NorthStarInc

The Denver Business Owners' Guide to IT Support Services and Fees

What You Should Expect To Pay For IT Support For Your Denver Business

(And How To Get *Exactly* What You Need Without Unnecessary Extras, Hidden Fees and Bloated Contracts)

Read this guide and you'll discover:

✓ The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.

✓ A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you, the customer, when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.

✓ Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.

✓ How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.

✓ 17 revealing questions to ask your IT support firm BEFORE giving them access to your computer network, e-mail and data.

Provided as an educational service by:
Darryl Kalli, CEO \ Partner
North Star, Inc.
451 E. 58th Avenue, Suite 4263
Denver, CO 80216-8407
720-548-2221
www.nssit.com

Never Ask An IT Services Company, "What Do You Charge For Your Services?" Instead You Should Ask, **"What Will I *Get* For My *Money*?"**

From The Desk Of: Darryl Kalli
CEO \ Partner, North Star, Inc.

Dear Colleague,

If you are the CEO of a small business in Denver that is currently looking to outsource some or all of the IT support for your company, this report contains important information that will be extremely valuable to you as you search for a competent firm you can **trust**.

***My name is Darryl, CEO / Partner of North Star, Inc. We've been providing IT services to businesses in the Denver area for over 20 years now.

One of the most commons questions we get from new prospective clients calling our office is "What do you guys charge for your services?" Since this is such a common question — and a very important one to address — I decided to write this report for 3 reasons:

1. I wanted an easy way to answer this question and educate all prospective clients who come to us on the most common ways IT services companies' package and price their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.

2. I wanted to bring to light a few "industry secrets" about IT service contracts and SLAs (service level agreements) that almost no business owner thinks about, understands or knows to ask about when evaluating IT service providers that can end up burning you with hidden fees and locking you into a long-term contract when they are unwilling or unable to deliver the quality of service you need.

3. I wanted to educate business owners on how to pick the *right* IT services company for their specific situation, budget and needs based on the *VALUE* the company can deliver, not just the price, high OR low.

In the end, my purpose is to help you make the most informed decision possible so you end up working with someone who helps you solve your problems and accomplish what you want in a time frame, manner and budget that is right for you.

Dedicated to serving you,

Darryl Kalli

About The Author

North Star was founded in 1992 and the original owners found themselves in a bad situation in 2011. Shortly after, Brad, Tony, and myself met with the prior owners and made the decision to purchase the company. It was at that time we decided to build a better business than the one we bought. One that is dedicated to our customers' success by delivering exceptional IT support, and always doing what's in their best interests.

Once the initial years of ownership were under our belt, we set out to expand our service offering to include newer technology that gives our clients more cloud features, round-the-clock network support, and a better experience with us overall.

Darryl has been with North Star since 1996, Brad started in 1998, and Tony came on board in 2008.

We're enjoying this journey to grow and become greater assets to our clients.

Darryl Kalli, CEO / Partner

We strive to have a close and trusting relationship with clients, and a staff that promises to listen to their needs.

With firm roots in the small to medium size business world of IT, North Star understands that businesses frequently set goals that are unattainable without the proper use of technology. Our goal is to make sure our clients don't fall into that situation. North Star provides services and manages tools to enable and empower our clients to not only meet but exceed their goals. This helps them increase efficiency, boost productivity and in turn increase profitability.

Comparing Apples To Apples:
The Predominant IT Service Models Explained

Before you can accurately compare the fees, services and deliverables of one IT services company to another, you need to understand the 3 predominant service models most of these companies fit within. Some companies offer a blend of all 3, while others are strict about offering only one service plan. The 3 predominant service models are:

- **Time and Materials**. In the industry, we call this "break-fix" services. Essentially you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to "fix" your problem when something "breaks." Under this model, you might be able to negotiate a discount based on buying a block of hours. The scope of work may be simply to resolve a specific problem (like removing a virus), or it may encompass a large project like a computer network upgrade or move that has a specific result and end date clarified. Some companies will offer staff augmentation and placement under this model as well.

