

The IT Buyer's Guide

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

And how to get exactly what you need without unnecessary extras,
hidden fees and bloated contracts.

Soteria Award winner

Most Trusted MSP in North America

Prepared by

Tom Crossley, Founder and President, and Adam Crossley, CEO

Established

1991, independent and owner-led

Serving

Eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island and the Charlotte, NC area

Offices

Franklin, MA and Belmont, NC

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For business owners in Eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island and the Charlotte, NC area

The Small Business Owner's Guide to IT Support and Services

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- The three 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, 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, so you avoid disappointment, frustration and costs you didn't expect.
- 21 revealing questions to ask any IT support firm before you give them access to your computer network, email and data.

A letter

From the desk of Tom and Adam Crossley



Tom Crossley

Founder and
President



**Adam
Crossley**

CEO

If you run a small or midsize business in Eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island or the Charlotte, NC area and you're looking to outsource some or all of your IT support, this guide contains information that will be extremely valuable to you as you search for a competent firm you can trust.

We're Tom and Adam Crossley, the owners of Fair Oaks IT. We've been providing IT services to businesses since 1991, from offices in Franklin, MA and Belmont, NC. You may not have heard of us before, but you may know some of the manufacturers, contractors, accounting firms and professional services firms we support. A few of their comments are enclosed.

One of the most common questions we get from prospective clients is, "What do you charge for your services?" Since it's such a common and important question, we wrote this guide for three reasons:

1. To give you a straight answer about the most common ways IT services companies package and price their services, and the pros and cons of each.
2. To bring to light a few "industry secrets" about IT contracts and service level agreements that almost no business owner knows to ask about, and that can burn you with hidden fees or lock you into a long-term contract with a provider that can't deliver.
3. To help you pick the right IT services company for your situation, budget and needs based on the VALUE they deliver, not just the price, high or low.

Our purpose is to help you make the most informed decision possible, so you end up working with someone who solves your problems in a time frame, manner and budget that's right for you. We treat our clients' money as if it were our own, and we'd suggest holding any IT company you talk to to the same standard.

Dedicated to serving you,

Tom Crossley, Founder and President **Adam Crossley**, CEO

About the authors

Two owners, one standard

Fairoaks IT is independently owned by Tom Crossley and his son, Adam. The people who own the company are the people responsible for your IT.



Tom Crossley

Founder and President

Tom founded Fairoaks IT in 1991 and is passionate about delivering technology that “just plain works the way it’s supposed to.” He prides himself on personal service: Fairoaks staff know their clients’ businesses, their names and their unique situations, and every client’s IT is built around their business and their budget.

Tom graduated summa cum laude from the University of Massachusetts in 1979 with a dual degree in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research and a minor in Industrial Psychology. Before IT, he worked for GE as a consultant and manager throughout the US, the Caribbean and Asia, then co-founded a property management company in Massachusetts.

Tom is the author of *YOU Are The #1 Target*, *The Business Owner’s Essential Guide To I.T. And All Things Digital* (Version 2.0) and *If You’re Not Flying, You’re Falling*, one of which made Amazon’s Best Seller List. He speaks on data security, network management and business continuity. Away from the office, he heads to the family cabin in Maine for hiking and snowmobiling, and he’s an avid, instrument-rated private pilot.

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Adam Crossley

CEO

Adam is CEO of Fairoaks IT and leads our manufacturing and CMMC work. Before IT, he worked at Sikorsky on the Navy Seahawk program and as an internal consultant and manager for United Technologies throughout the US, Europe and Asia.

Adam’s books include *The Compliance Formula: Successful Strategies of CMMC Compliant Companies*, *Cyberattack: How to Defend Your Business and Protect Your Bottom Line* and *Cybersecurity: The Silent Battlefield*, and he has been featured in *MSP Success Magazine*.

