IT BUYERS GUIDE

WHAT EVERY BUSINESS OWNER MUST KNOW ABOUT I.T. SUPPORT SERVICES AND FEES

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO PAY FOR I.T. SUPPORT FOR YOUR BUSINESS AND HOW TO GET EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED

HODGSON
CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO PAY FOR I.T. SUPPORT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

(And How To Get *Exactly* What You Need Without Unnecessary Extras, Hidden Fees And Bloated Contracts)

READ THIS GUIDE AND YOU'LL DISCOVER:

✔ The three most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.

✔ A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.

✔ Exclusions, hidden fees, and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.

✔ How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

✔ 20 revealing questions to ask your IT support firm BEFORE giving them access to your computer network, e-mail, and data.

Provided As An Educational Service By:

Robert Zehnder
President, Chief Technology Officer
Hodgson Consulting & Solutions, Ltd.
1110 W. Lake Cook Rd, Ste 235, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
(847) 906-5005 | www.hodgsonconsulting.com

From the Desk of:
ROBERT ZEHNDER
President
Hodgson Consulting & Solutions

If you are the CEO of a business in the Chicagoland area that is currently looking to outsource some or all of the IT support for your company, this report contains important information that will be extremely valuable to you as you search for a competent firm you can **trust**.

My name is Robert Zehnder, President of Hodgson Consulting & Solutions and author of The Business Owner's Guide To IT and All Things Digital. We've been providing IT services to businesses in the Chicagoland area for over 12 years now. You may not have heard of us before, but I'm sure you're familiar with one or more of the other Chicagoland businesses that are clients of ours. A few of their comments are enclosed.

One of the most common questions we get from new prospective clients calling our office is, "What do you guys charge for your services?" Since this is such a common question – and a very important one to address – I decided to write this report for three reasons:

1. I wanted an easy way to answer this question and educate all prospective clients who come to us on the most common ways IT services companies package and price their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.

2. I wanted to bring to light a few "industry secrets" about IT services contracts and SLAs (service level agreements) that almost no business owner thinks about, understands, or knows to ask about when evaluating IT service providers that can end up burning you with hidden fees and locking you into a long-term contract when they are unwilling or unable to deliver the quality of service you need.

3. I wanted to educate business owners on how to pick the **right** IT services company for their specific situation, budget and needs based on the *VALUE* the company can deliver, not just the price, high OR low.

In the end, my purpose is to help you make the most informed decision possible, so you end up working with someone who helps you solve your problems and accomplish what you want in a time frame, manner and budget that is right for you.

Dedicated to serving you,

Robert Zehnder

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

President and CTO of Hodgson Consulting & Solutions, Robert Zehnder, has over 14 years of experience in Information Technology. Hodgson Consulting & Solutions has been providing managed IT and cloud computing services for small to midsized business clients of all markets in the Chicagoland area and beyond for over 20 years.

Robert has currently over 20+ Industry Certifications crossing over several technology disciplines including logical and physical network structure management. Robert has been a guest speaker at Olivet University as well as assisted Citrix Systems in writing multiple exams, including Certified Citrix Administrator, XenApp, and Excalibur exams.

He has served in various technical support roles for both large and small environments and is highly recognized for his inherit ability to troubleshoot and deliver rapid solutions to complex technical problems. Robert's in-depth knowledge of Project Management has produced many satisfied clients around the globe. He has implemented a global Microsoft Enterprise Server Solution for a European based company which includes systems throughout Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. He continues to design and implement internal network infrastructures and multi-layer security solutions for companies throughout North America.