- **Managed IT Services.** This is a model where the IT services company takes the role of your "IT department" and not only installs and supports all the devices and PCs that connect to your server(s), but also offers phone and on-site support, antivirus, security, backup and a host of other services to monitor and maintain the health, speed, performance and security of your computer network. North Star has packaged managed services a little differently than most other IT support companies. While we do offer an all-you-can-eat service plan for clients who specifically request it, **our primary support offer is a Monitoring & Maintenance + monthly hours plan** (MM+Hours). So, if you believe that you will use 4 hours every month for network support, you would sign up for the Monitoring & Maintenance + 4 hours contract. Why do we choose this plan over the all-inclusive? It's simple really, we found that 99.9% of our long-term and loyal clients cannot afford a set rate each month that covers "everything imaginable". The all-inclusive plans may be good for some businesses, just not the majority of ours. Our MM+Hours plans offer a great hourly rate, and we have the ability to add other services on top of that, such as our very affordable cloud-based spam filtering service and cloud backup solution. Couple MM+Hours with a pre-purchased block of time that you can use when your support needs fluctuate, and you will find that this covers the majority of your regular network needs.

- **Software Vendor-Supplied IT Services.** Many software companies will offer IT support for their customers in the form of a help desk or remote support for an additional fee. However, these are typically scaled-back services, limited to troubleshooting their specific application and NOT your entire computer network and all the applications and devices connected to it. If your problem resides outside of their specific software or the server it's hosted on, they can't help you and will often refer you to "your IT department." While it's often a good idea to buy some basic-level support package with a critical software application you use to run your business, this is not enough to provide the full IT services and support most businesses need to stay up and running.

When looking to outsource your IT support, the two service models you are most likely to end up having to choose between are the "managed IT services" and "break-fix" models. Therefore, let's dive into the pros and cons of these two options, and then the typical fee structure for both.

Managed IT Services Vs. Break-Fix:
Which Is The Better, More Cost-Effective Option?

You've probably heard the famous Benjamin Franklin quote, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I couldn't agree more — and that's why it's my sincere belief that the managed IT approach is, by far, the most cost-effective, smartest option for any small business. The only time I would recommend a "time and materials" approach is when you already have a competent IT person or team proactively managing your computer network and simply have a specific IT project to complete that your current in-house IT team doesn't have the time or expertise to implement (such as a network upgrade, installing a backup solution, etc.). Outside of that specific scenario, I do not think the break-fix approach is a good idea for general IT support for one very important, fundamental reason: you'll ultimately end up paying for a pound of "cure" for problems that could have easily been avoided with an "ounce" of prevention.

Why Regular Monitoring And Maintenance Is Critical
For Today's Computer Networks

The fact of the matter is, computer networks absolutely, positively need ongoing maintenance and monitoring to stay secure. The ever-increasing dependency we have on IT systems and the data they hold — not to mention the *type* of data we're now saving digitally — has given rise to very smart and sophisticated cybercrime organizations and who work around the clock to do one thing: compromise your networks for illegal activities.

In most cases their intent is to access financial information and passwords to rob you (or your clients), create fake identities for credit card fraud, etc. In other cases they may want to use your computer network to send illegal spam, host pirated software, spread viruses, etc. And some do it just for the "fun" of being able to make computer systems inoperable. These criminals work around the clock in teams, constantly finding and inventing new ways to get around your antivirus software and firewalls; that's why you have to remain ever vigilant against their attacks.

Of course, this doesn't even take into consideration other common "disasters" such as rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures (which are the #1 reason for data loss), fire and natural disasters and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. Then there's regulatory compliance for any business hosting or touching credit card or financial information, medical records and even client contact information such as e-mail addresses.

Preventing these problems and keeping your systems up and running (which is what managed IT services is all about) is a LOT less expensive and damaging to your organization than waiting until one of these things happens and then paying for emergency IT services to restore your systems to working order (break-fix).