Adam graduated cum laude from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth with a degree in Operations Management, and holds a Master of Science in Global Supply Chain from Indiana University and an MBA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

When Adam isn’t helping clients who have relied on Fairoaks IT for 10, 20 or even 30 years, you’ll usually find him outdoors, flying or traveling. But there’s nothing he enjoys more than time with his wife and two young boys.

Soteria Award winner: Most Trusted MSP in North America. Fairoaks IT is also a Microsoft Partner and a Certified Trust Level 2 IT provider.

The basics

Comparing apples to apples

The short version

Break-fix gets paid when things break. Managed IT gets paid to keep them from breaking.

■ The three predominant IT service models

Before you can compare the fees, services and deliverables of one IT services company with another, you need to understand the three service models most of these companies fit within. Some offer a blend of all three; others offer only one.

- **Time and materials.** In the industry, we call this “break-fix.” You pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to fix your problem when something breaks. You might negotiate a discount by buying a block of hours. The work may be one specific problem, like fixing your email, or a larger project, like a network upgrade or office move, with a defined result and end date.
- **Managed IT services.** The IT company becomes your fully outsourced IT department. It installs and supports the devices and computers on your network, and also provides phone and onsite support, antivirus, cybersecurity, backup and a host of other services to monitor and maintain the health, speed, performance and security of your network.
- **Software vendor-supplied IT services.** Many software companies offer a help desk or remote support for an additional fee. These are scaled-back services, limited to troubleshooting their own application, not your entire network and everything connected to it. If your problem sits outside their software, they’ll often refer you to “your IT department.” Buying basic support for a critical application is often smart, but it isn’t enough to keep a business running.

When you outsource IT support, the two models you’re most likely to choose between are managed IT services and break-fix. Let’s look at the pros and cons of each, and then the typical fees for both.

The basics

Managed IT vs. break-fix

Worth knowing

Hardware failure is still one of the biggest causes of data loss. Not every disaster is a hacker.

■ Which is the better, more cost-effective option?

You've probably heard Benjamin Franklin's line, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." We couldn't agree more, and that's why we believe some form of managed IT is essential for every small business.

We offer different plans to fit our clients' needs. For a very small business, we might offer a basic managed plan that covers the most essential maintenance, then bill hourly for any support used; our smallest clients often find this the most economical. For midsize organizations, we offer a fully managed approach where far more is covered in the monthly plan, so we can staff properly for their accounts and make sure they get fast, responsive support and expertise.

The only time we'd recommend time and materials is when you already have a competent IT person or team proactively managing your network and simply need help with a specific project, like a cloud migration or a cybersecurity plan. Outside of that, break-fix is a bad idea for general IT support for one fundamental reason: you'll end up paying for a pound of cure for problems an ounce of prevention would have avoided.

■ Why regular monitoring and maintenance is critical

Computer networks absolutely need ongoing maintenance and monitoring to stay secure. Our growing dependence on IT systems, and the data they hold, has given rise to sophisticated cybercrime organizations that work around the clock to do one thing: get into your network to steal data or money, or to hold you for ransom.

These aren't solo crooks in a hoodie. They're organized operations with teams of hackers, using software that scans millions of networks for weaknesses and stolen usernames and passwords from the dark web to get in.

Should you hire a full-time IT manager?

■ It isn't only hackers

Rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures, fire and natural disasters can all interrupt or destroy your systems and the data they hold. Then there's regulatory compliance for any business that handles credit card or financial information, medical records or even client contact information. Preventing these problems, which is what managed IT is all about, is far less expensive and damaging than waiting until one happens and paying for emergency help.

■ Should you just hire a full-time IT manager?

In most cases, it isn't cost-effective for companies with fewer than 20 employees, for a couple of reasons.

First, no one IT person can know everything about IT support and cybersecurity. If you're big enough to support a full-time IT lead, you probably need more than one person: help desk expertise, a network engineer, a network administrator, and someone thinking like a chief information officer and a chief information security officer. So even with a full-time IT person, you may still need co-managed IT support from a firm that fills the gaps. That's not a bad plan. Hiring one person and expecting them to know it all and do it all is.