To book Robert to speak at your next event or seminar for your company or request our services, please contact him at **info@hodgsonconsulting.com**

Check out his popular blog at **www.hodgsonconsulting.com/blog**

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COMPARING APPLES TO APPLES: THE PREDOMINANT IT SERVICE MODELS EXPLAINED

Before you can accurately compare the fees, services, and deliverables of one IT services company with another, you need to understand the three predominant service models most of these companies fit within. Some companies offer a blend of all three, while others are strict about offering only one service plan. The three predominant service models are:

- **Time and Materials.** In the industry, we call this "break-fix" services. Essentially, you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to "fix" your problem when something "breaks." Under this model, you might be able to negotiate a discount based on buying a block of hours. The scope of work may be simply to resolve a specific problem, like fixing a problem with your e-mail, or it may encompass a large project, like a network upgrade or move, that has a specific result and a clarified end date. Some companies will offer staff augmentation and placement under this model as well.

- **Managed IT Services.** This is a model where the IT services company takes on the role of your fully outsourced "IT department" and not only installs and supports all the devices and PCs that connect to your server(s), but also offers phone and on-site support, antivirus, cyber security, backup, and a host of other services to monitor and maintain the health, speed, performance, and security of your computer network.

- **Software Vendor-Supplied IT Services.** Many software companies will offer IT support for their customers in the form of a help desk or remote support for an additional fee. However, these are typically scaled-back services, limited to troubleshooting their specific application and NOT your entire computer network and all the applications and devices connected to it. If your problem resides outside of their specific software or the server it's hosted on, they can't help you and will often refer you to "your IT department." While it's often a good idea to buy some basic-level support package with a critical software application you use to run your business, this is not enough to provide the full IT services and support most businesses need to stay up and running.

When looking to outsource your IT support, the two service models you are most likely to end up having to choose between are the "managed IT services" and "break-fix" models. Therefore, let's dive into the pros and cons of these two options and then the typical fee structure for both.

MANAGED I.T. SERVICES VS. BREAK-FIX: WHICH IS THE BETTER, MORE COST-EFFECTIVE OPTION?

You've probably heard the famous Benjamin Franklin quote, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I couldn't agree more — and that's why it's my sincere belief that some form of managed IT is essential for any business.

The only time I would recommend a "time and materials" approach is when you already have a competent IT person or team proactively managing your computer network and simply have a specific IT project to complete that your current in-house IT team doesn't have the time nor expertise to implement (such as migrating to a cloud-based solution, implementing a cyber security plan, etc.). Outside of that specific scenario, I do not think the break-fix approach is a good idea for general IT support for one very important, fundamental reason: you'll ultimately end up paying for a pound of "cure" for problems that could have easily been avoided with an "ounce" of prevention.

WHY REGULAR MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE IS CRITICAL FOR TODAY'S COMPUTER NETWORKS

The fact of the matter is that computer networks absolutely, positively need ongoing maintenance and monitoring to stay secure. The ever-increasing dependency we have on IT systems and the data they hold – not to mention the type of data we're now saving digitally – has given rise to very smart and sophisticated cybercrime organizations that work around the clock to do one thing: hack into your network to steal data or money or to hold you ransom.

As you may know, ransomware is at an all-time high because hackers make millions of tax-free dollars robbing one small business owner at a time. But that's not their only incentive.

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or call our office at 847-906-5005

Some will attempt to hack your network to gain access to bank accounts, credit cards, or passwords to rob you (and your clients). Some use your computer network to send spam using YOUR domain and servers, host pirated software and, of course, spread viruses. Some even do it just for the "fun" of it.

And don't think for a minute that these cybercriminals are solo crooks working alone in a hoodie out of their basement. They are highly organized and well-run operations, employing teams of hackers who work together to scam as many people as they can. They use advanced software that scans millions of networks for vulnerabilities and uses readily available data on the dark web of YOUR usernames, passwords, e-mail addresses, and other data to gain access.

Of course, this isn't the only IT danger you face. Other common "disasters" include rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures (still a BIG reason for data loss), fire and natural disasters, and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. Then there's regulatory compliance for any business hosting or touching credit card or financial information, medical records, and even client contact information, such as e-mail addresses.