Should You Just Hire A Full-Time IT Manager?

In most cases, it is not cost-effective for companies with under 50 employees to hire a full-time IT person, because you can outsource this function of your business far cheaper and with a lot less work; but you DO want to hire a professional to perform basic maintenance just as you would hire a doctor to handle your medical matters or an accountant to prepare your taxes. **And if you truly understand the cost of your TIME and factor in employee productivity, the managed IT services model is considerably less expensive over time than the "break-fix" model.**

Why a "Break-Fix only" Model Can Sometimes Work In The Consultant's Favor, *Not* Yours

Under a "break-fix only" model, there can be a fundamental conflict of interests between you and your IT firm. The IT services company has no incentive to stabilize your computer network or to resolve problems quickly because they are getting paid by the hour; therefore, the risk of unforeseen circumstances, scope creep, learning curve inefficiencies and outright incompetence are all shifted to YOU, the customer. Essentially, the more problems you have, the more they profit, which is precisely what you DON'T want.

Under this model, the IT consultant can take the liberty of assigning a junior (lower-paid) technician to work on your problem who may take two to three times as long to resolve an issue that a more senior (and more expensive) technician may have resolved in a fraction of the time. There is no incentive to properly manage the time of that technician or their efficiency, and there is every reason for them to prolong the project and to find MORE problems than solutions. Of course, if they're ethical and want to keep you as a client, they *should* be doing everything possible to resolve your problems quickly and efficiently; however, that's akin to putting a German shepherd in charge of watching over the ham sandwiches. Not a good idea.

Second, it creates a management problem for you, the customer, who now has to keep track of the hours they've worked to make sure you aren't getting overbilled; and since you often have no way of really knowing if they've worked the hours they say they have, it creates a situation where you really, truly need to be able to trust they are being 100% ethical and honest AND tracking THEIR hours properly (not all do).

And finally, it makes budgeting for IT projects and expenses a nightmare since they may be zero one month and thousands the next.

What To Look For In A Managed IT Services Agreement And What You Should Expect To Pay

Important! Please note that the following price quotes are industry averages based on a recent IT industry survey conducted of over 750 different IT services firms. We are providing this information to give you a general idea of what most IT services firms charge and to help you understand the VAST DIFFERENCES in service contracts that you must be aware of before signing on the dotted line. Please understand that this does NOT reflect our pricing model or approach, which is simply to understand exactly what you want to accomplish FIRST and then customize a solution based on your specific needs, budget and situation.

Hourly Break-Fix Fees: Most IT services companies selling break-fix services charge between $110 and $165 per hour with a one-hour minimum. In most cases, they will give you a discount of 5% to as much as 20% on their hourly rates if you purchase and pay for a block of hours in advance.

If they are quoting a **project**, the fees range widely based on the scope of work outlined. If you are hiring an IT consulting firm for a project, I would suggest you demand the following:

- **A very detailed scope of work that specifies what "success" is.** Make sure you detail what your expectations are in performance, work flow, costs, security, access, etc. The more detailed you can be, the better. Detailing your expectations up front will go a long way in avoiding miscommunications and additional fees later on to give you what you REALLY wanted.

Managed IT Services: Many managed IT services firms will quote you an all-you-can-eat or all-inclusive MONTHLY fee based on the number of devices they need to maintain, back up and support. In Denver, that fee is somewhere in the range of $180 to $250 per server, $60 to $80 per desktop and approximately $5 per smartphone or mobile device.

If you hire an IT consultant and sign up for a managed IT services contract, here are some things that SHOULD be included (make sure you read your contract to validate this):

- Security patches applied weekly, if not daily, for urgent and emerging threats
- Antivirus updates and monitoring
- Firewall updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and test restores
- Spam-filter installation and updates
- Spyware detection and removal
- Monitoring disk space on workstations and servers
- Monitoring hardware for signs of failure
- Optimizing systems for maximum speed

The following services may **NOT be included** and will often be billed separately. This is not necessarily a "scam" or unethical UNLESS the managed IT services company tries to hide these fees when selling you a service agreement. Make sure you review your contract carefully to know what is and is NOT included!