Second, finding and hiring skilled IT people is hard, and if you're not technical, it's even harder to know the right questions to ask in an interview.

More often than not, building an internal IT department for day-to-day support doesn't pay off for a small or midsize business until you're closer to 100 employees, or you need specialized skills like a developer.

Pricing

What should you expect to pay?

Rule of thumb

If a provider makes more money when your systems have problems, their incentives aren't aligned with yours.

■ Why break-fix works in the consultant's favor, not yours

Under break-fix, there's a built-in conflict of interest. The IT company has no incentive to prevent problems, stabilize your network or resolve issues quickly, because it gets paid by the hour when things stop working. The risk of surprises, scope creep, learning curves and outright incompetence all shifts to you. The more problems you have, the more they profit.

They can also assign a junior technician who takes two or three times as long as a senior one would. An ethical firm will still try to resolve your problems quickly, but that's like putting a German shepherd in charge of the ham sandwiches. Break-fix also leaves you tracking their hours with no real way to verify them, and it makes budgeting a nightmare, since IT costs may be zero one month and thousands the next.

Important: the price ranges in this section are industry averages based on an IT industry survey of more than 750 IT services firms. We share them to give you a general idea of what most firms charge, and to show the vast differences in service contracts you need to understand before you sign. They do not reflect our pricing. Our approach is to understand exactly what you want to accomplish first, then recommend a solution built around your needs, budget and situation.

■ Hourly break-fix fees

Most IT services companies selling break-fix services charge between \$125 and \$300 per hour, usually with a one-hour minimum. Many will discount their hourly rate by 5% to 20% if you buy and pay for a block of hours in advance.

Pricing

What should you expect to pay?

■ Project fees

Project fees vary widely with the scope of work. If you're hiring an IT firm for a project, insist on two things:

- **A detailed scope of work that defines success.** Spell out your expectations for performance, workflow, costs, security and access. The more detail up front, the fewer misunderstandings and extra fees later.
- **A fixed budget and time frame.** Be wary of loose estimates that let the firm bill you for "unforeseen" circumstances. It's the IT firm's job to assess your situation accurately and quote based on experience. You shouldn't pick up the tab for their underestimate.

■ Managed IT services

Most managed IT firms quote a monthly fee based on the number of devices they maintain, back up and support. Industry averages:

Servers	about \$275 to \$400 per server, per month
Desktops	about \$65 to \$175 per desktop, per month
Mobile devices	about \$10 per smartphone or mobile device, per month

Beware the gray areas of "all-inclusive" contracts. To compare one managed IT contract with another, you need to know exactly what is and isn't included, and the service level agreement you're signing up for. It's easy for one provider to look less expensive than another until you look closely at what you're getting.

What SHOULD be included

- Security patches applied weekly, if not daily, for urgent threats
- Antivirus updates and monitoring
- Firewall updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and test restores
- Spam filter installation and updates
- Monitoring for signs of failure
- Optimizing systems for speed

What may be billed separately

- Hardware, like new servers, computers and laptops
- Software licenses
- Special projects
- Onsite support

That isn't a scam or unethical, unless the provider hides these fees when selling you an agreement. Read your contract carefully.

Customer service

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q1 When I have an IT problem, how do I get support?

Our answer: When a client has a problem, we open a ticket in our IT management system so we can assign, track, prioritize, document and resolve it. Some IT firms force you to log in to a portal to submit a ticket and won't let you call or email. That's for their convenience, not yours. A portal is a good option, but it should never be your only option.

Also make sure they have a reliable system to track requests; if they don't, yours will get overlooked. We make it easy: call, email or use our portal, and your issue is on its way to being resolved.

■ Q2 Do you offer after-hours support?

Our answer: Any good IT company will answer its phones live, not with voicemail or phone trees, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every weekday. But many owners and executives work outside normal hours. Fair Oaks IT offers after-hours support for emergencies, like a network being down or a critical problem stopping your team from working, and we can tailor after-hours help to fit your needs. Ask every provider how after-hours support works and how it's billed.