Preventing these problems and keeping your systems up and running (which is what managed IT services are all about) is a LOT less expensive and damaging to your organization than waiting until one of these things happens and then paying for emergency IT services to restore your systems to working order (break-fix).

SHOULD YOU JUST HIRE A FULL-TIME IT MANAGER?

In most cases, it is not cost-effective for companies with under 50 employees to hire a full-time IT person for a couple of reasons.

First of all, no one IT person can know everything there is to know about IT support and cyber security. If your company is big enough and growing fast enough to support a full-time IT lead, you probably need more than one guy. You need someone with help-desk expertise as well as a network engineer, a network administrator, a CIO (chief information officer), and a CISO (chief information security officer).

Therefore, even if you hire a full-time IT person, you may still need to supplement their position with co-managed IT support using an IT firm that can fill in the gaps and provide services and expertise they don't have. This is not a bad plan; what IS a bad plan is hiring one person and expecting them to know it all and do it all.

Second, finding and hiring good people is difficult; finding and hiring skilled IT people is incredibly difficult due to the skill shortage for IT. And if you're not technical, it's going to be very difficult for you to interview candidates and sift and sort through all the duds out there to find someone with good skills and experience. Because you're not technical, you might not know the right questions to ask during the interview process or the skills they need to do the job.

More often than not, the hard and soft costs of building an internal IT department for general IT support just don't provide the best return on investment for the average small to midsize business. An internal IT department typically doesn't make sense until you have closer to 100 employees OR you have unique circumstances and need specialized skills, a developer, etc., but not for day-to-day IT support and maintenance.

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WHY "BREAK-FIX" WORKS ENTIRELY IN THE CONSULTANT'S FAVOR, NOT YOURS

Under a "break-fix" model, there is a fundamental conflict of interests between you and your IT firm. The IT services company has no incentive to prevent problems, stabilize your network, or resolve problems quickly because they are getting paid by the hour when things stop working; therefore, the risk of unforeseen circumstances, scope creep, learning curve inefficiencies, and outright incompetence are all shifted to YOU, the customer. Essentially, the more problems you have, the more they profit, which is precisely what you DON'T want.

Under this model, the IT consultant can take the liberty of assigning a junior (lower-paid) technician to work on your problem – one who may take two to three times as long to resolve an issue that a more senior (and more expensive) technician might resolve in a fraction of the time. There is no incentive to properly manage the time of that technician or their efficiency, and there is every reason for them to prolong the project and find MORE problems than solutions. Of course, if they're ethical and want to keep you as a client, they should be doing everything possible to resolve your problems quickly and efficiently; however, that's akin to putting a German shepherd in charge of watching over the ham sandwiches. Not a good idea.

Second, it creates a management problem for you, the customer, who now has to keep track of the hours they've worked to make sure you aren't getting overbilled, and since you often have no way of really knowing if they've worked the hours they say they have, it creates a situation where you really, truly need to be able to trust they are being 100% ethical and honest AND tracking THEIR hours properly (not all do).

And finally, it makes budgeting for IT projects and expenses a nightmare since they may be zero one month and thousands the next.

WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT TO PAY?

IMPORTANT! Please note that the following price quotes are industry averages based on a recent IT industry survey conducted of over 750 different IT services firms. We are providing this information to give you a general idea of what most IT services firms charge and to help you understand the VAST DIFFERENCES in service contracts that you must be aware of before signing on the dotted line. Please understand that this does NOT reflect our pricing model or approach, which is simply to understand exactly what you want to accomplish FIRST and then customize a solution based on your specific needs, budget and situation.

Hourly Break-Fix Fees

Most IT services companies selling break-fix services charge between $100 and $250 per hour with a one-hour minimum. In most cases, they will give you a discount of 5% to as much as 20% on their hourly rates if you purchase and pay for a block of hours in advance.

