Hiring an MSP:

Why I.T. Should Be a Recruitment Process, Not Just a Procurement Exercise

"Choosing an MSP is basically recruiting a team of specialists to work within your business part-time. You wouldn't hire an internal IT manager by just comparing three CVs and picking the cheapest option."

Craig Van Aswegen
MD & Snr IT
Management Consultant
Breathe Technology LTD

Introduction:
Why This Conversation Matters

In today's digital environment, where we are more reliant on IT than ever before and exposed to more security risks, the performance and security of your IT infrastructure are fundamental to business success. The partner you choose to manage that infrastructure – your Managed Service Provider (MSP) – becomes an extension of your team. Yet, many organisations approach MSP selection like buying stationery: request three quotes and pick the cheapest.

That's not due diligence – it's a liability.

Choosing an MSP is basically recruiting a team of specialists to work within your business part-time. You wouldn't hire an internal IT manager by just comparing three CVs and picking the cheapest option. You'd follow a structured recruitment process. It's time to apply that same thinking externally.

Why the MSP Selection Process Should Mirror Recruitment

Most business leaders have received at least some training in recruitment. They know how to write job descriptions, evaluate CVs, interview candidates, and assess cultural and personality fit. Do we like the person? Can they do their job? Do they have proven experience? Will the team get on with them? Is the salary affordable? These learnt skills enable them to build teams that work. But when it comes to MSPs, few have been taught how to vet external IT partners in the same way.

It's no surprise, then, that so many businesses end up with the wrong provider – because they simply didn't know or have experience in doing this. It's not like you hire MSPs every day.

Imagine trusting your company's IT operations, security, compliance, and end-user support (allowing your staff to actually work) to a provider chosen only because they were the cheapest bidder. It sounds a bit stupid – but it happens every day.

Obviously, money comes into play, and managing IT costs is super important. But partner selection, like recruitment, should probably be more aligned with getting the best people for what you can afford.

breathetechnology
support | cloud | security | infrastructure | comms

The Recruitment-Like MSP Evaluation Framework

Here are 11 things you should consider when "recruiting" your next Managed IT and Cybersecurity provider:

1. **The team's skillset** – What can and can't they do? What are their specialisms? Is the business certified in anything?

2. **Who will actually work on your account?**

3. **Experience in Your Industry** – Does the MSP have relevant experience in your sector? Can they understand your systems, challenges, and regulatory needs?

4. **Cultural Fit & Communication Style** – Will their team align with your company's culture and values? How well do they communicate – plain English or tech-speak?

5. **Onboarding Process** – Do they have a structured, proven approach to onboarding that minimises disruption and builds confidence from day one?

6. **Transparency & Reporting** – Will you have visibility into the work being done, and how do they take responsibility and ownership?

7. **Cybersecurity Standards & Certifications** – Are they proactively protecting your business, and can they demonstrate this with Cyber Essentials, ISO 27001, or penetration testing?

8. **Service Desk.** How does it work? What can you expect? How do you escalate?

9. **Proactive vs. Reactive Support** – Do they only respond to issues, or are they proactively monitoring, maintaining, and improving your systems? Maintenance is a must. Not only break-fix helpdesk.

10. **Pricing Transparency** – Is the pricing easy to understand, fair, and sustainable? Are there hidden extras?

11. **References & Case Studies** – Can they provide relevant, credible customer references or real-world examples of similar organisations they've helped?

Conclusion: Think Beyond the Quote

Your IT provider becomes a critical business partner.

Can you live without your IT?

Treating the selection of your MSP like a recruitment process allows you to choose a team of people that's not only competent but also aligned with your expectations, values and goals.

It's about more than just cost – it's about capability, culture, trust and ultimately relationships.

If you would like to know more about Breathe as one of
the region's longest-standing and most experienced IT & Cyber Security MSPs
and how we can help you get the most from your IT,
please email **Lucy@breathetechnology.com**.

breathetechnology
support | cloud | security | infrastructure | comms

Author: Craig Van Aswegen, MD & Snr IT Management Consultant, Breathe Technology