Important Questions to Ask When Choosing an IT Service Provider for Your Law Firm

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In the hyper-competitive economic environment that we are currently in, technology is essential for the growth and success of a business. The legal industry is no exception to this general rule: Law firms large and small need the right IT infrastructure and cybersecurity in place. You need to know that you are putting the IT needs of your firm into the hands of a service provider that you can trust.

At Rize Technologies, we provide managed IT services for law firms. Our IT support team wants to make sure that all law firms and legal organizations have the knowledge, tools, and resources that they need to choose the right service provider. In this article, you will find an overview of twenty one questions that you should ask when choosing a managed IT service provider for your law firm.

Top 21 Questions to Ask When Choosing an IT Service Provider for Your Law Firm

1. How Large Is the IT Provider and How Long Has the Company Been in Business?

When choosing a managed IT services provider for your law firm, you need to be sure that the company has the capacity to meet your needs. It is a best practice to start by looking for some background information about the provider, such as the size of the company and how long the company has been in business.

Trusting your IT needs to a managed service provider (MSP) is a big decision. Make sure that the company has the staffing level to meet your law firm's needs and has been in business long enough to have developed a proven reputation of high quality service.

2. Does the IT Service Provider Have the Technical Expertise That You Need?

A managed service provider (MSP) must have a well-trained, highly qualified staff of information technology professionals who have the right technical skills to effectively serve your law firm.

Whether your firm needs support with network monitoring, data security, cybersecurity, device management, data backup, cloud-based services, remote technology, or any other issues, it is crucial that you connect with an MSP that has the right technical expertise.

3. What Are the Range of Technology Services Offered by the Firm?

When finding an IT service provider for your law firm, it is important to get into the specific details of what is being offered. You do not need a deep technical background to ask questions about the specific range of IT services that are available.

Make sure that you understand exactly what your law firm will be getting from the service provider. If you have specific questions or concerns about the available services, you should not hesitate to ask for deeper and more comprehensive answers.

4. How Easy Will It Be to Onboard/Transition?

One of the best questions to ask an IT service provider is how they will handle the onboarding process. It is not uncommon to hear about law firms that are dissatisfied with their current IT service provider, but are hesitant to make a change.

The reason for this is that many firms are worried that the transition and onboarding process will be too slow and too chaotic. While this is certainly an understandable concern, it does not have to be that way. A top IT services provider for law firms will make the transition and onboarding process as smooth and easy as possible. You should not have to start from scratch. A top IT service provider can help you seamlessly transition.

5. Will the IT Service Provider Perform a Comprehensive Review of Your Practices?

Whether you have a new law firm that is starting from scratch or you already have a comprehensive IT system in place, you will want to know whether or not a managed service provider (MSP) is equipped to conduct a detailed-driven review and assessment of your current IT practices. This is important because your current technology set-up will have a major impact on the onboarding process and the services that you will review.

A top IT service provider for law firms should be asking you and your partners prohibitive questions so that they understand your system and are ready to develop a plan of action that actually works for your law firm.

6. Is Any On-Site Support Available?

Your law firm may need fully remote IT support services, on-site IT management services, or a combination of both. When inquiring about a new managed service provider (MSP), it is always important to ask about the full range of their services. Do they offer any on-site support options? If so, it is best to ask deeper questions about how exactly that process works. When you need on-site support or off-site support, how will the service be provided?

7. How and When Is Support Provided and How Strong Is the Response Time?

When you select an IT service provider, you should know the precise steps that you need to take to request (and receive) tech support. It is also useful to know the general timeline for support. For example, when you make an IT request, you should have clear expectations for how and when you will receive the initial response. You will want to know who will begin working on your request and how strong the initial response will be.

Remember, the response time is not the same thing as resolution time. The timeframe for the resolution of an IT issue varies based on a wide range of different factors. Similar to how lawyers and law firms cannot guarantee certain case results, IT service providers cannot pre-guarantee a resolution time for an IT issue that has not yet occurred. Still, the initial response time tells you a lot about how well (and quickly) an IT company will handle a matter.

8. Is Support Available in Time-Sensitive Situations?

Is there anything more frustrating than running into a computer problem or IT problem on a day when you are already incredibly busy? It can seem like IT issues always arise at the worst possible moment. A useful question to ask an IT service provider is how they will handle time-sensitive situations. Is IT support available for a time-sensitive matter? Are there any specialized protocols in place for these types of situations? Beyond knowing the general response time for IT requests, it is also very useful to know what you can expect if you are dealing with an emergency tech issue.

