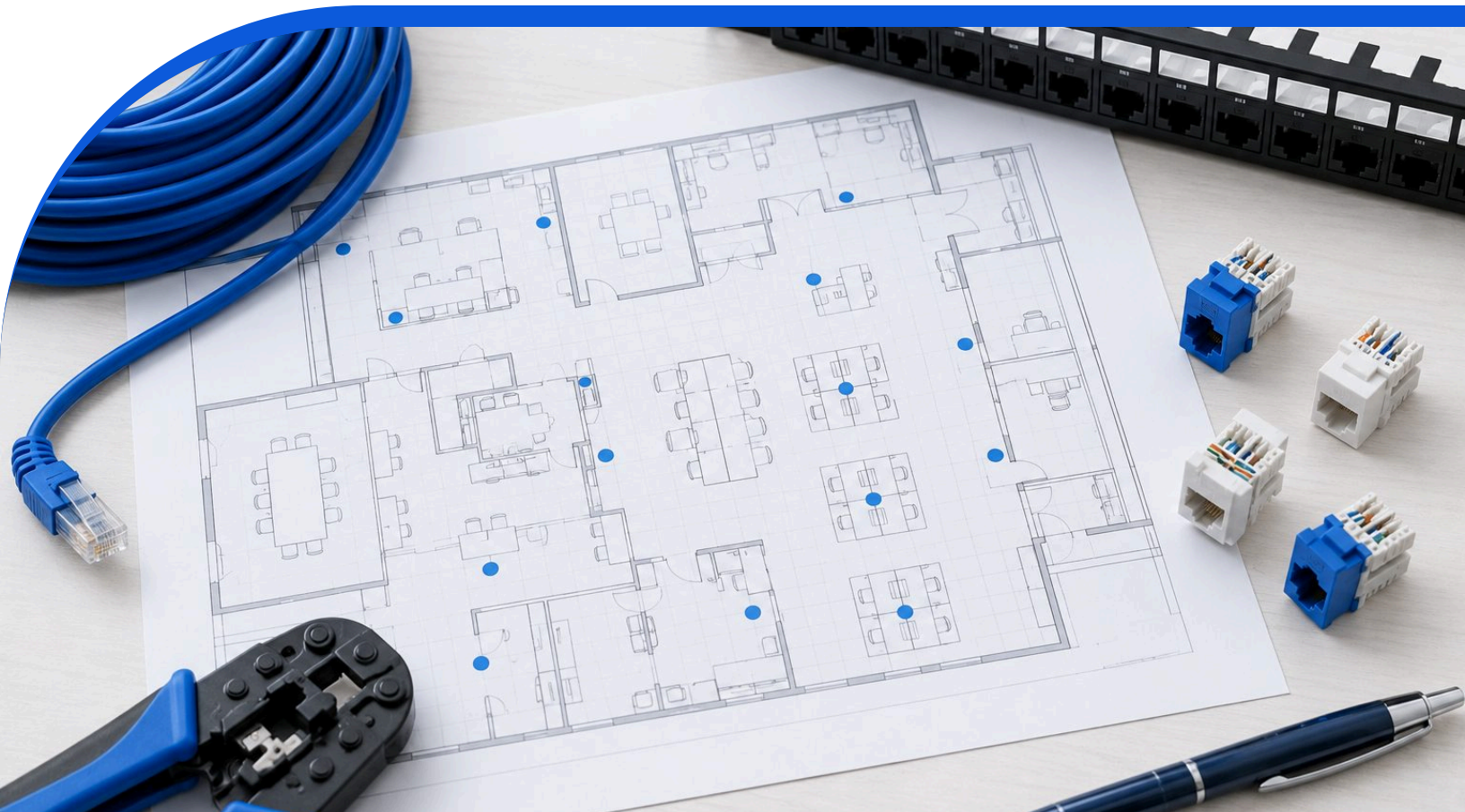




A QOS MSP PLANNING WORKSHEET: **STRUCTURED CABLING PLANNING GUIDE**

Plan your drops, categories, and closets before the walkthrough.





Structured Cabling Planning Guide

A 15-minute worksheet to scope your cabling project before the walkthrough — so your quote is fast and accurate.

Plan your cabling project before the walkthrough

Most cabling projects go sideways for the same reason: nobody counted the drops before the crew showed up. A conference room that needed six drops got two. The camera and the door reader were an afterthought. The closet had no power. Every one of those is cheaper to catch on paper than to fix in the ceiling.

This worksheet walks you through the four things that decide the scope and price of a cabling job: **how many drops each room needs, which cable category to run, what your closet and pathways require, and what to have ready for the walkthrough.** Fill it in before we meet and your on-site walkthrough turns into a fast confirmation instead of a discovery session.

***Time to complete:** about 15 minutes. **What you'll need:** a floor plan or rough sketch, and a sense of what goes in each room (desks, phones, printers, cameras, Wi-Fi, displays).*

1 — Drop-count-per-room planner

Walk your floor plan room by room. A "data drop" is one cable run to one outlet — count one per device that plugs in (PC, access point, printer, camera, POS, display). Put phones and other low-voltage runs in the second column.

