

How to Choose a Remote IT Provider

The questions that separate a genuine remote partner from a ticket queue - and how to verify a provider can actually support you from another state.

01	The contract terms that quietly lock you in
02	How to verify response times before you sign
03	What happens when work must be done at the site

Use this guide to assess where you are, identify the evidence you need, and turn the biggest gaps into a practical action plan.

Prepared by Brotherly Technology

Owner-led IT, security, and compliance support.

15-MINUTE ASSESSMENT

Start with the current state

Mark each item Yes, Partial, or No. A written policy only counts as Yes when the process is operating and you can show evidence.

☐ The provider publishes support hours, after-hours coverage, and the escalation path.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ The agreement defines response targets by severity, not one average response time.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ You can speak with a technical decision-maker before signing.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Remote-control tools require MFA, named technician accounts, and session logging.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ The provider explains how it will handle internet outages and site-wide failures.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ A documented local-hands process covers cabling, power, hardware, and carrier visits.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ The provider identifies who owns licenses, domains, documentation, and admin credentials.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Backups, security monitoring, patching, and vendor coordination have named owners.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Pricing clearly separates recurring service, projects, hardware, licenses, and travel.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Termination language includes export formats, transition help, and credential handoff.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ References include organizations with similar size, industry, and multiple locations.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ The provider can show a sample service report without exposing another client's data.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No

Quick score: Yes = 2, Partial = 1, No = 0. Start with any No that could stop work, expose sensitive data, or create an avoidable contract cost.

Translate the agreement before it becomes a problem

Circle anything vague. If a term affects cost, access, security, or your ability to leave, put the operational meaning in writing.

Clause	Healthy version	Question to ask
Term and renewal	Short initial term or clear value exchange; visible renewal date	When and how can we decline renewal?
Termination	Defined notice, export, credential, and transition process	What exactly do we receive, in what format, and when?
Ownership	Client owns domains, tenant, data, and core admin identities	Whose name appears on every account?
Price changes	Notice period and a defined basis for increases	Can licenses or labor change mid-term?
Scope	Included systems, users, sites, hours, and exclusions are listed	What common request becomes a project?
Security	MFA, least privilege, logging, notification, and insurance are addressed	How do you protect access to all clients?
SLA remedy	Reporting, escalation, and corrective action are defined	What happens after repeated misses?

OPERATIONAL PROOF

Prove remote support works before you depend on it

A remote provider can be excellent, but the physical-work plan must exist before a router fails or a new site opens.

1	Run a live test ticket: start by email or portal, then escalate by phone. Record every timestamp.
2	Ask the provider to explain its triage decision and who takes ownership when the first technician cannot solve it.
3	Walk through a site-wide internet failure. Confirm an out-of-band contact method and local-hands trigger.
4	Review the tools used for remote access, monitoring, documentation, and credential storage.
5	Call two references and ask about an actual urgent incident, not overall satisfaction.

What to watch for

WATCH: One response time is quoted for every severity.

WATCH: The SLA measures an automated acknowledgement, not human engagement.

WATCH: Onsite support is described as available but has no coverage or arrival target.

WATCH: The provider will not show a sample report, escalation path, or offboarding checklist.

WATCH: Core accounts or licenses would be opened in the provider's name.

WATCH: The contract auto-renews long before you receive a performance review.

Turn the worksheet into a 30-day plan

Do not try to solve everything at once. Assign one owner, one next action, and one date for each priority.

NOW	Name the owner and confirm the current state.	_____
NEXT 7 DAYS	Fix the highest-risk gap or gather the missing evidence.	_____
NEXT 30 DAYS	Complete the remaining quick wins and set review dates.	_____
NEXT QUARTER	Test the process, document results, and assign improvements.	_____

Notes / decisions / questions for your provider

Want a second set of eyes? Book a free consultation at brotherlytechnology.com/contact/ or call 404-907-1005.

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