- Hardware, such as new servers, PCs, laptops, etc.
- Software licenses, yada, yada, yada.
- On-site support

Warning! Gray areas of "all-inclusive" service contracts. In order to truly compare the "cost" of one managed IT services contract to another, you need to make sure you fully understand what IS and ISN'T included AND the "SLA" or "service level agreement" you are signing up for. It's VERY easy for one IT services provider to appear far less expensive than another UNTIL you look closely at what you are getting.

Why North Star's hybrid approach to IT support is a WIN-WIN for everyone!

Here's what we believe to be true: All companies want great service at a fair price.

While we are 100% convinced that monitoring and maintaining your network 24/7 is the smartest approach to having a healthy network environment for your employees and business, we don't necessarily believe that every company should have to commit to a 2-3 year contract for an all-inclusive dollar amount every month for their help desk and user support, especially when they don't always need it. Some companies like that kind of all-inclusive format, but many don't. You know how it goes, some months you may only need an hour or two each week, and some months you need a lot more. It can't be planned or controlled. That's just how business works in the real world.

So we set out to bring the best of the managed services model together with the break-fix model. All clients that we're responsible for managing their network get 24/7 monitoring and maintenance, our **Proactive Advantage Program**, for an extremely affordable and competitive price. We're not here to rake you through the coals. We're here to make sure your network is safe and secure, and that your employees continue to be productive and your business is working efficiently.

We offer a selection of add-on cloud-based services that are available to custom build your IT support plan with the features that fit your needs best. Not what fits us best. From cloud-based antivirus protection to a fully robust data backup and disaster recovery solution. It's available to add to your IT support. Your needs are covered.

Only want to pay for hours you use? That works great for us too. Love the idea of a fixed price each month? We're on board. Think of it as IT support on your terms.

And if we don't say so ourselves, it's a pretty sweet deal for both our clients and us. We truly feel it's a win-win for everyone.

This is the kind of IT support that our clients want, and this is what we want to give them. It all comes down to competency and trust.

The following are 17 questions to ask your IT services provider that will clarify exactly what you're getting for the money. Some of these items may not be that important to you, while others (like response time and adequate insurance) may be critical. Make sure you fully understand each of these items before making a decision about who the right provider is for you; then make sure you get this IN WRITING.

17 Service Clarification Questions You Should Ask Your IT Services Firm Before Signing A Contract

Customer Service:

Q1: Do they answer their phones live or do you always have to leave a voicemail and wait for someone to call you back?
Our Answer: We do our very best to answer our phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and give all clients an emergency after hours number they may call if a problem arises, including weekends. Why? Because many of the CEOs and executives we support work outside normal hours and find it to be the most productive time they have. If they cannot access their computer network AND can't get hold of anyone to help them, it's incredibly frustrating.

Q2: Do they offer a written, promised response time to your calls?
Our Answer: We promise to have a technician working on a problem within 2 hours or less of your call. This is written into every service agreement we give to our clients because it's standard procedure.

Q3: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek-speak), or do they come across as arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?
Our Answer: Our technicians are trained to have the 'heart of a teacher' and will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms.

Q4: Do they consistently (and proactively) offer new ways to improve your network's performance, or do they wait until you have a problem to make recommendations?
Our Answer: We conduct quarterly review meetings with our clients to look for new ways to help improve their operations, lower costs, increase efficiencies and resolve any problems that may be arising. Our goal is to help our clients be more profitable, efficient and competitive with these meetings.

Q5: Do they provide detailed invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?
Our Answer: We provide detailed invoices that show what work was done, why and when so you never have to guess what you are paying for. We also double check our invoices for accuracy before they are sent to you.

