

# Shopping around for an MSP?

## Here are your do's and don'ts

Starting the hunt for a Cloud Managed Service Provider (MSP) can feel like walking into a huge tech buffet – you've got tons of options, and they all promise to keep your IT infrastructure running smoothly.

But how do you pick the right MSP? It's not just about finding somewhere to host your infrastructure. It's about choosing a provider which will amp up your business' game. We're going to dive into the do's and don'ts of choosing the perfect MSP for you.

### Where to start

Conducting thorough research into the different MSPs available and their capabilities is the perfect place to start. Here are some research tips to help you find the right provider:

- What do you need? Before you start scrolling through your MSP options, take a minute to decide what your business needs. Do you need some help managing your cloud? Or maybe you need to beef up your cybersecurity?
- Do a Google search – Do an online search of MSPs, have a look at their websites and read their case studies and reviews. The more you look, the more likely you are to find the perfect fit!
- Speak to the provider – Set up a chat with their experts and talk through products and services. You could even use this as an opportunity to check out their customer service.

### 3 things to watch out for:

- Vendor lock-in – Locking yourself into a long-term contract without any evidence of what the MSP can provide could end up restricting your business' growth.
- Finding the right size solution – Make sure the MSP isn't offering a one-size-fits-all package. You want your solution to be tailored to your business.
- Keep within budget – A good MSP should understand what your budget is and tailor the solution to that. There should be no surprise costs that could cause issues in the future.

### Making the right choice

Once you've done your initial research and contacted potential MSPs, you'll start receiving proposals detailing how they plan to manage your IT needs. But how do you sift through these to find the gold? It's not just about the lowest price – it's about finding the proposal that offers the best value and aligns closely with your business objectives. Here's a breakdown of what to look for in these proposals to make the decision:

- Clarity – Look for detailed descriptions of what the MSP will manage, such as network services, cloud infrastructure, cybersecurity, end-user support and any other infrastructure tasks.

- Customisation – Check if services can be customised to meet your business needs specifically. You don't want to be handed a package that's generic and doesn't suit what your business requires.
- Scalability – A good MSP should be flexible and adaptable to your business' evolving needs. Check whether the service is manual or automatic scaling. Manual scaling offers more control over costs and avoids the unexpected bills that could surprise you with automatic scaling.
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) – Review the SLA closely. This is where you find the performance and uptime guarantees, response times for issues, and resolution targets. This is an important part of the proposal as it sets your expectations and consequences for non-compliance.
- Pricing – Understand how you'll be paying. Is it a monthly fee, or based on the services you use?
- Proactivity – Look for signs that the MSP is proactive rather than reactive. Do they offer regular reviews and planning sessions? Do they update the infrastructure based on new technology?
- Compliance and certifications – Do they comply with the latest ISO standards for security and energy efficiency?
- Exit – What are your options if you want to leave the provider? You don't want to be stuck in a vendor lock-in if your needs change. What is the cost and complexity of leaving?



Picking the right Managed Service Provider (MSP) isn't just ticking a box – it's about finding your IT infrastructure soulmate. You want a provider who gets your business goals, scales with your growth, and jumps into action before things go sideways. So take your time to go through your options, and go with an MSP that feels right.

If you need any help making this decision, or you think ProActive might be the right fit for you, give us a call on 0333 111 2000. You can also arrange a callback or book a meeting at a time that works for you.