If they are quoting a **project**, the fees range widely based on the scope of work outlined. If you are hiring an IT consulting firm for a project, I would suggest you demand the following:

- **A very detailed scope of work that specifies what "success" is.** Make sure you detail what your expectations are in terms of performance, workflow, costs, security, access, etc. The more detailed you can be, the better. Detailing your expectations up front will go a long way toward avoiding miscommunications and additional fees later on to give you what you REALLY wanted.

- **A fixed budget and time frame for completion.** Agreeing to this up front aligns both your agenda and the consultant's. Be very wary of loose estimates that allow the consulting firm to bill you for "unforeseen" circumstances. The bottom line is this: it is your IT consulting firm's responsibility to be able to accurately assess your situation and quote a project based on their experience. You should not have to pick up the tab for a consultant underestimating a job or for their inefficiencies. A true professional knows how to take into consideration those contingencies and bill accordingly.

Managed IT Services

Most managed IT services firms will quote you a MONTHLY fee based on the number of devices they need to maintain, back up, and support. In Chicagoland, that fee is somewhere in the range of $150 to $250 per server, $50 to $100 per desktop.

If you hire an IT consultant and sign up for a managed IT services contract, here are some things that SHOULD be included (make sure you read your contract to validate this):

- Security patches applied weekly, if not daily, for urgent and emerging threats
- Antivirus updates and monitoring
- Firewall updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and test restores
- Spam-filter installation and updates
- Spyware detection and removal
- Monitoring disk space on workstations and servers
- Monitoring hardware for signs of failure
- Optimizing systems for maximum speed

The following services may **NOT be included** and will often be billed separately. This is not necessarily a "scam" or unethical UNLESS the managed IT services company tries to hide these fees when selling you a service agreement. Make sure you review your contract carefully to know what is and is NOT included!

- Hardware, such as new servers, PCs, laptops, etc.
- Software licenses On-site support
- Unlimited phone support
- Unlimited remote support
- After hours support
- Loaner PC's/Servers

WARNING! Beware the gray areas of "all-inclusive" service contracts. In order to truly compare the "cost" of one managed IT services contract with another, you need to make sure you fully understand what IS and ISN'T included AND the SLA (service level agreement) you are signing up for. It's VERY easy for one IT services provider to appear less expensive than another UNTIL you look closely at what you're getting.

The following are 21 questions to ask your IT services provider that will clarify exactly what you're getting for the money. Some of these items may not be that important to you, while others (like response time, adequate insurance, and uptime guarantees) may be critical. Make sure you fully understand each of these items before making a decision about who the right provider is for you, then make sure you get this IN WRITING.

20 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK YOUR I.T. SERVICES COMPANY OR CONSULTANT BEFORE HIRING THEM FOR I.T. SUPPORT

Customer Service:

Q1 **Do they answer their phones live or do you always have to leave a voicemail and wait for someone to call you back?**

Our Answer: We answer our phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and give all clients an emergency after-hours number they may call if a problem arises, even on weekends. Why? Because many of the CEOs and executives we support work outside normal hours and find it the most productive time they have. If they cannot access their computer network AND can't get hold of anyone to help them, it's incredibly frustrating.

Q2 **Do they offer a written, guaranteed response time to your calls?**

Our Answer: We guarantee to have a technician working on a problem within 60 minutes or less of your call. This is written into every service agreement we give to our clients because it's standard procedure.

Q3
Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand, or do they come across as arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?

Our Answer: Our technicians are trained to have the "heart of a teacher" and will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms. Just look at what this client had to say:

"Working with Hodgson Consulting feels like working with In-house IT support. I work with the same 1 or 2 technicians, which allows them to get to know me, my applications and computer systems. When I have a problem, the technicians take the time to show me what went wrong so I can avoid that issue in the future."

- Harry Moser, CEO, Reshoring Initiative

Q4
Do they consistently (and proactively) offer new ways to improve your network's performance, or do they wait until you have a problem to make recommendations?