Q6: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?
Our Answer: Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn sure whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions

insurance AND workers' compensation — and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True Story: A few years ago Geek Squad was slapped with multimillion-dollar lawsuits from customers for bad behavior by their technicians. In some cases, their techs where accessing, copying and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers' PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In other cases, they lost a client's laptop (and subsequently all the data on it) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line: make sure the company you are hiring has proper insurance to protect YOU.

Maintenance Of Your Network:

Q7: Do they insist on remotely monitoring your network 24/7/365 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions and security patches up-to-date and PREVENT problems from turning into downtime, viruses, lost data and other issues?
Our Answer: Yes; for clients who have partnered with us to maintain and be responsible for your network on an ongoing basis, our remote network monitoring system watches over your network to constantly look for developing problems, security issues and other problems so we can address them BEFORE they turn into bigger problems.

Q8: Do they provide you with a weekly report that shows all the updates, security patches, and status of every machine on your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?
Our Answer: Every week our clients get a detailed report that shows an overall health score of their network and the updates to their antivirus, security settings, patches and other important network checks (like hard-drive space, backups, speed and performance, etc.).

Q9: Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written network documentation detailing what software licenses you own, critical passwords, user information, hardware inventory, etc., or are they the only person with the "keys to the kingdom"?
Our Answer: All clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost. We also perform a quarterly update on this material and make sure certain key people from your organization have this information and know how to use it, giving you complete control over your network.
Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their control as a means of job security, get rid of them (and we can help to make sure you don't suffer ANY ill effects). This is downright unethical and dangerous to your organization, so don't tolerate it!

Q10: Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?
Our Answer: Yes; and since we keep detailed network documentation (basically a blueprint of your computer network) and updates on every client's account, any of our technicians can pick up where another one has left off.

Backups And Disaster Recovery:

Q11: Do they INSIST on monitoring an off-site as well as an on-site backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated tape backups?

Our Answer: We do not recommend to our clients to use tape backups because they are incredibly unreliable. Yes, we make sure all of our clients are informed about their options and have an opportunity to sign up for our affordable and tested managed backup solution.

Q12: Do they INSIST on doing periodic test restores of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?
Our Answer: We perform a monthly "fire drill" and perform a test restore from backup for our clients to make sure their data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency. After all, the WORST time to "test" a backup is when you desperately need it.

Q13: Do they insist on backing up your network BEFORE performing any type of project or upgrade?
Our Answer: We do, and that's simply as a precaution in case a hardware failure or software glitch causes a major problem.

Q14: If you were to experience a major disaster, do they have a written plan for how your data could be restored FAST and/or enable you to work from a remote location?
Our Answer: All clients receive a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage them to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office, but at a minimum, their network will be covered should something happen. For our customers who have opted for our online backup solution, access to your data is at your fingertips from wherever you are located with an internet connection, and restoring is efficient and painless.

Technical Expertise And Support:

Q15: Do their technicians arrive on time and dress professionally?
Our Answer: Our technicians are true professionals that you would be proud to have in your office. They dress professionally and show up on time, and if they cannot (for some odd, unforeseen reason), we always notify the client immediately. We believe these are minimum requirements for delivering a professional service.

Q16: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line of business applications?
Our Answer: We assist with troubleshooting problems with all line of business applications for our clients. That doesn't mean we can fix faulty software or compatibility issues – but upon your request, we WILL be the liaison between you and your vendor to help resolve problems you are having and do our best to make these applications work smoothly for you. What we won't tolerate are vendors that try to take advantage of your limited technical knowledge of how things should work together. It's uncalled for, unprofessional, and we always go to bat on your behalf.

Q17: When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or do they say, "That's not our problem to fix"?
Our Answer: We will always help a client when they ask, so they don't have to try and resolve any of these issues on their own if they are not comfortable doing this – that's just plain old good service and something many computer guys won't do.

