EUGENE NETWORKS

The Ultimate Guide to IT

for Small-to-Midsized Businesses

01
ISSUE

Table of Contents

01 Welcome

02 How to Talk to IT Services like a Pro

03 How to Vet an IT Service

04 Debunking Cybersecurity Scare Tactics of IT Services

05 A Word of Advice

06 FAQs

New Message: Welcome!!!

Hey! Nate from Eugene Networks here.

Look, you probably have as much interest in IT services as waiting in traffic. And who can blame you? The industry's loaded with mazes of price tags, salesy sales calls, and contract traps.

We've moved past all that noise at Eugene Networks, but hey, we're just a drop in the ocean. So, we've crafted this guide to help you navigate that big ocean.

Why? Because choosing an IT service isn't just about duct-taping your tech issues. It's about you, your business, and your vision.

This guide is about helping you find a service that syncs with your vision and takes you, your team, and your customers forward to better experiences.

Aim high, don't settle, and best of luck.

Enjoy the guide,

Nathan Martin

Founder and Director of Client Experience

How to Talk to IT Services like a Pro

Before you get tangled in a bunch of sales calls, this quick exercise will arm you with all the information you need to speak with confidence about your business's tech.

Having this information on hand will allow you to approach IT services not as a business in distress, but as a savvy partner who knows what they want. You'll find you can quickly weed out bad fit services and not get distracted by the shiny promises of salespeople.

To start, you're going to list your current tech-stack, front to back. Don't get overwhelmed, it doesn't have to be perfect. Most services will offer a free walkthrough to go over these things before signup. This is just to give you clarity and put the power in your hands!

After that, you'll define your 'Why' using a not so secret method that gets to the heart of the matter every time.

Step 1: List Your Current Tech

Don't worry about getting this perfect. Just try your best. Consider printing this out and keeping it by your desk for a week, writing things down as you go.

Computers & Hardware Mac or PC? List computers, printers, other technology tools you use in your business.	
Apps & Software List software or apps you use, include things like Microsoft Office, Dropbox, or any special software unique to your business.	
Data & Backups Where is your business information is stored? On computers, in "the cloud", or elsewhere?	
Security Anything you use to keep your computers safe. This could be things like antivirus programs.	
Internet Setup Who is your provider? Do you use any special equipment to connect to the internet?	
Current Support? Who currently manages your tech? This helps envision what a transition to a new IT service might entail.	

Step 2: Know Your ‘Why’

The Secret of the 5 Whys

Defining your ‘Why’ is the heart of your search. And this ‘Why’ is what ultimately needs to be resolved by your IT service. To uncover your why, we’re going to use a special technique.

Ever heard of the '5 Whys' technique? It's a brainchild of Toyota's production process, but it works magic everywhere.

Ask yourself 'Why' and keep asking four more times. It's like a treasure hunt leading you to the crux of your issue. It helps you tell IT services what you really need – not just what you think you need.

Example:

1. Why are we considering an IT service? "Our server keeps crashing, causing significant downtime.”

2. Digging a little deeper. Why does the server crash? "We suspect our server can't handle the increased load from the growing user base."

3. Why hasn't it been upgraded? "The server is custom-built, and we're unsure how to scale it without disrupting operations."

4. Why is your server custom-built? "When we started, a custom-built server seemed cost-effective and met our needs."

5. And the final ‘why.’ Why haven't you switched to a server that can scale with your business? "Migrating all data to a new system seems overwhelming and risky. We need to fully trust someone’s expertise for something so important."

Your Turn. Why Am I Considering an IT Service?

Ask ‘Why’ 4 more times. Write your answer as clearly as you can here.