Our Answer: We conduct quarterly review meetings with our clients to look for new ways to help improve their operations, lower costs, increase efficiencies and resolve any problems that may be arising. Our goal with these meetings is to help our clients be more profitable, efficient and competitive.

Q5
Do they provide detailed invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?

Our Answer: We provide detailed invoices that show what work was done, why and when, so you never have to guess what you are paying for. We also double-check our invoices for accuracy before they are sent to you.

Q6
Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Our Answer: Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible?

Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn sure whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions insurance AND workers' compensation — and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True Story: A few years ago, Geek Squad was slapped with multimillion-dollar lawsuits from customers for bad behavior by their technicians. In some cases, their techs were accessing, copying, and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers' PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In other cases, they lost a client's laptop (and subsequently all the data on it) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line: make sure the company you are hiring has proper insurance to protect YOU.

Q7 Do they guarantee to complete projects on time and on budget?

Our Answer: All projects are fixed-priced and guaranteed to be completed on time, in writing. This is important because many unethical or incompetent computer guys will only quote "time and materials," which gives them free rein to nickel-and-dime you as well as take as much time as they want completing a project.

Maintenance of Your Network:

Q8 Do they insist on remotely monitoring your network 24/7/365 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions and security patches up-to-date and PREVENT problems from turning into downtime, viruses, lost data, and other issues?

Our Answer: Yes, our remote network monitoring system watches over your network to constantly look for developing problems, security issues, and other problems so we can address them BEFORE they turn into bigger problems.

Q9 Do they provide you with a weekly report that shows all the updates, security patches, and status of every machine on your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?

Our Answer: Every week our clients get a detailed report that shows an overall health score of their network and the updates to their antivirus, security settings, patches, and other important network checks (like hard-drive space, backups, speed and performance, etc.).

Q10

Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written network documentation detailing what software licenses you own, critical passwords, user information, hardware inventory, etc., or are they the only person with the "keys to the kingdom"?

Our Answer: All clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost. We also perform a quarterly update on this material and make sure certain key people from your organization have this information and know how to use it, giving you complete control over your network.

Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their control as a means of job security, get rid of them (and we can help make sure you don't suffer ANY ill effects). This is downright unethical and dangerous to your organization, so don't tolerate it!

Q11

Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Our Answer: Yes, and since we keep detailed network documentation (basically a blueprint of your computer network) and updates on every client's account, any of our technicians can pick up where another one has left off.

Q12

Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Our Answer: Our "all-inclusive" support plan is just that — all-inclusive. One of the more popular service plans offered by consulting firms today is an "all-inclusive" or "all-you-can-eat" managed services plan. These are actually a good thing because they'll save you a lot of money in the long run. HOWEVER, make sure you REALLY understand what is and isn't included. Some things to consider are:

- Is phone/e-mail help desk included or extra?
- What about network upgrades, moves, or adding/removing users?
- Is hardware and/or software included?
- What about 3rd-party software support? (We recommend that this IS included.)
- What are the costs/consequences of early cancellation?

- What if you aren't happy with their services? Do they offer a contract cancellation policy?
- If the hardware and software is included, what happens if you cancel the contract?
- Are off-site backups included? To what degree?
- If you have a major disaster, is restoring your network included or extra?
- What about on-site support calls? Or support for remote offices?
- Are home PCs used to access the company's network after hours included or extra?

Backups And Disaster Recovery:

Q13 — Do they INSIST on monitoring an off-site as well as an on-site backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated tape backups?

Our Answer: We do not allow our clients to use tape backups because tape backups are incredibly unreliable. We make sure all of our clients have SafetyNet Online Backup Solutions, and here is why:

- SafetyNet Online Backup Solution host servers automatically backup your systems via the internet, onsite, or a combination of both.
- An encrypted copy of your data is safely stored and mirrored at two secure facilities for optimal protection.
- We can quickly and efficiently restore all or part of your data – typically within 24 hours – from anywhere in the world.
- You only pay for the server space you use based on the compressed data size.

