# 5 MYTHS ABOUT IT SERVICES

**BY HEATHER REMER, CEO, COMPUTERCARE LLC**

**I** have been in the technology industry long enough to know that for many, the world of IT falls somewhere between an enigma to be marveled at from a distance and something to avoid out of distrust. But, unfortunately, you can't really avoid technology these days in the world of business. It is here to stay, and for most small- or medium-sized companies, that means at some point, you will need to outsource IT work to someone with more knowledge. This can seem daunting, especially if you don't know much about IT, and these decisions become even more difficult when misconceptions skew the terrain. So, with that in mind, here are five myths I would like to address to give you more knowledge about what you can and should be able to expect from your IT provider.

## MYTH #1: THE IT INDUSTRY IS REGULATED.

There is, in fact, no regulation of the IT industry. What this means is that anyone can start fixing computers. This isn't necessarily a bad thing nor is it a slam on the small IT provider. Just be aware so that when you hire an IT provider, don't assume they are adequately trained. You may want to ask them if they have any basic certifications. Microsoft certifications are a great place to start. CompTIA A+, Net+ or Security+ will also demonstrate a basic commitment to the field and a decent standard of knowledge.

## MYTH #2: TECHIES ARE SOCIALLY INEPT AND ONLY SPEAK A HIGH-TECH LANGUAGE.

Certainly there is a stereotype out there that techies are nerds who can't make eye contact and don't know how to speak in anything other than garbled tech jargon. This is unfortunate and unfair. Some of the best communicators I know have technology backgrounds. And, while there are many IT professionals who prefer to work with technology and avoid interacting with people, there are just as many IT professionals out there who do what they do because they want to help others. They just happen to be good at technology. I find the problem to be more about the approach some technology professionals have to what they do — the stereotype persists because of IT professionals who don't recognize that IT exists to provide services, not technology. In fact, IT exists solely for the purpose of supporting the business through the delivery of services that provide value to clients. So, don't assume you have to settle for working with a provider who lacks transparency or who you feel talks over your head. There are providers out there who are normal, can work with you to understand your IT needs and understand that it's not about how lightning-fast your processor is but instead how a faster processor is going to make YOUR life easier.

## MYTH #3: ON-SITE SUPPORT IS THE BEST SUPPORT.

Most professional providers now deliver the majority of their service remotely. What this means for you is faster resolution of problems since a technician no longer needs to travel to your location. They can typically see all the systems at your business through a centralized dashboard that receives up-to-the-minute information about the health of your network and devices. This faster and more efficient approach also allows for maintenance tasks (like updating systems, purging old files, executing virus scans, etc.) to be performed automatically behind the scenes. Today, IT providers also work to keep an eye on your systems. Keeping track of things like computer temperature, disk space, and memory utilization allows your IT provider to be proactive and recommend replacement when a computer is being "overused." As issues arise, your IT provider is automatically alerted by the monitoring system, and then, a technician can respond as needed — usually behind the scenes — to address the issue before it takes your system down.

## MYTH 4: IT SERVICES ARE EXPENSIVE.

When IT is delivered right, the cost to the company will be less than what that company would lose in revenue from down systems and idle employees. Consider the example of a 25-employee law firm that has a server go down for three hours each month. With an average billable rate of $250 per hour and seven attorneys, the lost revenue is over $5,000 per month. That's just for the billable aspect of the company — it doesn't even take into account the burdened overhead of the support staff. When determining what is affordable, make sure to take into account what an hour of downtime for your company really costs you. While managed support might not be right for everyone, most businesses can't afford not to invest in a professional level of coverage.

## MYTH 5: IT PEOPLE DON'T CONSIDER THE "BIG PICTURE."

A provider worth his or her salt plans with your business, making decisions based upon your mission and your vision. They become an extension of your company and consider the big-picture impacts of repairing old systems, installing legacy software, or designing a hybrid cloud solution. They meet regularly with the decision makers to check in and see what is happening with your business specifically or with your industry in general to come up with short-term and long-term plans to handle IT needs and strategize how best to flex IT muscle so your goals are achieved. Therein lies the difference between an IT service provider and a computer repair company: The computer repair company is there to repair your computer with no focus on your overall business goals.

Hopefully, I've helped dispel some of the myths about IT providers and given you a better idea of what you can realistically expect. In summary, I would like to leave you with the notion that IT is done very differently now than it was ten years ago. You can and should expect a proactive and professional approach that keeps your bigger business needs and goals in mind.



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