■ Q3 How fast do you respond, and can you prove it?

Our answer: Ask for real numbers, not promises. Be wary of a company that can't tell you how quickly it starts on problems; that's a sign it's disorganized, understaffed or overwhelmed. A good IT firm tracks every request in its service management software and can show you reports on average response and resolution times. Fair Oaks IT's average time to start on a support issue is under 12 minutes, and we're happy to show you the numbers.

Customer service

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q4 Will I have a dedicated point of contact?

Our answer: Smaller firms may not offer this, and the owner may say they'll personally manage your account. That sounds like great service, but a busy owner usually ends up giving you reactive support instead of proactive account management. With us, you'll have a named point of contact who knows you, your business and your goals, from the first call to the final resolution.

■ Q5 Do you have a feedback system for clients to rate your service? Can I see the reports?

Our answer: If they don't have a way for clients to rate their service, they may be hiding poor results. If they do, ask to see the actual scores and reporting. That will tell you a lot about the quality of service they provide. We're proud of ours: our end-user satisfaction rating is 98%, and we're happy to show you the reports.

■ Q6 Do you offer true managed IT services and support?

Our answer: You want an IT company that proactively monitors for problems and performs routine maintenance on your systems. If they can't or don't, look somewhere else. Our monitoring system watches your network around the clock for developing problems and security issues, so we can address them before they turn into bigger ones.

IT maintenance

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q7 What is NOT included in your managed services agreement?

Our answer: Another “gotcha” many IT companies fail to explain is what isn’t included in the monthly fee and will trigger an invoice. “All you can eat” is rarely true. There are limits, and you want to know them before you sign. Projects are commonly excluded, like a server upgrade, an office move or setting up new employees, along with the hardware and software you buy.

But ask this too: if you were hit with ransomware, would the recovery be extra or included? Recovering from a cyberattack can take hours of high-level expertise. Who pays that bill? Other things to ask:

- Is your help desk truly unlimited, or will we be nickel-and-dimed for every call?
- Does the service include support for cloud services like Microsoft 365?
- Do you charge extra to resolve a problem with a software vendor, internet provider, phone system or leased printer? You want a company that owns the problem and doesn’t point fingers.
- What about onsite visits, remote offices, or employees working from home?
- If we’re hit by ransomware, fire or flood, is rebuilding the network included or a separate project? Get it in writing.

Our agreement spells out exactly what’s included and what isn’t before you sign, including Microsoft 365 support, onsite service and how security incidents are handled, so there are no surprises.

IT maintenance

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q8 Is your help desk local or outsourced?

Our answer: Be careful, because smaller IT firms may outsource this critical function. You may get a tech who isn't familiar with you, your network, your history or your preferences, or who isn't as qualified. That leads to the same problems coming back, longer resolution times and you spending time educating the tech on your account. We employ technicians and engineers who get to know you and your company, your preferences and your history, so they resolve issues faster and handle things the way you want.

■ Q9 How many engineers do you have on staff?

Our answer: Be careful about hiring a one- or two-person IT firm. Everyone gets sick, has emergencies or takes time off. We have more than enough full-time technicians on staff to cover when one is out.

Also ask how they document fixes, changes and credentials for your organization, so another tech can step in and know your settings, history and previous issues. Otherwise you'll be constantly frustrated by techs starting over on known problems.

■ Q10 Do you provide documentation of our network, and how does it work?

Our answer: Network documentation is a detailed record of the assets you own (computers, devices, software, user profiles, passwords and more) and how your network is set up, backed up and secured. It matters for three reasons. It protects you: no IT person or company should be the only holder of the keys to the kingdom. It speeds up fixes, because engineers don't waste time hunting for accounts and licenses. And it's your blueprint for rebuilding after a disaster.

Our fully managed clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost, and we keep it current so key people in your organization have what they need.

Side note: never let an IT person have that much control over you. If you suspect your current IT person is keeping this to themselves as job security, that's unethical and dangerous to your organization. Don't tolerate it.