NorthStarInc

A Final Word And Free Assessment Offer To Show You How To Eliminate System Slowness, Crashes And Viruses And Drastically Lower Your IT Maintenance Costs

I hope you have found this guide helpful in shedding some light on what to look for when hiring a professional firm to outsource your IT support to. As I stated in the opening of this report, my purpose in providing this information was to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by incompetent or unethical firms luring you in with cheap prices.

Below you will find information on how to request a FREE IT Optimization Plan for your company as a next step in engaging with us. There is no cost or obligation, and I guarantee you will find this consult to be extremely valuable and eye-opening.

Looking forward to your call!

Darryl Kalli
CEO \ Partner, North Star, Inc.
Phone: 720-548-2221
Web: www.nssit.com

Give Me 30 Minutes, And I <u>Promise</u> I Can Show You How To Eliminate System Slowness And A Host Of Other Annoying IT Problems — And How To Eliminate Those Unnecessary IT Expenses

From The Desk Of: Darryl Kalli,
CEO / Partner, North Star Inc.
Denver, CO

Dear Colleague,

Do you have a **nagging suspicion** that your current IT provider isn't delivering the quality of service you're paying for?

Maybe you're experiencing **chronic problems** with your computer systems that your IT provider just never seems to resolve.

Maybe it has become easier to find a work-around or **try to fix IT problems yourself** than to call your IT provider.

Or maybe you're sending a check every month for their services **but don't *really* know what you're paying for**. Could they really get you back up and running after a disaster? Are they *truly* maintaining critical security updates for your IT systems? Have you outgrown their ability to adequately support you?

It's very common for businesses to be unhappy with the quality of service and support they're getting from their current IT company, but they tolerate it simply because they don't know who else to call, or they're just too darn busy to take the time to find someone else.

Free Customized IT Optimization Plan And 53-Point IT Network Security And Performance Assessment

If I just described your situation, I want to give you a **<u>customized IT Optimization Plan for free</u>** that will reveal what's REALLY going on in your computer network and show you the fastest and most efficient way to get your systems working the way they're supposed to, saving you a great deal of time, aggravation and money. **Briefly, here's what I have in mind...**

First, I want to perform our proprietary **53-Point IT Network Security And Performance Assessment** on your computer network (one that's taken us many years to perfect). I'll bring an audit consent agreement and non-disclosure for your protection before we do anything.

NorthStarInc

There's no charge for this, and it only requires a 30- to 60-minute meeting with me and one of our top IT engineers. After doing this type of thing for many years, we've truly perfected a process for helping companies like yours to get their IT systems working the way they are supposed to.

After conducting this Free Assessment, we'll be able to answer your top questions, such as:

- Are your IT systems truly secured from hackers, viruses and rogue employees?

- Are your backups configured properly to ensure that you could be back up and running again <u>fast</u> in a disaster?

- Could you utilize cheaper and more efficient cloud-computing technologies to lower IT costs and make it easier to work remotely?

- Are your systems optimized for maximum speed and performance? (I can tell you, many of the computer networks we review are NOT.)

Once we have a clear picture of the state, health and performance of your current IT systems, we'll then deliver a **customized IT Optimization Plan** that will show you how to eliminate every single nagging problem, enable you to work faster and easier and lower IT costs wherever possible.

At The End Of This Assessment,
One Of Two Things Will Happen:

You love the plan and decide to implement it on your own. If this is the case, we'll wish you the best of luck and *ask that you keep in touch with us to let us know how you're doing.*

Or…

You love the plan and ask to become our client so we can personally help you implement it ASAP. *If that's the case, we'll knock it out of the park…and that's a promise.*

Your time is your most valuable asset, and I respect that. To date, we've NEVER had anyone say that we've wasted their time.

Think about this…

The "worst" that can happen is you've spent an hour having an independent third party validate and review the security, speed and health of your computer network.

The best that can happen is we work together to finally take all IT complaints off your plate.

