



Managed IT Services

Scope & Value Worksheet

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Managed IT services aren't a generic outsourcing decision — they're a sourcing model with specific tradeoffs that matter most at certain growth stages. This worksheet helps you define the scope you actually need, choose the right operating model, and measure whether your current partnership is delivering the one thing that matters most: reclaimed strategic capacity.

How to use this: work through the scope definition, pick your operating model, then run the relationship health check on your current or prospective partner.

Step 1 — Define the Scope You Need

"Managed services" covers radically different models. Before evaluating any provider, decide which scope patterns you actually need. Check all that apply:

| Scope Model | What's Included | Need It? |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Help Desk & Support | User support, troubleshooting, password resets, installs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Infrastructure Management | Servers, network, endpoints monitored proactively | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Co-Managed IT | Partner augments internal team on defined responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fully Outsourced IT | Partner is the IT department; one internal owner | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Specialty Services | Security ops, cloud management, compliance, voice | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Step 2 — Choose Your Operating Model

The right model usually tracks company size and how strategic IT is to the business. Mark the row that best fits where you are now:

| Operating Model | Best Fit | Yours? |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Fully outsourced + strong partner | Under ~25 employees; IT not a differentiator | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hybrid (internal lead + MSP support) | ~25-150 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Co-managed (internal owns strategy) | ~150-500 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internal IT + specialty MSP services | Capable internal team, depth gaps in security/cloud | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Step 3 — What a Good Partner Actually Delivers

Outcomes, not activity. Check the ones your current partner delivers consistently (or that a prospective partner can demonstrate):

- Operational stability you can stop thinking about (backups, patches, monitoring just work)
- Predictable cost structure (IT is a manageable budget line, not a source of surprises)
- Access to specialty skills uneconomical to staff internally (especially security and cloud)
- Reclaimed strategic capacity — your senior team is on strategic work, not tickets
- Proactive recommendations, not just execution of assigned work

Step 4 – Relationship Health Check

Score your current partnership. The warning signs are usually quiet rather than dramatic.

| Signal | Healthy | Warning |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Internal team has time for strategic work | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Major incidents are rare and well-handled | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| SLAs are met (and reported on) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Security posture is measurably improving | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Partner brings unprompted recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Responsiveness has held or improved over time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Capability gaps are filled, not persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Step 5 – Avoid the Common Mistakes

- Not buying on price alone (the low end is reactive and thin on specialty depth)
- Meeting the delivery team during evaluation, not just the sales team
- Getting reference calls with companies at your size, industry, and operating model
- Building in real exit provisions: knowledge transfer, data/config portability, transition assistance
- Treating the engagement as an operating relationship (QBRs, SLA reporting, joint roadmap)

The Measure That Matters Most

The right measure of value isn't the line-item invoice – it's reclaimed strategic capacity. If your senior engineers are back on patches, password resets, and tickets, the model isn't delivering what you're paying for, regardless of how the monthly cost compares. Re-evaluate the relationship annually, not just at renewal: the partner that fit at 50 employees may not fit at 250.

Evaluating Managed IT Services?

Plow Networks helps growing companies design IT sourcing models that fit how the business actually operates – co-managed, fully outsourced, or specialty services where you need depth.

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