

What Good IT Support Should Cost You

Response times, escalation paths and pricing models compared - so you can tell a real support agreement from a padded one.

01	Response vs resolution times, and which one to hold vendors to
02	Per-user, per-device and block-hour pricing compared
03	The SLA clauses worth negotiating before you sign

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 quote states covered users, devices, sites, systems, hours, and support channels.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Response targets are defined by severity and measure human engagement.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Resolution expectations distinguish provider-controlled work from dependencies and workarounds.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Escalation identifies technical, service-management, and leadership contacts.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Remote, onsite, after-hours, project, travel, and emergency work are clearly classified.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Licenses and security tools list product, tier, quantity, ownership, and renewal treatment.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Backup, monitoring, patching, vendor coordination, reporting, and documentation have named owners.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Onboarding and offboarding costs, deliverables, and timing are defined.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Price adjustments and reconciliation of users/devices are predictable.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ The agreement includes exclusions, assumptions, dependencies, and client responsibilities.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ Termination includes credential, data, documentation, configuration, and license handoff.	☐ Yes ☐ Partial ☐ No
☐ You can calculate an annual expected cost under normal and high-demand scenarios.	☐ 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.

PRICING MODELS

Compare risk allocation, not just the unit price

Normalize every quote to the same users, devices, sites, hours, tools, projects, and likely usage before comparing.

Model	Works well when	Watch for
Per user	People use several managed devices and cloud services	Shared/kiosk users, premium tools, projects, after-hours
Per device	Device count is stable and ownership is clear	User support, mobile devices, servers, network gear
Flat monthly	Scope and environment are well-defined	Fair-use limits, exclusions, change thresholds
Block hours	Needs are small, variable, and non-urgent	Expiration, priority, minimums, reactive incentives
Hourly / break-fix	Discrete project or low-dependency environment	Unpredictability and delayed maintenance
Hybrid	Managed baseline plus defined projects or usage	Overlap, double billing, and unclear boundaries

Annual expected cost = recurring service + licenses + onboarding + expected projects + after-hours/travel + internal administration + contingency.

SERVICE LEVELS

Hold vendors to response, ownership, and communication

Resolution time matters, but it is affected by parts, vendors, user access, and complexity. Negotiate a service system, not an impossible blanket promise.

1	Define severity with real examples and business impact, then assign channel, hours, human response target, and escalation.
2	Measure acknowledgement, human engagement, useful work, workaround, resolution, and customer confirmation separately.
3	State what pauses the clock and require visible communication during vendor, parts, or client dependencies.
4	Review misses, repeat incidents, backlog age, root causes, user satisfaction, patch/backup coverage, and improvement actions.
5	Include chronic-miss escalation, corrective plans, reporting access, and a fair exit path rather than relying only on small service credits.

What to watch for

WATCH: The SLA response is an automated ticket receipt.

WATCH: Common work is labeled a project only after the contract is signed.

WATCH: One target applies to outages and minor requests.

WATCH: The provider owns the tenant, domain, licenses, or administrator identities.

WATCH: Resolution time stops whenever the ticket is assigned to another vendor.

MAKE IT ACTIONABLE

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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