Q14 — Do they INSIST on doing periodic test restores of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?

Our Answer: We perform a monthly "fire drill" and perform a test restore from backup for our clients to make sure their data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency. After all, the WORST time to "test" a backup is when you desperately need it.

Q15 — Do they insist on backing up your network BEFORE performing any type of project or upgrade?

Our Answer: We do, and that's simply as a precaution in case a hardware failure or software glitch causes a major problem.

Q16

If you were to experience a major disaster, do they have a written plan for how your data could be restored FAST and/or enable you to work from a remote location?

Our Answer: All clients receive a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage them to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office, but at a minimum, their network will be covered should something happen.

Technical Expertise And Support:

Q17

Is their help-desk U.S.-based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?

Our Answer: We provide our own in-house help desk and make sure the folks helping you are friendly and helpful. We consider this one of the most important aspects of customer service, plus we feel it's important to keeping your data secure.

Q18

Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in ongoing training — or are they learning on your dime?

Our Answer: Our technicians are required to keep the most up-to-date vendor certifications in all the software we support. Our technicians have over 40 industry recognized certifications. Plus, our top grading hiring process is so stringent, 99% of the technicians who apply don't make it through. (Guess who's hiring them?)

Q19

Do their technicians arrive on time and dress professionally?

Our Answer: Our technicians are true professionals that you would be proud to have in your office. They dress professionally and show up on time, and if they cannot, (for some odd, unforeseen reason), we always notify the client immediately. We believe these are the minimum requirements for delivering a professional service.

Q20

When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or do they say, "That's not our problem to fix"?

Our Answer: We feel WE should own the problem for our clients so they don't have to try and resolve any of these issues on their own — that's just plain old good service and something many computer guys won't do.

A FINAL WORD AND FREE ASSESSMENT OFFER TO SHOW YOU HOW TO ELIMINATE SYSTEM SLOWNESS, CRASHES, AND VIRUSES AND DRASTICALLY LOWER YOUR I.T. MAINTENANCE COSTS

I hope you have found this guide helpful in shedding some light on what to look for when hiring a professional firm to outsource your IT support. As I stated in the opening of this report, my purpose in providing this information is to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by incompetent or unethical firms luring you in with cheap prices.

Below you will find information on how to request a FREE IT Optimization Plan for your company as a next step in engaging with us. There is no cost or obligation and I guarantee you will find this consultation to be extremely valuable and eye-opening.

Looking forward to your call!

To Schedule Your <u>FREE</u> Assessment, please visit
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or call our office at 847-906-5005

Robert Zehnder
President, Chief Technology Officer
Hodgson Consulting & Solutions, Ltd.
(847) 906-5005
www.hodgsonconsulting.com

SEE WHAT OTHER BUSINESS OWNERS ARE SAYING ABOUT HODGSON CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS

Dependable with great customer service and easy to understand business solutions.

I have been with Hodgson Consulting & Solutions for about 5 years, and they came highly recommended by companies we work with on a daily basis. The decision to switch companies had many variables, but Hodgson Consulting had a very simplistic and easy to understand System that they tailored to my claims business.

- Martin Alpert, President and CEO, Environmental and General Liability

My IT problems never become my business problems.

Working with Hodgson Consulting feels like working with In-house IT support. I work with the same 1 or 2 technicians which allows them to get to know me, my applications and computer systems. When I have a problem, the technicians take the time to show me what went wrong so I can avoid that issue in the future.

- Harry Moser, CEO, Reshoring Initiative

I don't have to learn about IT!

We have received personalized service that meets our specific needs. We get the right sized solutions, not too small with constant upgrades, not overkill and overspending.

- John W. Beaver, Owner, Phase III Advisory

SEE WHAT OTHER BUSINESS OWNERS ARE SAYING ABOUT HODGSON CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS

Professional and responsive.