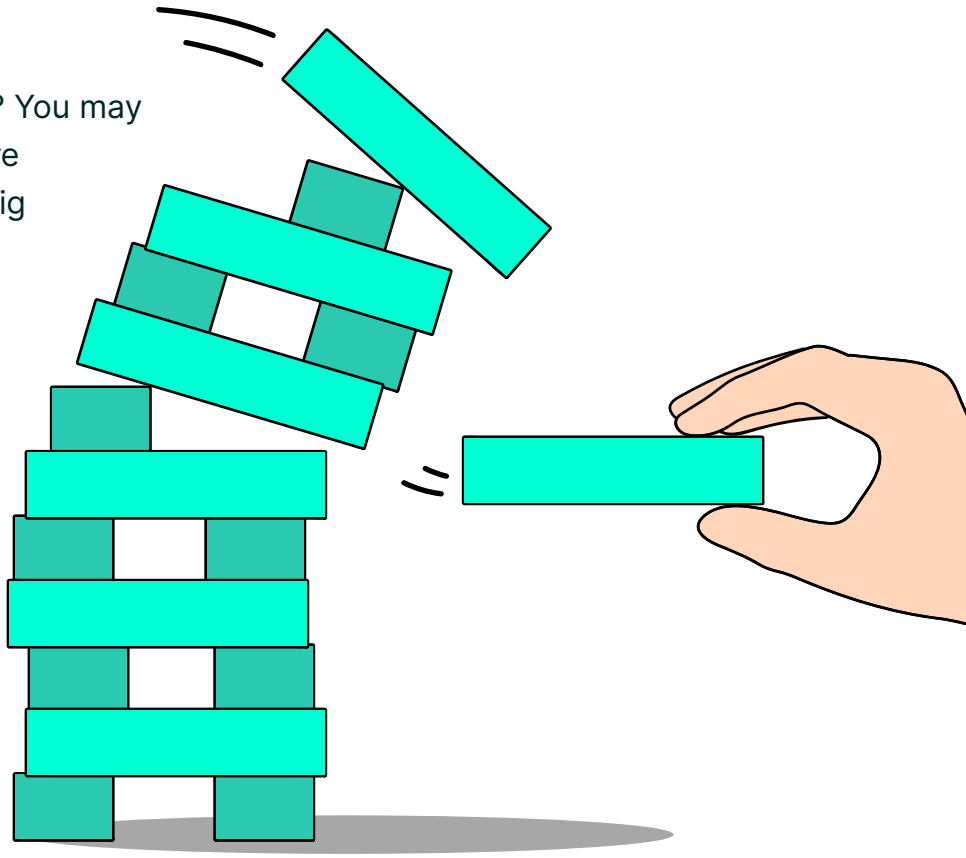
How to Vet an IT Service

Okay, now you've got a good grasp on your tech. And you've got your 'Why' pinned down.

After you reach out to a few IT services, you'll quickly find only a few make it through this filter. With the few remaining, you'll need to vet them to make sure they fit with your business.

But how do you vet an IT service? You may feel overwhelmed if you feel you're not very tech-savvy. But, it's no big deal, we'll walk you through it.

Here's how you vet any service to make sure they are the perfect partner.



How to Vet an IT Service

1. Know Their Support Style

IT services usually come in one of two styles. The first is the dedicated team approach - you get a small, dedicated team of techs who know your business inside out. It's as close as you can get to an in-house IT team from an IT service.

The other style treats client issues like a factory conveyor belt. It's called 'tiered' or 'escalation' support. No assigned techs. Your problems are handed off from one tech to the next, starting with the least experienced tech (cheapest labor). But this handoff process slows things down and leads to a messy game of telephone. Choose a service with dedicated team approach if possible.

Ask: How do you guys structure your client support tickets? Do I get to work with the same technicians every time or do you use an escalation/tiered approach?

Ask: “Which technician(s) will me and my team be working with? Can I meet them?”

2. Know Their Responsiveness

Quick response times are vital. It’s okay to ask your potential IT service directly about their average response time for issues and for emergencies. If a long-term contract is on the table, seek a response time guarantee in writing.

Ask: "What's your average response time for tech issues? And what about emergencies?”

Longterm contract? Ask:"Could we include the response time in our contract? It'll assure us of prompt action throughout our agreement."

3. Check Tech Compatibility

Reference your tech stack from Step 1. Ask directly about the most important things on your list and gauge their confidence. You don’t want a lukewarm answer like: “Yeah, I’m pretty sure we can handle that.” You want experience, confidence, and knowledge about your tech stack. Their assurance in handling your hardware and software speaks volumes about their skill and readiness for the years ahead.

Ask: “What part of our tech stack do you think will be most challenging for your team to support?”

4. Check the Reviews for Keywords that Match Your ‘Why’

Next, reference your ‘Why’ you wrote down. Then read customer reviews on Google, Yelp, or Facebook to uncover recurring praises or complaints. Look for comments that match your ‘Why’ such as response times, knowledge, helpfulness, patience, and expertise.

How to Vet an IT Service

5. Know Their Billing

Transparency in billing ensures longterm trust in your partnership. Make sure the IT service offers unambiguous invoices and notifies you about any extra charges in advance, especially for projects not included in the service.

Ask: About billing, are there any extra costs that might come up?

Ask: "Will you inform us ahead of any additional charges for projects?"

6. Scrutinize the Proposal. Question Any Contracts.

Is everything the salesperson promised during your discussions reflected in the proposal? A confusing or unclear proposal might hide disappointing service down the line.

Look for attention to your pain points. Does their approach specifically address your business pain points, or does it feel generic?