9. What Is the Structure of the It Provider's Contract (Cost, Cancellability, etc.)?

As attorneys well know, the specific language and structure of a contract matters. You should carefully inquire about the nature of a contract and/or your relationship with an IT service provider. Among other things, law firms, legal organizations, and legal departments should know about:

- The cost of managed IT services;
- The scope of the support being provided; and
- Your ability to cancel and/or adjust your services.

10. What Is the Composition of the IT Support Team?

You may want to ask about the specific composition of the IT support team that will be provided services to your law firm or legal organization. This is an often-overlooked issue in the initial stages of searching for the right IT service provider. Yet, in the long run, it is an issue that will be very important for law firms.

Here is an example: Imagine that you retain an IT service provider for a mid-sized law firm. A few weeks later, you run into an issue and make a request to the help desk. Do you know exactly how that request will be processed and handled? Does it go to a large pool of IT professionals? Does it go to a specific individual? The details of the composition of the IT support team matter.

11. Does the IT Service Provider Follow the Best Cybersecurity Practices?

The importance of cybersecurity cannot be overstated. A recent study cited by The Washington Post found that cybersecurity breaches cost global businesses more than $1 trillion per year. An IT service provider for law firms must have the best cybersecurity practices in place. Law firms should always look for an IT management service provider that can offer reliable Cybersecurity support.

Cybersecurity is a huge issue in the legal industry. Breaches can cause serious financial and intangible damages to law firms, legal departments, and their clients. For example, the The New York Times reported that the New York City Law Department was subject to a massive cyber security breach in 2021. An enormous amount of sensitive information was exposed.

An investigation revealed that an employee's password was exposed and used to breach the system. Alarmingly, the New York City Law Department lacked the systematic cybersecurity protections needed to stop the damage caused by the initial breach. Law firms should always look for an IT services provider that understands the vital importance of cybersecurity.

12. What Cybersecurity Framework Does the IT Service Provider Use?

You will want to know what type of cybersecurity framework an IT services provider uses. To comply with the best data security practices for the legal industry, law firms must know that their tech partner has the right cybersecurity framework in place. In this context, a cybersecurity framework can be best understood as the system of standards, guidelines, and practices that will be followed. Some examples of cybersecurity frameworks include:

- NIST;
- CSF;
- CIS;
- ISO/IEC 27001; and
- ISO/IEC 27002.

Do not hesitate to inquire about the specific cybersecurity framework that will be adhered to and implemented by an IT service provider. Your provider should be able to explain—in plain English—the nature and purpose of their system. No matter the framework, a well-designed cybersecurity system should provide proactive protection against serious threats.

13. Has the IT Services Provider Achieve Certified Compliance in Cybersecurity?

Beyond following a recognized cybersecurity framework, it is beneficial to ask an IT service provider about any cybersecurity risk certifications that they have. Two of the most cybersecurity risk certifications are:

- SOC 2; and
- ISO 27001.

These two cybersecurity certifications are relatively similar. The primary difference is who conducts the audit. An ISO 27001 audit must be conducted by an ISO 27001 accredited organization. In contrast, a SOC 2 must be conducted by a qualified certified public accountant (CPA).

14. What Is the Scope of the Cybersecurity Services Offered by the IT Management Provider?

As cybersecurity and data protection are of the utmost importance for law firms, it is essential that you understand the full scope of the services available for your IT provider. Along with other types of cybersecurity services, your law firm, legal organization, or legal department may benefit from:

- Cybersecurity consulting;
- Password protection and management services;
- Proactive vulnerability management;
- Data leak analysis and solutions;
- Cyber threat intelligence;
- Cyber attack prevention and protection; and
- Data privacy support.

15. Does the IT Service Provider Offer Round-The-Clock Monitoring?

Your law firm's information technology needs do not take nights and weekends off. It should be a 24/7/365 priority. Does an IT service offer round-the-clock monitoring and/or 24/7/365 support services? As an owner or manager of a law firm, legal organization, or legal department, you should make sure that the MSP has the capability to provide the IT support and IT infrastructure services that your firm needs.

