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6 SIGNS YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS MANAGED IT

The Managed IT Readiness Scorecard

One sheet to work through before you talk to anyone. Print it double sided and fill it in by hand, about twenty minutes. The point is not to decide whether your IT is good. It is to decide whether the *way you have arranged it* can be relied on to catch the next problem before you do. It works whether or not you already have a provider: Sign 6 is written for the reader who has one.

1 Score the six signs

Tick the box only if the statement is honestly true of your business today. Signs 3 and 5 are shaded because each one counts on its own, whatever your total is.

	The sign	What to look at	Yes / No
1	**It runs on one person's memory.** Someone does IT that is not in their job title, on a setup nobody wrote down.	How long a new starter waits to be fully set up	
2	**Purely reactive support.** You start every conversation, and never in a good mood.	Who initiates contact, every time	
3	**Untested backups.** Nobody can name the date a backup was last restored.	The date of the last test restore	
4	**Lumpy, unforecastable spend.** Two or three invoices a year nobody saw coming.	Twelve months of IT invoices, sorted by amount	
5	**A compliance line crossed quietly.** Obligations arrive by turnover and by customer.	Your turnover, and the security questionnaires you now receive	
6	**You have become a small client.** You have a provider, but its attention has moved to larger accounts.	Your own ticket history, this year against two years ago	
		Total number of signs ticked	

2 Read the number

Signs	What it means	What to do about it
0 to 1	Your arrangement is holding	Nothing. Revisit in twelve months, or next time you add people or a site
2 to 3	A specific gap, not a broken arrangement	Fix the named gap. Often documentation or a tested backup, not a change of model
4 or more	The arrangement is the problem	Change how IT is arranged. Fixing four faults one at a time will reproduce them

If Sign 6 is most of your total, the problem is probably the provider rather than the model. Managed IT is not failing you, a particular arrangement of it is. Start with a direct conversation with your current provider, not a change.

The rule that beats the count. If you ticked Sign 3 or Sign 5, act on that one alone whatever your total is. Those are the two where finding out later cannot be fixed by working harder afterwards. Everything else on the list costs you money and patience. Those two can cost you the business or the contract.

3 Ask these six questions out loud

One per sign. Write down the answer you actually get, not the answer you expect. A vague answer is itself an answer.

The question	The answer you got
If that person resigned on Friday, who would know the administrator password for our accounting system?	
When did someone last tell us about a problem before we noticed it ourselves?	
When did you last restore from our backups, and how long did it take?	
How many of last year's IT invoices did we know about a month in advance?	
Which obligations apply to a business our size this year, and who keeps track of them?	
Who is our named engineer, and what has changed in our arrangement in the last twelve months other than the price?	
The two numbers behind Sign 3. How much work would we lose, and how long until staff are working again? Not until the data exists somewhere. Until people are doing their jobs.	

That last one is a business decision rather than a technical one. Having the conversation at all is the difference between a managed arrangement and a backup product.

4 Before you sign anything, ask a provider these

- ☐ **What is not included?** Ask this before you ask what is.
- ☐ **What are your response times, and what happens if you miss them?** A response time with no consequence attached is a hope.
- ☐ **How will you test our backups, and how will I know you did?** Look for a schedule and a report you receive without asking.
- ☐ **Who owns our data, our licences and our domain names?** The answer should be you in all three cases.
- ☐ **What does the end of this agreement look like?** Ask while everyone is optimistic, because it cannot be negotiated later.

Ticked more than two, and not sure which to deal with first?

That conversation takes about fifteen minutes. 1300 InTech looks after technology for small and mid-sized businesses across Melbourne, and we will tell you plainly whether you have one gap to fix or an arrangement to change. Sometimes the honest answer is that your current setup is fine. Call **1300 468 324** or book a 15-minute call at **1300intech.com.au/contact-us**.

Prepared by Alan Arthurson, Managing Director, 1300 InTech. General information only: it does not take account of your circumstances, and privacy, security and reporting obligations vary by business and by turnover. Seek advice suited to your situation.