and what will require "additional fees"? (Ensure you won't be nickel and dimed to death.) Will you be capped at a certain amount of time or calls? What about emergency support or after-hour needs?

Strategic Reviews
Will they meet with you on a regular schedule and at your request (a monthly or quarterly business review) to discuss your network, business goals and help you plan and budget for continued growth? Do they provide their recommendations and analysis or simply send you a report from their monitoring tool?

24x7 Available
Do they offer the option of 24x7 support? Do they only take care of you from 8-5? Do they charge for scheduled downtime and maintenance that occurs after business hours?

National Reach
Do they have the resources to support remote offices or employees nationally and internationally?

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Value

Scalability

How can they help you grow and hit your business goals? Are they an expense or an asset you can leverage? Are they simply looking to make your technology work today, or do they have a higher-level business acumen to help you navigate and implement technology for tomorrow?

Cost

The goal of IT is not to save money, rather to get the most value for the money you will spend. As you budget for IT support, consider the tools, the people, and the holistic partnership. Will this provider be an expenditure or an investment for your business? What return are you going to see from a partnership; stabilize your cost, provide proactive support, leverage your technology to optimize your processes and increase your employee and customer engagement?

Security

Security should be more than a set of tools and software they deploy. They should have a strategic plan that is specific to your business and industry to mitigate threats before they happen and recover you quickly in the case of a breach. Do they provide Firewalls, anti-virus, web filtering, server backups, disaster recovery, email filtering, 24x7 monitoring? Do they provide end-user training so your staff can be equipped to spot and avoid the latest threats?

Stability

The most significant IT expenditure any business can incur is downtime and inefficiency. What resources do they provide to ensure that your network is becoming more stable over time? Are they proactive, do they address the ticket only or are they looking for patterns and underlying causes to address?

Support

Do they provide a level of strategic, proactive, and consistent support that you would expect from an in-house IT department? Do they have a level of ownership and responsibility for your network that goes beyond simply closing tickets?

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Selection Topography and Next Steps

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People			
Tech			
Reputation			
Strategic Partner			
Value			
Compiled Value			

Next Steps

- **Determine Your Budget** – if you haven't already done so, determine your budget and identify potential cost savings to quantify ROI.

- **Timelines & On-Boarding** – Determine when it makes sense to begin your new relationship. Ask your potential partners what steps need to be taken for integration, what guidance can they offer around change management, and what resources will they deploy to help ensure a smooth transition.

- **Office Visit** – Visit the partner's office to get a feel for the culture and people, make sure it's congruent with what was communicated during the discovery process. Ensure they practice what they preach and use the products they will be deploying for your organization.

- **Meet Leadership** – Talk to those who drive the organization. Get a feel for who they are, and what your instincts tell you about them. Is the service manager truly managing the team, or are they buried by making service calls of their own?

- **Request References** – Get feedback, both written and in-person from current clients. Ask them if they had to go through the process all over today, would they still make the same choice. Ask why they chose their partner – what were the top factors.

Our Promise To You

We know that trying out a new Managed Services Provider can be risky. No company wants to be locked into a contract with an MSP that doesn't fit their needs.

Iconic IT stands above the competition by offering a 90-day money-back promise. If at any time during the first 90 days of signing on with Iconic IT you decide we aren't a good fit for your IT needs, we will refund 100% of your monthly fees. Not only that, but Iconic IT will help you transition to another company.

How Can We Do This?

Iconic IT prides itself on "Doing the Right Thing." This means we start with integrity and back it up with a positive attitude, complete transparency. helpfulness, and gratitude.

100% MONEY BACK
ICONIC Promise

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