16. Will the IT Service Provider Make the Cloud More Accessible, Functional, and Reliable?

The entire world continues to transition to cloud-based technology. Broadly defined, cloud computing is the delivery of different services through the web—including data storage, servers, networking, and software. According to Statista, 60% of all corporate data in the United States is stored on a cloud-based platform. That is more than double what it was just seven years ago.

Law firms large and small are increasingly using cloud-based services. In looking for the right IT service team for your law firm, it is important to consider your cloud computing needs. A top cloud service provider for law firms will make the cloud faster, more accessible, and more reliable. At its best, cloud computing can offer security, efficiency, and an all around improved user experience.

17. Does the IT Provider Have the Capability to Truly Support Remote Work?

Remote work is crucial in the legal industry. A recent survey cited by the American Bar Association (ABA), found that the majority of U.S. law firms believe that remote work is an important part of their future. A law firm may offer fully remote work to some attorneys and staff, pre-scheduled part-time remote work, or a flexible schedule. An information technology service provider for law firms should put the right infrastructure in place to support remote work if that is something that is important for your law firm.

18. Can You Trust the IT Provider's Data Backup and Data Recovery?

Data preservation masters. When you store important data—whether on hardware or on the cloud—it is imperative that you can trust the reliability. The reality is that downtime can happen, network problems can happen, and server issues can happen. An IT service provider should be able to effectively manage data backup and data recovery. You should be confident that you can:

- Backup your data;
- Restore your network;
- Maintain business continuity; and
- Retrieve all critical documents.

19. How Effective Is the Service Provider Able to Handle Technology Updates?

Information technology is a fast-paced environment. Things can change quickly. Patches, updates, and upgrades are rolled out on a regular basis. A top quality IT management service provider will be able to effectively handle patching and updates. Law firms and legal organizations will want to know exactly how their provider will handle these updates. Flexibility is important.

A top IT service provider should be able to work with you and your law firm to patch and update systems in a manner that does not disrupt your workflow or compromise your cybersecurity.

20. Does the IT Service Provider Understand the Unique Needs of Law Firms?

Law firms face some unique business and regulatory challenges. When contracting with a managed services provider (MSP), law firms should ask whether or not the company has experience and expertise working with other clients in the legal industry. An IT service provider that works with law firms will be in the best position to understand the unique needs of your firm.

For example, data security is especially important for law firms. Attorneys have a professional responsibility to protect the sensitive client information. As cited by the American Bar Association (ABA), Rule 1.6 Confidentiality of Information makes it clear that absent a client's informed consent, ***"the lawyer must not reveal information relating to the representation."***

By asking an IT service provider about its experience working with other clients in the legal industry, you can learn more about whether or not the company is truly up to the task of providing the reliable and security information technology services that your law firm needs.

21. Does the Managed IT Service Provider Have Positive Reviews/Referrals?

The right IT service provider is one that has a strong record of demonstrated success. Law firms should not hesitate to ask a service provider about its history of client reviews and client referrals. By hearing what current and former clients have to say about an IT service provider or managed services provider (MSP), you can learn a lot about what they can actually deliver—not just about the promises that are made on the front-end of the relationship.

Why Choose Rize Technologies as Your Managed IT Service Provider

Information technology is becoming ever-more complicated. You do not need to navigate new technologies on your own. Professional support can save time and money.

At Rize Technologies, we have provided leading-end IT services to large law firms, small law firms, and legal organizations for more than two decades. No matter your IT needs, our team is ready to help. By outsourcing your IT management needs, you and your partners can concentrate on what you do best—practicing the law and running your firm. Among other things, our IT management services provider offers:

Easy Onboarding, Cost Effective, and Cancel at Any Time

We are confident in our managed IT services for law firms. We offer cost effective support and make the onboarding process as smooth and easy as possible. The transition should not adversely affect the day-to-day operations for your law firm. Further, you are free to cancel at any time.

Productivity-Focused

Technology should make it easier to get legal work done and run your practice—not harder. We provide managed IT services that are focused on helping our clients enhance their productivity. There should be a measurable return on investment. Our IT team is committed to making sure that technology tools work for you, not against you.

Digital Transformation, Global Access

We help our client change the way that work gets done through digital transformation. With our protected cloud-based platform, you will be able to securely access your data anytime and anywhere. Remote work is on the rise: Your firm can be fully prepared for a more flexible future.

