

## FIRST THINGS FIRST: Top 8 Tips for Managing IT Vendors



**SPOT**  
Managed IT Services

One of the most time-consuming tasks in day-to-day IT is the managing of 3<sup>rd</sup> party IT vendors. This includes everything from software vendors to telecom vendors, to Internet Service Providers, to Cloud Service Providers, as well as third party IT contractors.

### First Things First – Top 8 Tips for Managing IT Vendors

Our Top 8 Tips	What it means for you
<b>1. Start a complete list of your various IT operating vendors</b>	<p>When you have issues, you want to have all the details for someone ahead of time. Gather the vendor's name, any special phone numbers/ contacts/email addresses, note needed serial numbers/contract numbers.</p> <p>It's also a good idea to notate the date added to network, and any dates for contract ending or renewal.</p>
<b>2. Cultivate a relationship with vendors</b>	<p>Proactively reach out to close vendors prior to major changes and they usually will respond sooner. By establishing contacts at multiple levels, the IT vendor will see you as a person and not another support issue.</p>
<b>3. Speak your vendor's language</b>	<p>When you are working with an IT vendor, it helps to speak their language and use their terminology. If you have a relationship with a primary IT vendor, they can be a valuable resource and can usually speak in other third party lingo to your software, security and ISP vendors.</p> <p>Consider outsourcing vendor management, if you need to stay focused on driving revenue or management of your core business.</p>



THE **FULCRUM** GROUP  
*One Technology Solution: Yours*

<p><b>4. Manage your vendors to lower your costs</b></p>	<p>Regularly review invoices, review scope of services received and possibly renegotiate prices to help lower costs. The better prepared you are with a detailed scope, the easier it is for a vendor to provide a better price.</p> <p>When you are disorganized and don't provide a detailed scope of required services, they have to assume higher costs related to project management.</p>
<p><b>5. Measure your vendors to ensure they meet their contract terms and service level agreements</b></p>	<p>Vendors that meet their contract terms and service level agreements will provide better value to your business. You can target first response times, mean time to resolve issues, uptime or simpler requirements such as a specific deliverable (network map, password list, admin guide).</p>
<p><b>6. Identify the gaps in your IT vendors and their service offerings</b></p>	<p>Gaps in your IT delivery can represent risk to your business. Filling in the gaps with vendors, internal staff, and processes can help lower your risk and improve the value you receive from your IT vendors.</p> <p>Technology skills are vastly different between personnel in different roles such as Help Desk, Network Analyst, Business Analyst, Software Developer and Security Analyst.</p>
<p><b>7. Manage your IT vendor budget AND hype</b></p>	<p>New prospective IT vendors may promise a lot in their sales pitch. Managing your expectations while making sure they live up to those expectations can lead to better relationships with your IT vendors.</p> <p>New vendors may pitch new software, systems, or services that may seem great on the surface. You must understand how a design fits into your current IT environment to identify limitations or even required IT system upgrades (in order to take advantage of some new features).</p>



**THE FULCRUM GROUP**  
*One Technology Solution: Yours*

The Fulcrum Group, Inc. 5751 Kroger Drive, Suite 279, Fort Worth, TX 76244  
 Phone: 817.337.0300 Fax: 817.337.0313 Help Desk: 817.898.1277  
[info@fulcrumgroup.net](mailto:info@fulcrumgroup.net) [www.fulcrum.pro](http://www.fulcrum.pro)

**8. Avoid spending all of your IT vendor budget**

Be sure to keep some annual budget funds in reserve to cover emergencies that inevitably arise. Budgeting has its own best practices but you should be able to estimate replacement equipment, new functionality needed and recurring costs.

These costs include ongoing support contracts, cloud services and annual licensing.

**SPOT** *Managed IT Services*



THE **FULCRUM** GROUP  
*One Technology Solution: Yours*

The Fulcrum Group, Inc. 5751 Kroger Drive, Suite 279, Fort Worth, TX 76244  
Phone: 817.337.0300 Fax: 817.337.0313 Help Desk: 817.898.1277  
[info@fulcrumgroup.net](mailto:info@fulcrumgroup.net) [www.fulcrum.pro](http://www.fulcrum.pro)