Room / Area	# Data drops	# Voice/other	Notes
Reception <i>(example)</i>	2	1	Desk PC + guest Wi-Fi access point
Conference room <i>(example)</i>	4	1	Wall display, ceiling AP, VoIP, floor box

Rule of thumb: count the drops you need today, **plus about 20% spare** for growth and moved furniture. And don't forget the invisible drops — access points, cameras, door readers, displays, printers, and POS terminals each need their own run, and they're the most expensive to add after the ceiling is closed.

2 – Cat6 vs Cat6A vs fiber: decision aid

Category is the other half of scope. Copper handles the horizontal runs to desks and devices; fiber handles the backbone between closets, floors, and buildings. Use the table to place each run, then the quick guide to make the call.

Factor	Cat6	Cat6A	Fiber
Max 10G distance	~55 m (1G to full 100 m)	100 m (full run)	Well beyond 100 m – OM3/OM4 multimode ~300–400 m, OS2 singlemode to kilometers
Typical use	Desk and device drops, shorter runs, 1G everywhere / 10G short	New buildouts, longer copper runs, 10G to the desk	Backbone between closets, floor-to-floor risers, building-to-building, high-bandwidth uplinks
Relative cost	\$ – lowest	\$\$ – higher material, thicker and harder to route	\$\$\$ – cable is cheap per foot, but terminations and optics add cost
When to choose	Budget refresh, runs under ~55 m, no 10G-to-desk plan	The safe default for new construction and any run you want 10G-ready for the next decade	Runs over 100 m, floor/building links, or bandwidth copper can't reach

Quick call

- **Choose Cat6** if your runs are short (under ~55 m), the budget is tight, and you don't need 10G at every desk.
- **Choose Cat6A** if it's a new buildout or you want every drop 10G-safe for years – the default choice for horizontal cabling today.
- **Choose fiber** if you're linking floors or buildings, running past 100 m, or feeding high-bandwidth uplinks between closets.

Mixing is normal and usually right: **Cat6A to the desks, fiber for the backbone**. You don't have to pick one category for the whole building.



3 – Closet & pathway checklist

Every drop terminates somewhere — a cabling job is only as good as the closet and the pathways feeding it. **Check every item that's already handled; leave the rest for the walkthrough:**

- ☐ **MDF/IDF location decided** — where the main closet lives, plus any intermediate closets for larger or multi-floor spaces
- ☐ **Power available** — a dedicated circuit and outlets in the closet for the rack and active gear
- ☐ **Cooling adequate** — ventilation or AC so the closet won't cook the equipment
- ☐ **Plenum ceilings identified** — air-handling ceiling spaces require plenum-rated (CMP) cable by code
- ☐ **Conduit / pathway needs mapped** — core drills, wall sleeves, cable tray, or J-hooks between areas and floors
- ☐ **Rack space planned** — open-frame or enclosed rack sized for patch panels plus your switches
- ☐ **Penetrations firestopped** — wall and floor pass-throughs sealed to code after runs are pulled
- ☐ **Rack grounded and bonded** — proper grounding for the rack and panels

Two or more boxes unchecked? Those are the items that stall a cabling install mid-job — flag each one so we can plan it into the walkthrough instead of discovering it in the ceiling.

4 – What to have ready for the walkthrough

The walkthrough is where we confirm scope and produce the per-drop quote. Bring these and it goes fast:

- ☐ **A floor plan** (PDF or printout), marked with your drop counts from section 1
- ☐ **Device counts per area** — PCs, phones, printers, access points, cameras, POS, displays
- ☐ **Your target timeline** — move-in date, cutover window, or hard deadline
- ☐ **After-hours / phasing needs** — is the space occupied, and what production hours must we work around?
- ☐ **Building access details** — ceiling type, existing pathways, and the landlord or GC contact for leased/under-construction space
- ☐ **Existing cabling** you'd like us to test and reuse vs. replace

In new construction, the best time to walk the space is **before drywall**. Pulling cable through open framing is faster, cleaner, and cheaper than fishing it through finished walls later.



5 — Next step: book your free cabling walkthrough

You've got a drop count, a category plan, and a closet checklist. The last step is a free on-site walkthrough, where we confirm the scope against the building and turn it into a clear, per-drop quote — no flat-rate guesswork.

Every run we install is Fluke-certified to TIA-568, which documents the plant and unlocks the **25-year manufacturer warranty** on your cabling.

Book your free cabling walkthrough. Bring this completed worksheet and we'll pick up exactly where you left off. Schedule at www.qosmsp.com or call **+1 (877) 800-7672**.

Honest note: if your existing Cat5e or Cat6 tests clean, you may only need to *add drops*, not re-cable. We'll tell you that after testing — we don't sell a full rip-out you don't need.

QOS MSP — structured cabling installed, certified, and documented for businesses across Indianapolis, Indiana, and Chicagoland. Founder-led since 2007.

© QOS Consulting, Inc. · ☎ +1 (877) 800-7672 · www.qosmsp.com