IT maintenance

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q11 Do you meet with your clients regularly as part of your managed services agreement?

Our answer: There's nothing more important than face time with our clients. We hold regular technology reviews, quarterly for our fully managed clients, to cover the status of your projects and the health and security of your network, and to recommend upgrades you'll need soon. These are business conversations, not geek-fests: your goals, your IT budget, critical projects, compliance and cybersecurity. It's also your chance to tell us how we're doing.

■ Q12 If I need to cancel my service with you, how does that work?

Our answer: Carefully review the cancellation terms in any agreement before you sign. Some IT firms hold clients hostage with long-term contracts and hefty cancellation penalties, and they'll even sue if you refuse to pay. Ask every provider two questions: what happens if you don't deliver, and how are price increases handled? Get both answers in writing. Ours are spelled out in our agreement, and we'll walk you through every page before you sign.

Cybersecurity

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q13 What cybersecurity certifications do you and your in-house team have?

Our answer: Your IT firm should have recent training and certifications, and be able to answer this question without hesitation. If they aren't investing in ongoing training for their engineers, that's a red flag. Some business owners skip training with this excuse: "What if I train my employees and they leave?" Our response: "What if you don't train them, and they stay?" Our in-house technicians invest in ongoing cybersecurity training and certifications, and we're happy to walk you through them.

■ Q14 How do you lock down our employees' computers and devices so they don't compromise our network?

Our answer: This one may get technical. The key is that they have an answer and don't hesitate to give it. Some of the things they should mention:

- Multi-factor authentication
- Advanced endpoint protection, not just antivirus
- Endpoint detection and response monitored by a security operations center
- Security awareness training and simulated phishing emails for users

We use every one of these, and we recommend all of them for every client. Endpoint detection and response monitored by a 24/7 security operations center is part of our advanced security option. Effective cybersecurity isn't a choice between this OR that.

Cybersecurity

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q15 What cyber liability and errors and omissions insurance do you carry to protect me?

Our answer: If THEY cause a problem that takes your network down for hours or days, loses your data or gets you hacked, who's responsible? What if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, or damages your property? Make sure whomever you hire carries errors and omissions insurance, workers' compensation and cyber liability coverage, and don't be shy about asking to see the policy. If they cause a ransomware infection and can't cover your losses, you may end up suing them to recover your costs. We carry all the necessary insurance to protect you, including errors and omissions, workers' comp and cyber liability. Just ask, and we'll show you a copy of our policy.

■ Q16 Who audits YOUR company's cybersecurity, and when was the last audit?

Our answer: Nobody should proofread their own work. A professional IT firm should have an independent third party regularly reviewing its own security practices. If they don't, or they say their peers audit them, don't hire them. We're reviewed by independent third parties, and Fair Oaks IT is a Certified Trust Level 2 IT provider. Ask us, and we'll share the details of our most recent review.

Cybersecurity

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q17 Do you have a security operations center? Is it in-house or outsourced?

Our answer: A security operations center, or SOC, is a team that monitors for and responds to security issues around the clock. A minority of IT firms run a good SOC in-house; others partner with a specialized provider because they know their limits, which isn't a bad thing. The key is that they have one. Less experienced firms may monitor servers and workstations for uptime and patches but provide no security monitoring at all, which matters most if you handle financial information, medical records or credit cards. Our advanced security option includes a 24/7 security operations center, run with a specialized security partner, to catch threats before they become breaches.

■ Q18 Can you give me a timeline for getting my network running again after a disaster?

Our answer: There are two parts to recovery: "fail over" and "fail back." If you get a flat tire, you fail over by putting on the spare, then fail back to a new tire at the service station. After a disaster, you want a fail-over solution so your team can keep working with as little interruption as possible, with backups locked down separately so ransomware can't reach them. Eventually you fail back to your own network, which can take days or weeks, or may not be possible at all if backups weren't done right.