Here's How This Will Work:

First, you'll fill out a brief IT Analysis Questionnaire on our web site: www.nssit.com/it-survey. This gives us the basic information we need about you to prepare for our meeting.

Once you complete this, Renae from our office will call you and set up a convenient time for us to come to your office and perform our **53-Point IT Network Security And Performance Assessment.**

After that initial meeting, we'll prepare a **customized IT Optimization Plan and a "Report Of Findings"** that will reveal any vulnerabilities in your backups and security, as well as show you how to optimize your IT to increase everyone's productivity in the fastest, most efficient way possible.

And like I said, _there's no charge for this_.

So Why Would We Offer This For Free?

For one simple reason:

It's the fastest and easiest way for us to demonstrate the value we can deliver without any risk to you. Frankly, it's how we get the happy clients you've seen all over our web site. (See attached.)

After all, if you like what you see and we show you how to solve a number of IT-related problems in your company, why wouldn't you want to work with us? Of course, we will approach this with no expectations or heavy sales pressure of any kind. I don't like pushy salespeople any more than you do — **and we stand on the belief that providing extreme value in advance is the best way to showcase our services** and win new business.

You'll Find This Consultation To Be
Incredibly Valuable

The ONLY catch is that we can't help everyone, so we have a strict (but reasonable) set of criteria that need to be met in order for us to proceed. Here it is:

1. **You have to at least have a Windows server and 5 workstations.**
   Our services and advice work best for companies that have at least one server and 5 workstations. If that's not you (or if you are a brand-new startup), we might be able to help you through a different process. Call the office and we'll direct you from there: 303-747-4024.

2. **You must be the owner of the business.**
   Due to the nature of the advice we'll give you, it will be actionable only for the owner or key executive.

3. **You must be in the Denver Metro area of Colorado, including Boulder.**

If You Meet The Criteria Above,
Here's How We Get Started:

Step 1: Go to the web site below to complete our IT Analysis Questionnaire. Don't worry, it's simple and unobtrusive; if you don't know the answers to certain questions, just put "I don't know" as your answer:

www.nssit.com/it-survey

Step 2: Once we've received your application and reviewed it, Renae from our office will call you and set up a time for us to meet.

The initial meeting will be between 30 and 60 minutes. This is where we really begin working to figure out exactly what you want and how to make it happen**.** We'll also initiate our **53-Point IT Network Security And Performance Assessment**.

Step 3: After that initial meeting, we'll prepare a **customized IT Optimization Plan and a "Report Of Findings"** that will reveal any vulnerabilities in your backups and security, as well as show you how to optimize your IT to increase everyone's productivity in the fastest, most efficient way possible. <u>I'm certain you'll find this second meeting to be full of helpful and powerful information you can implement right away.</u>

If you see the value in engaging beyond that, great! We can talk about it at that time. And if you don't want to become a client — *that's OK too.* By the way, we've *never* had anyone feel like their time was wasted. EVER.

So, unless you are 100% happy with the IT support you are getting and absolutely confident that your network is secure, backed up properly and running at optimal levels, why wouldn't you give this a try? Do it now and you'll be glad you did:

www.nssit.com/it-survey

Dedicated to your success,

Darryl Kalli
CEO / Partner, North Star Inc.
Phone: 303-747-4024

NorthStarInc

See What Other Business Owners Are Saying:

"North Star is clued into our business, and that reassurance is invaluable"

Prior to working with North Star, we had been through both in-house and outsourced IT consultants at every price point. As a smaller firm, we were generally treated as more of a nuisance. In 2007, we chose North Star to handle our move to a new office and upgrading our equipment. We found their pricing structure competitive, but their customer service exceeded everyone. They have responded immediately to crisis situations and have remained equally engaged for routine maintenance calls. Although we are small client for them, they are always fully aware of our issues and past history – essentially, they're clued in, and that reassurance is invaluable.

