



OUTSOURCED IT DEPARTMENT BUYER'S GUIDE

Role-by-role hiring costs, what an outsourced IT department actually includes, and an honest hire-vs-outsource framework for business leaders.



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The Outsourced IT Department Buyer's Guide

Every growing business reaches the moment where technology outgrows the person who's been handling it on the side. The instinct is to post a job: one IT hire to fix the tickets, watch the network, stop the phishing emails, and plan the budget. This guide exists because that job posting is asking one salary to cover six different specialties — and there's a better way to buy those six roles.

In the next few pages: what each IT role actually costs to hire, what an outsourced IT department includes, the real math side by side, and — honestly — the situations where hiring in-house is still the right call.

1. The Six Roles Every Business Eventually Needs

"IT" is not one job. By the time a business passes twenty or thirty employees, the work splits into distinct disciplines — and they don't live comfortably in one person:

- **Help desk support** — answering the daily "I can't log in / it won't print / the file is gone" stream
- **Desktop support** — building, fixing, and managing every workstation and laptop
- **System administration** — servers, backups, patching, user accounts, and recovery
- **Network administration** — the firewalls, switches, Wi-Fi, and connectivity everything rides on
- **Security administration** — monitoring, access control, and incident response
- **IT leadership** — strategy, budgeting, vendor decisions, and a technology roadmap

The Trap:

Hiring one "IT person" and expecting all six. The generalist ends up firefighting tickets while security, backups, and planning quietly go unattended — the exact areas where neglect is expensive.



2. What These Roles Cost to Hire

Typical Indiana salary ranges for competent, mid-level people in each discipline — before the roughly 25–40% employers add in payroll taxes, benefits, training, and tooling:

Role	Typical Salary (IN)	Loaded Cost / Year
Help desk technician	\$42,000–\$58,000	\$55,000–\$78,000
Desktop support specialist	\$48,000–\$65,000	\$62,000–\$88,000
System administrator	\$72,000–\$95,000	\$92,000–\$128,000
Network administrator	\$70,000–\$92,000	\$90,000–\$124,000
Security administrator	\$85,000–\$115,000	\$108,000–\$155,000
IT manager / director	\$100,000–\$135,000	\$128,000–\$182,000

Add recruiting (weeks to months per seat), onboarding time, turnover risk, and the awkward fact that one person per role means zero coverage on vacation, sick days, and the day they resign.

The Rule:

Price the department, not the hire. The realistic minimum in-house “department” — one generalist admin plus one support tech — runs \$150,000–\$200,000 a year loaded, and still leaves security and leadership uncovered.

3. What an Outsourced IT Department Includes

An outsourced IT department delivers those same six roles as a service: a staffed team, the management layer, and the toolset, under one agreement. With QOS MSP that means:

- **Unlimited help desk and desktop support** for every covered user
- **Proactive system and network administration** — monitoring, patching, backups, maintenance
- **Security operations** — endpoint protection (Bitdefender licensing included), monitoring, and response
- **Data backup and disaster recovery** — configured, monitored, and tested
- **Vendor and license management** — we deal with the ISP and the software renewals
- **IT leadership** — strategy, budgeting, and roadmap reviews, with fractional CIO/CTO depth when you need it

Pricing follows users, not incidents: QOS MSP plans run **\$125–\$195 per user per month** (month-to-month; \$10/user less on an annual agreement). A user’s fee covers the person, their primary computer, and their mobile device; additional computers are \$35/month, managed servers \$95/month, and managed network devices \$25/month. Device rates cover management only — hardware and third-party software licensing are billed separately.

The Bottom Line:

The fee is flat and public. When something breaks, fixing it is our cost, not your invoice — which is exactly the incentive alignment you want from an IT department.

4. The Math, Side by Side

Take a real 25-person business:

Option	What You Get	Cost / Year
One in-house generalist	One person, six jobs, no coverage on absence	\$92,000– \$128,000
Minimal in-house team (2)	Admin + support tech; security & leadership gaps remain	\$150,000– \$200,000
Outsourced IT department	All six roles, 24/7 monitoring, tools included	\$37,500– \$58,500

The outsourced line is 25 users at published per-user rates. Even after adding a few extra computers or a managed server, the department costs a fraction of the smallest serious in-house alternative — and it never takes a vacation.

The Honest Caveat:

These lines buy different things. The in-house hire is *yours* — on-site, dedicated, steeped in your business. The outsourced department is a *team* — broader skills, always covered, but shared. Which trade-off wins depends on the next section.

5. When Hiring In-House Actually Wins

We sell outsourced IT departments, so read this section as the disclosure it is. Hire in-house — or blend — when:

- **You need full-time physical hands.** Manufacturing floors, warehouses, and clinics with constant on-site hardware work justify a dedicated body in the building.
- **A proprietary system is the business.** Software or machinery so specialized that mastering it is a full-time internal job.
- **You've outgrown the model.** Past a couple hundred employees, an internal IT core (often co-managed with an MSP for depth and after-hours coverage) starts to pencil out.
- **Culture demands an embedded person.** Some leadership teams simply want their IT person in the Monday meeting. That preference is legitimate — budget for it honestly.

The blend is real, not a consolation prize: many QOS clients keep one internal generalist and outsource the rest of the department around them — the hire handles hands and context, we handle depth, coverage, and strategy.



6. Questions to Ask Any Provider (Including Us)

- Is the monthly fee flat, and exactly which devices and services does it cover?
- Who answers the phone at 2 a.m., and what are the guaranteed response times?
- Are backups tested — and how often are restores actually rehearsed?
- What security stack is included in the base fee, and what costs extra?
- Do we get IT strategy and budgeting help, or only break/fix support?
- What does offboarding look like if we leave — who owns the documentation?

For the full 28-criteria version, our Managed IT Provider Evaluation Checklist is free at www.qosmsp.com.

7. How QOS MSP Runs an Outsourced IT Department

QOS MSP is the managed-services arm of QOS Consulting, Inc. — founder-led since 2007, supporting more than 75,000 users across our customers from teams in the Indianapolis and Chicago areas. Onboarding takes weeks, not months: we document your environment, deploy the management and security stack, and your staff starts calling a help desk that actually answers. Every role in this guide is covered from day one, and the fee is on our website.

The Final Word

Don't ask "who should we hire?" Ask "how do we cover six roles without six salaries?" For most businesses under a couple hundred employees, the answer is an outsourced IT department — and the math isn't close.

Next Step:

Get a real number for your business. QOS MSP will price your outsourced IT department at no cost or obligation: call +1 (877) 800-7672 or visit www.qosmsp.com.