Ask any IT firm to explain both processes and give you a timeline. Critical operations should fail over quickly, and a business should aim to be operational with its data within hours, not days. With our backup and disaster recovery service, your systems are backed up to an on-site device and the cloud with daily recovery verification, and we'll walk you through a realistic recovery timeline before you ever need it.

Backups and disaster recovery

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q19 Do you INSIST on periodic test restores of my backups?

Our answer: A great IT firm checks your backup systems every day to make sure backups are actually happening without failures. It should also run regular random “fire drill” test restores to prove your data CAN be recovered. The worst time to test a backup is when you desperately need it.

Want to test your current provider? Copy three unimportant files to a thumb drive and delete them from your server: one created today, one a week ago and one a month ago. Then call your IT company and say you need them restored. They should do it quickly and easily. If not, you have a problem.

Tip: keep three copies of your data, your working copy plus two backups, with one on-site and one in the cloud.

■ Q20 If a disaster kept us out of the office, how would you get us working remotely?

Our answer: Fires, floods, storms and shutdowns can close a building when you least expect it. Ask any IT firm how quickly it got clients working remotely, and securely, when COVID shut everything down, and ask to talk to a few of those clients. When COVID struck, we moved countless clients to work-from-home setups almost overnight, from simple remote desktop access to full secure connections between home and office networks.

Backups and disaster recovery

Get it in writing

Make sure you understand each answer before you decide, and get the important ones in writing.

■ Q21 Show me your process and documentation for onboarding a new client.

Our answer: The reason to ask is to see whether they HAVE a plan, a procedure, a process. Don't take their word for it; ask to see it in writing, and have them explain how it works. Discuss in detail how they'll take over from your current IT company, especially if that company is hostile. It's more common than you'd think for a fired IT provider to cause problems on the way out, and a good IT company has a process for handling it. If you consider us, we'll gladly share our onboarding process and documentation. We think you'll be impressed.

Beyond the 21 questions

■ Do they answer your questions in plain English, not “geek-speak”?

Good IT companies won't confuse you with techno-mumbo-jumbo, and they certainly won't make you feel stupid for asking questions. Great consultants have the heart of a teacher and take time to explain things simply. Watch for this as you talk to them. Our technicians are trained to do exactly that.

“Fairoaks IT was recommended to us by a colleague of ours. We have been very satisfied with the service from Tom, Jen and the rest of his team. We did not feel pressured into buying more than we needed and we are confident that he has provided our business with the appropriate level of service required to keep us efficient and secure.”

Debbie Mastroianni, Office Manager

■ Do they show up as true professionals?

If you'd be embarrassed for your clients to see your IT consultant behind your desk, that's a red flag. How you do anything is how you do everything. If they can't show up on time, are sloppy with paperwork or forget your requests, how can you expect them to be on point with your IT? Our technicians dress professionally and show up on time, and if something unexpected delays them, we let you know immediately.

Beyond the 21 questions

■ Do they have experience with businesses like yours?

Do they understand how your business operates and the software you depend on? Do they know how you communicate, get paid and serve your clients? We support manufacturers, construction companies, accounting and tax firms, professional services firms and more, and we get to know your business, so chances are we already know your industry well too. Here's what a few of our clients have said:

"Our experience with Fairoaks IT has been extremely positive and everything from the initial call to the work done Friday has gone smoothly. Each person from Fairoaks IT has been pleasant, professional, and clear on each step that's been taken... We commend you for creating such an environment in your IT business."

Nancy Borowy, Milford Franklin Counseling Services, Inc.

"One of the biggest differences from what we had before Fairoaks IT, is the fact that we call one person to manage everything IT related. Before Fairoaks IT our staff of about 5 people were experiencing at least 5 hours a week of lost productivity mostly from determining who to call for what issues. Our employees now have one number to call and I have absolutely noticed a decrease in stress and aggravation when it comes to their computer problems."