Contracts. Long term contracts almost always skew in the IT services's favor. Look out for fine print, especially around termination and auto-renewal clauses. Opt for a 'cancel anytime' service when possible. (You'll thank us later.)

7. Check Their Local Presence

On site support is extremely valuable in not only supporting your business, but understanding your operations from the inside. A local team offers benefits like understanding your local context, idea generation for new solutions, and, of course, quick on site assistance.

Ask: "Is your team locally-based and do they provide on site support?"

6. Meet the Team

Just as you would when hiring a new employee, arrange a face-to-face meeting (or a video call). Are they open, honest, and straightforward? Do they seem transparent in their dealings? Do they have time for your questions? A good partnership is built on trust. If you feel comfortable during the initial interactions, that's a promising sign.

Know the Team Size. Remember, the size of the team matters. A one-person show is not the best option for an established company. Look for an IT service with a minimum of 4 team members. This ensures you have a safety net if someone is unavailable.

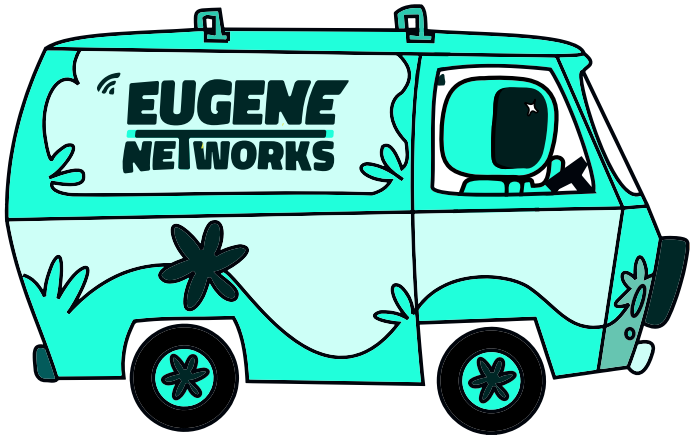
Ask: "So, how many people are on your team?

Debunking the Cybersecurity Scare Tactics of IT Services

It's true, cybersecurity is serious business. It safeguards your precious business from attacks targeting sensitive information, normal operations, or even user extortion. Yikes! Unfortunately, many IT services use the seriousness of security to push scare tactics during sales. They're hoping to get you to decide from a place of fear, not knowledge. We're here to tell you, there's no need for those trembling knees.

We'll show you exactly how to gather some clues so you can unmask the scare tactics, verify solid security, and make decisions from a place of confidence – not fear.

And to think, they would've gotten away with it if it weren't for us pesky kids....



1. Begin to Unravel the Mystery

To start, recognize if you have industry specific regulations or required policies. From there, you'll want to note your business size (revenue) and number of employees you have.

2. Your Secret Weapon

Time to dig into the clues. One highly effective method is getting a free consultation from a cyber insurance company. These companies will often provide technical underwriting requirements that outline your business's cybersecurity needs such as:

- Multi-factor authentication,
- Managed Detection and Response (MDR),
- Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR),
- Security Operations Center (SOC) capabilities,
- or a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system.

Even if you choose not to purchase a policy immediately, these clues will guide your next steps to solving the mystery.

3. Unmask the Scare Tactics

It's time to pull the mask off and see what security the IT service really offers. For you, this means asking the IT service direct questions based on the clues you've gathered: The ones outlined by your cyber insurance requirements. Ask direct questions, such as:

"Can you provide multi-factor authentication?"

"Do you offer MDR or EDR? Do you have a SOC?"

Even if you're not an expert with these terms, you've just revealed whether the IT service can actually provide the solutions your business needs at an insurance-backed level.

4. Sleep Well

With your needs defined and the right questions answered, you've successfully navigated the world of cybersecurity. Look at you!

Now, go enjoy some Scooby snacks.

New Message: Best of Luck!!!

Before you go, we'd like to send you off with a word of advice.

At this point, technology is woven into the fabric of your business. The real worth of an IT partner is in their ability to set course with you and act as a partner.

Don't settle for a one-sided vendor experience. You want an IT partner you can actually talk to—about your next big move, your fears, your endgame, whatever's on your mind. The more they get you, the better they'll serve you. Simple.

In short, you're not just hiring tech support. You're adding members to your team. Aim for that. Anything less? Not worth your time.

Feel free to book a chat directly with me to talk about your business at: www.eugenenetworks.com/appointments
Best of luck on your journey.

Nathan Martin

Nate Martin

EUGENE NETWORKS

About Eugene Networks

Eugene Networks provides I.T. support for small-to-midsized businesses in Eugene, Springfield, and all of Lane County.