About a year ago, we had a catastrophic server outage due to our building's electrical system, and Dell did not completely pull through on their warranty. The techs at North Star lent us their personal hardware until we received our new equipment nearly a week later. When the monitoring service became available, we took advantage: it cost less than their routine monthly visits, and we could prevent problems before they occurred. In the few months since we've switched, North Star has alerted us to three major issues regarding our backup system, our antivirus, and our drive space. Left unattended, any of these could have brought our business to a standstill.

We routinely turn away IT companies, because North Star continues to provide stellar service.

Gregory Olivet
Systems Design International, Inc.

"Immediately saved us $800 a month"

We were struggling to maintain an aging network, create and maintain backups and plan for future upgrades and expansion. Bradley Miles came in and tackled our critical issues right away. Now in just about two months we have fixed the critical errors, updated much of the network and replaced our antiquated phone system.

We would like to give special recognition to Bradley Miles. Based on the research and options provided by North Star we have upgraded our phone and internet, increasing the speed twelve fold and decreasing the cost by $800 per month.

Corey Walker
Frontier GeoTek, Inc

"24/7 monitoring service will cost us less each year in IT expenses"

PVC has used North Star for several years now and we have never found any cause to look elsewhere because we find each of your techs highly experienced. Which should say something about our trust in you. This is our second server/new workstation upgrade and I thought it went quite smoothly. As did the first. You finished in the time you said you would. There was no problem you couldn't fix. I am quite satisfied. And yes you get what you pay for.

We have recently signed up for your 24/7 monitoring service wouldn't do it if I didn't think it was beneficial. I think cost wise it could work out to cost us less each year in IT expenses. And considering we have experienced a few viruses and lots of spam, I would just assume to stay on top of things with your monitoring. It gives me some peace of mind.

Chris Zotter
PVC Specialties

"For years, North Star has consistently provided excellent service and given us confidence in our systems"

North Star has supported our IT systems for years including upgrades, improvements, and emergency service. Tony and his team have consistently provided excellent service and given us confidence in the reliability of our systems. If a problem is persistent so is North Star until a solution is found.

Greg Roda
Outlast Technologies

NorthStarInc

The Top 6 Reasons Why You'll Want To Outsource Your IT Support To Us:

1. **We Respond Quickly.** We know you're busy and have made a sincere commitment to making sure your computer problems get fixed as FAST as possible. And since most repairs can be done remotely using our secure management tools, you don't have to wait around for a technician to show up.

2. **No Geek-Speak.** You deserve to get answers to your questions in PLAIN ENGLISH, not in confusing technical terms. Our technicians will also not talk down to you or make you feel stupid because you don't understand how all this "technology" works. That's our job!

3. **100% No-Small-Print Satisfaction Promise.** Quite simply, if you are not happy with our work, we'll do whatever it takes to make it right.

4. **Lower Costs, Waste And Complexity With Cloud-based Solutions.** By utilizing cloud-based solutions and other advanced technologies, we can eliminate the cost, complexity and problems of managing your own in-house solutions while giving you more freedom, lowered costs, tighter security and instant disaster recovery.

5. **We Won't Hold You Hostage.** Many IT companies do NOT provide their clients with simple and easy-to-understand documentation that outlines key network resources, passwords, licenses, etc. By keeping that to themselves, IT companies hold their clients "hostage" to scare them away from hiring someone else. This is both unethical and unprofessional. As a client of ours, we'll provide you with full, written documentation of your network and all the resources, software licenses, passwords, hardware, etc., in simple terms so YOU can understand it. We keep our clients by delivering exceptional service — not by keeping them in the dark.

6. **Peace Of Mind.** Because we monitor all of our clients' networks 24/7/365, you never have to worry that a virus has spread, a hacker has broken in or a backup has failed to perform. We watch over your entire network, taking the management and hassle of maintaining it off your hands. This frees you to focus on your customers and running your business, not on your IT systems, security and backups.