Simplicity

Too often, new technology can be intimidating and difficult to use for attorneys and legal staff. Our mission is to simplify things, making sure that lawyers, paralegals, and legal support staff are able to effectively use powerful technology tools without the hassle.

A Strong Emphasis on Cybersecurity

We firmly believe in the importance of cybersecurity. Cybersecurity threats must be proactively addressed. Our IT teams provide proactive threat-management, ensuring that your law firm's sensitive data is kept safe and confidential.

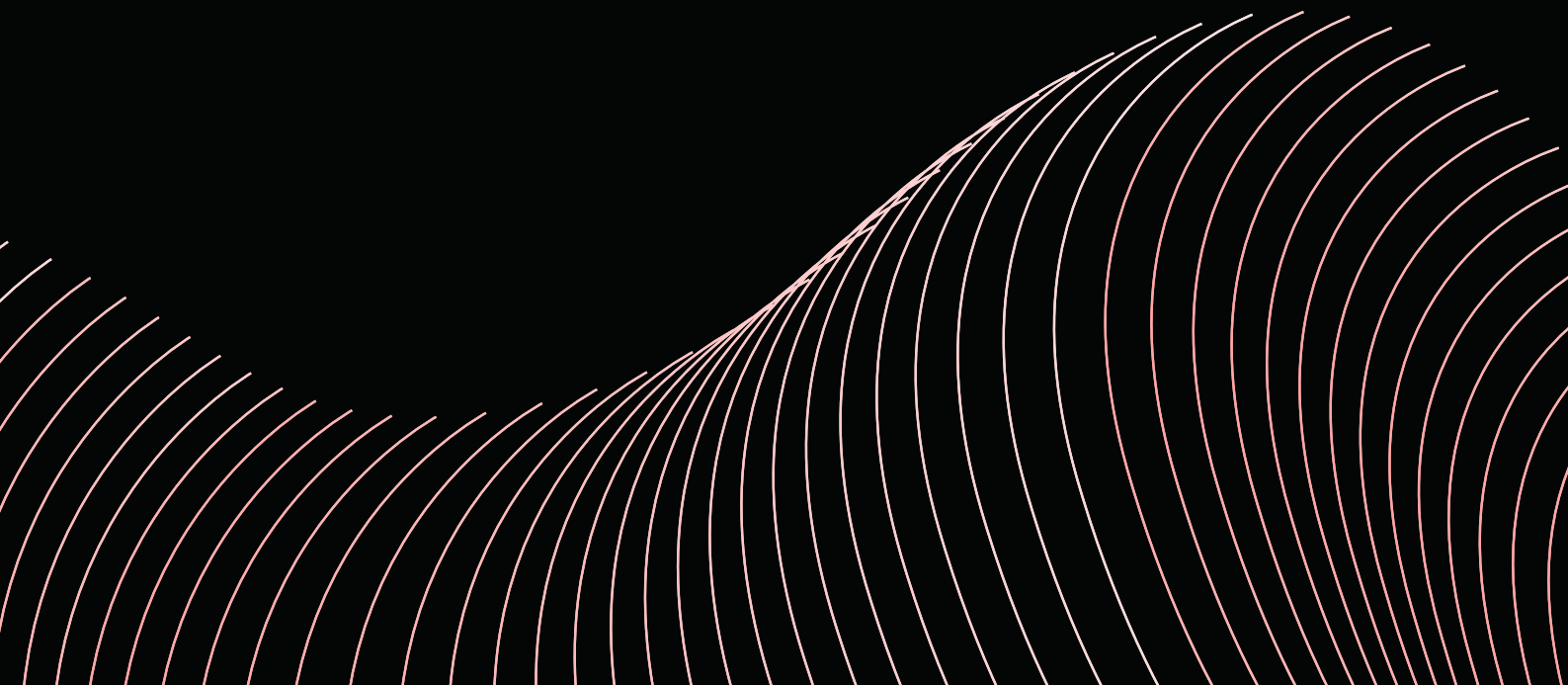
Get Help From a Top Managed IT Service Provider for Law Firms

At Rize Technologies, we provide reliable, comprehensive, and cybersecurity-compliant services to law firms and legal organizations.

With a focus on providing the highest quality services to our clients, we help law firms modernize, grow, and avoid serious problems.

Do you want to maximize your law firm's IT efficiency and feel truly secure about your data? **Contact our IT support team** today to set up a free, 15 minute initial discovery call.

We look forward to hearing from you.



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