The Hodgson Consulting crew do a great job keeping our technology up to date and our information safe. They are super responsive and very helpful in any situation.

— Joe Havansek, Principal, Moran Havansek Financial Group

When ransomware attacks, you NEED HCS on your side.

There was a point when my business experienced what no business owner ever hopes to we were hit with a ransomware attack. We are so grateful that we were already partnered with Hodgson Consulting and Solutions because Hodgson's response to our crisis was immediate. There wasn't a moment's hesitation. He prepared precise instructions for recovery, and his team had us up and running in no time! I've always had peace of mind with HCS.

Hodgson and his team aren't just helpful in worse-case scenarios; they also improve our daily performance. They save me hours by doing ancillary tasks such as backup verification, firmware updates, and checking to ensure each user's antivirus is updated and working correctly.

The best aspect of the HCS team is their level of expertise. They have a profound knowledge of IT at their fingertips. We get full access to professional-grade IT network hardware and infrastructure, tech support, security, and backup plans for less than I'd pay an entry-level IT professional. HCS protected my business after a ransomware attack, don't let a lack of a great IT firm be the end to yours!

- Rosetta Metz, Owner, Lettuce Organize

THE HODGSON CONSULTING & SOLUTIONS DIFFERENCE

WE THRIVE IN COMPANIES WITH MULTIPLE LOCATIONS AND/OR A REMOTE WORKFORCE.

That means we understand the unique IT and business related challenges of companies like yours. We understand your need to have access to your critical information, documents and applications from remote locations as well as your need to have your data shared securely. This is why our tech support team is skilled at ensuring that all of your workers, regardless of their location; have access to the same functionality and usability without slowness or work-arounds just as if they were in the office.

ON-STAFF CITRIX SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS.

Our expertise in Citrix is so specialized that we help write the certification exams. Our Citrix specialized engineers are on-staff to deliver the correct and most effective solutions to you. This means that you will be able to get someone on the phone that truly knows Citrix AND understands YOUR systems, who can answer questions and provide actual resolutions not "band aid" fixes.

WE OWN OUR US BASED DATA-CENTER ENVIRONMENT.

All of your data is guaranteed to be backed up and stored in the US. Unlike other companies that store your data in public clouds or use third party cloud storage, which can store your data in unknown parts of the world. Leaving you to "have faith" that they have reputable employees with reliable system keeping your data safe. With us, you have 100% certainty of the exact location where your data is stored and the confidence that our trained staff maintains direct management of your mission critical data and systems.

OUR US BASED HELP DESK ANSWERS YOUR CALLS LIVE AND STAFFED BY OUR EXPERIENCED HODGSON CONSULTING & SOLUTION TECHNICIANS.

All of our Help Desk staff are managed and employed by Hodgson Consulting & Solutions - we hand selected, screened and trained every employee in accordance with our high standards. We NEVER outsource our help desk to a third party or use any offshore employees or services. Companies and government agencies under compliance regulations such as ITAR can rest assured that our Help Desk is maintained and managed solely by US persons in US locations.

WE OFFER AND SERVICE BOTH HOSTED CLOUD AND ON-PREMISE CLOUD SOLUTIONS.

Not all clouds are the same and not one type of Cloud is right for everyone. Our philosophy is and always has been to offer what is BEST for your company, not us. We base our recommendations on what YOU want and what YOU feel most comfortable with. Our responsibility is to educate you on the pros and cons of each and guide you to the best solution for your company.

NO BLAME – NO EXCUSES.

We are the only IT Company in the Chicagoland area that guarantees that you will never hear one of our employees blame another vendor when issues arise. When you choose Hodgson Consulting & Solutions, we take full responsibility of your IT support from the day we take over.

To Schedule Your FREE Assessment,
please visit **www.hodgsonconsulting.com/discovery**
or call our office at 847-906-5005