William Shannon, Shannon Corporation

Next step

A final word and a free offer

Schedule a discovery call

fair OaksIT.com/discoverycall
Franklin 774-222-5500
Belmont (704) 440-9016

We hope this guide has shed some light on what to look for when hiring a professional firm to handle your IT support. Our purpose is to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by incompetent or unethical firms luring you in with cheap prices.

The next step is simple. Call our Franklin office at 774-222-5500 or our Belmont office at (704) 440-9016, or visit fair OaksIT.com/discoverycall, and mention this guide to schedule a brief discovery call.

On that call, we'll talk about your situation and any concerns you have, and answer any questions about us. If you're comfortable moving ahead, we'll schedule our proprietary 27-point IT assessment. It can be done 100% remotely, with or without your current IT company knowing. At the end, you'll know:

- Where you're overpaying, or being underserved, by your current IT company or team
- Whether your systems and data are truly protected from hackers and ransomware, and where you're exposed
- Whether your data is backed up in a way that would let you recover quickly after an emergency
- Where you may be out of line with cyber insurance, CMMC or PCI requirements
- How you could lower your overall IT costs while improving security, performance and productivity

Fresh eyes see things others can't. At a minimum, our free assessment is a cost-free, risk-free way to get a credible third-party look at the security, stability and efficiency of your IT.

With appreciation,

Tom Crossley, Founder and President **Adam Crossley**, CEO

In their words

What other business owners are saying

■ "Great company, great people, great experience"

"Prior to working with Fair Oaks IT, we would have to wait until after hours or even days to get a response when we needed assistance with our technology. That all changed when Fair Oaks IT took over our network. Our systems, which always seemed to be outdated, are now being constantly monitored, and we always have whatever resources we need... Before Fair Oaks IT our staff of about 11 people were experiencing at least 8-10 hours a week keeping things working and trying to understand where the underlying problems were... When first talking with Tom about Fair Oaks IT, we suffered an abandonment from our provider. Tom stopped by and got our access restored so we could operate our business, we had no contract, and no commitment to sign one at the time. Tom himself demonstrates the principles that he asks his team to follow."

Steve Sullivan, President, Connolly Bus

■ "We struggled with IT for 5 years"

"Tom and Fair Oaks IT staff are amazing! We struggled with IT for 5 years until Fair Oaks came in and took control of everything. They revamped our system and everything works smoothly now. I highly recommend him and his team!!"

Patty Winberg, President

What you can count on

Everything in this guide comes down to these seven things.

1

Help in minutes, not hours.

Our average time to start on a support issue is under 12 minutes, with live support during business hours and after-hours support available. Most problems can be fixed remotely with our secure management tools, so you don't have to wait for a technician to show up.

3

No surprises.

Before you sign, you'll know exactly what's included, what isn't and how every cost works. It's all in writing, and we'll walk you through every page.

5

Lower costs and complexity with the cloud.

Where it makes sense, cloud solutions can remove the cost and hassle of managing your own server, with tighter security and faster disaster recovery.

7

Watched around the clock.

We monitor our clients' systems 24/7/365, so problems like a failed backup or a security alert get caught early, often before you'd ever notice. That frees you to focus on your customers, not your IT.

2

No geek-speak.

You deserve answers in plain English, not confusing technical terms. Our technicians won't talk down to you or make you feel stupid for asking. That's our job.

4

Accountable at the top.

Fairoaks IT is owned and run by Tom and Adam Crossley. If something isn't right, the people who own the company are the people who answer for it.

6

We won't hold you hostage.

Some IT companies keep your network documentation, passwords and licenses to themselves so you're afraid to leave. That's unethical. We keep our clients by delivering great service, not by keeping them in the dark.

✓

Ready to talk?

fairoaksit.com/discoverycall

Franklin 774-222-5500 | Belmont (704) 440-9016

Ready for straight answers about your IT?

Schedule a discovery call: a straightforward conversation about your business and what isn't working. No pitch and no pressure. If we're not the right fit, we'll tell you.

fairoaksit.com/discoverycall

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Eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Belmont, NC

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