Our friendly crew of engineers fully manage your work technology—so you can stop wasting time, get on-site support in a few clicks, lock your security, and get more work done everyday.

FAQs About Eugene Networks

What specific IT services do you provide?

Simply put, we are your IT partner.

We handle your servers, computers, software, data, backups, including onboarding and off boarding of users, hardware, and even procuring new hardware, such as computers, laptops, docking stations, and monitors.

But we're more than that—we're your always-ready help desk. Any IT glitch, we're your go-to problem solvers, always ready to get you back on track. It's all part of the service.

What is your support style?

You get a dedicated team of technicians assigned to your business. We aim to create an experience that feels like they are part of your team. This means familiar faces, insights of your business, and accountability.

Is there a long-term contract or can I cancel anytime?

No contracts. Cancel anytime.

How do I switch to you from another IT service?

It’s surprisingly easy. First, know that you don’t have to be the middle man. We’ll work directly with your current service to ensure a secure transfer of your data. Most IT services will collaborate without issue. The only thing you'll need to take care of is making sure you're not locked into any contracts.

How does the onboarding process work?

Our goal is to create an instant sense of relief for you and your staff. That’s why we visit your office to introduce our service manager and your new I.T. team. We hand out delicious snacks and guides for your employees to learn how easy and enjoyable it is to get support from us.

From there, we’ll begin removing any previous IT software from your systems and installing ours so your users can feel the love.

Then, we’ll work closely with you on the backend tasks, like adjusting your spam filter or making other necessary service changes for a seamless, surprise-free transition. That's how we do onboarding.

FAQs

How do I sign up for your services?

The easiest way is to book a call with Nate and have a casual conversation.

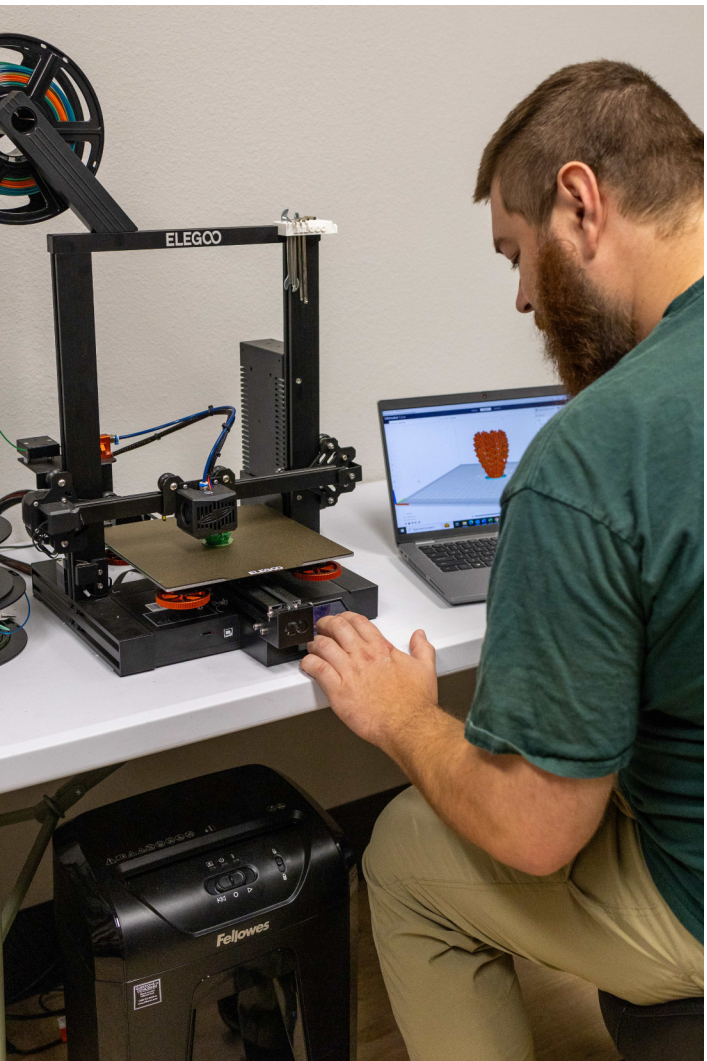
We're interested in finding good matches, so the conversation will be easygoing. Even if you're unsure and trying to decide if you want to sign up for I.T. service at all, talking to Nate will help you figure it out.

Head to this page to book a meeting now.

www.eugenenetworks.com/appointments

How quickly can I get started after I sign up?

Immediately, with limited support. Full support happens once we're able to log into your technologies. That's the magic moment.



EUGENE NETWORKS