

# Managed IT cost estimator worksheet

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Use this simple worksheet to estimate a reasonable managed IT budget before you talk to providers. It also helps you compare quotes and spot gaps in service, support, or security.

<b>What this is</b>	A free, plain-language checklist from a matching service — not an IT vendor.
<b>How to use it</b>	Work through each item, jot your answers, and use them to compare providers.
<b>Cost</b>	Free. Matching is always free for businesses.

## What this worksheet helps you do

If you have never bought managed IT before, pricing can feel hard to decode. One quote may look cheap, but leave out important work. Another may look expensive, but include stronger support, better security, and faster response times.

This worksheet gives you a rough budget range based on your people, devices, and security needs. It is not a quote. Real pricing depends on your headcount, device count, business hours, industry rules, office locations, and your local market.

Managed IT usually means ongoing help from an MSP, a managed services provider. That can include help desk support, device setup, software updates, security tools, backup oversight, and planning. Some providers also offer a vCIO, a virtual Chief Information Officer, which means an outside advisor who helps with IT planning and budgeting.

If you want help after you fill this out, NodeBridge IT can help you find an independent managed IT provider. Our service is free for business owners. We only collect basic business and contact details, not passwords or system access.

## How to use the estimator worksheet

Start with four numbers, users, computers, mobile devices, and locations. A user is anyone who needs support, email, file access, or business apps. A device can be a desktop, laptop, phone, tablet, or shared workstation.

Then list the service level you think you need. Basic support usually covers help desk, setup for common business devices, patching, and basic monitoring. Patching means regularly installing software and system updates. Monitoring often uses RMM, remote monitoring and management software, which lets a provider watch device health and routine alerts.

Next, mark any security needs. Many businesses now ask for MFA, multi-factor authentication, which adds a second sign-in step. Some also want EDR, endpoint detection and response. An endpoint is

any business-connected device like a laptop or phone. EDR is a security tool that watches those devices for suspicious behavior and helps a provider investigate and respond.

Finally, write down any special requirements. Examples include 24/7 support, multiple offices, regulated data, cloud migrations, after-hours work, server support, or line-of-business software that needs extra care. These items often move the budget up.

## The estimator worksheet

Use the ranges below to build a rough monthly budget. These are common US market ranges for small and mid-sized businesses. They are not quotes. Your actual number depends on your area, your environment, and how much support and security you want.

Step 1, count your supported users. For many fully managed plans, a starting range is about \$100 to \$250 per user per month. Lower ranges often cover standard business hours and a simpler setup. Higher ranges often include stronger security, deeper support, compliance help, or more hands-on service.

Step 2, check whether the provider also charges per device. Some quote per user only. Others add device fees for servers, shared computers, or specialty equipment. A rough range is \$25 to \$100 per workstation or laptop per month, and about \$100 to \$400 per server per month, depending on age, complexity, and software.

Step 3, add security items that may be separate. MFA may be included or billed as a small per-user add-on. EDR is often a separate line item. Email security, security awareness training, backup tools, and compliance reporting may also be separate.

Step 4, note backup needs. Ask whether backup is included, who checks it, and what recovery help is covered. You may hear the phrase 3-2-1 backup. That means keeping 3 copies of data, on 2 different types of storage, with 1 copy kept offsite. No honest provider promises zero downtime, zero data loss, or an unhackable network, so it is important to ask how backup is handled.

Step 5, write down one-time setup costs. Onboarding, documentation, cleanup work, device standardization, and tool deployment are often billed once at the start. If a quote looks low monthly but very high upfront, ask what work is included.

## A simple budget model you can copy

You can use this basic formula to create a rough monthly estimate.

Monthly estimate = users x monthly per-user rate, plus servers x monthly server rate, plus any extra security tools, plus after-hours or multi-location support if needed.

Example only. If you have 15 users and a provider's service level looks like \$125 to \$175 per user per month, your base range may be about \$1,875 to \$2,625 per month. If you also have 1 server at \$150 to \$300 per month and a few security add-ons, your total may rise into the low to mid \$2,000s or more.

If your business is highly regulated, open late, uses specialty software, or has several offices, the number can be higher. Requirements vary by industry and state. For example, healthcare businesses may need support around HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Businesses that handle payment cards may need help with PCI, the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard. Some vendors may also mention SOC 2, a reporting framework many software companies use to show how they handle security and controls.

The point of this worksheet is not to find a perfect number. It is to help you tell the difference between a realistic quote and one that may be missing important pieces.

## How to sanity-check a quote you receive

When you compare quotes, do not look at price alone. Look at what is actually covered, how fast support is meant to respond, and which security tools are included. Ask for plain language, not jargon.

One key term is SLA, service level agreement. This is the part that explains response targets, coverage hours, and what happens for different issue types. A cheaper quote may have a slower SLA, fewer support channels, or extra charges for onsite visits, projects, or after-hours help.

Also ask whether the provider includes patching, MFA support, EDR, backup checks, vendor coordination, employee onboarding and offboarding, and planning meetings. If those are all separate, the low monthly number may not reflect your real spend.

You can learn more about common service models on our services page, or read plain-language buying tips in our guides. If you want help sorting through quotes, we can connect you with an independent managed IT provider that fits your size, area, and needs.

- Ask if pricing is per user, per device, or both
- Check what happens after business hours
- Ask which security tools are included and which cost extra
- Confirm whether backups are monitored and tested
- Check for one-time onboarding or cleanup fees
- Ask who owns the documentation if you switch providers later

## What to do with your answers

After you finish the worksheet, keep three numbers in front of you, your likely monthly range, your one-time startup range, and your must-have items. This gives you a calm, clear starting point for provider conversations.

If a quote lands well below your range, ask what is not included. If it lands above your range, ask what extra service or protection you are paying for. In many cases, the difference is not markup. It is support scope, staffing, tools, and how much hands-on work the provider expects.

If you want, NodeBridge IT can help you compare your worksheet against the market and help you find an independent managed IT provider. We are a free matching service. We do not manage systems, repair networks, monitor accounts, or secure your business ourselves.

## Quick answers

### What is a normal monthly managed IT cost for a small business?

A common starting point is about \$100 to \$250 per user per month for fully managed service, with possible extra charges for servers, security tools, projects, or after-hours support. The real number depends on your headcount, devices, security needs, and area.

### Is managed IT priced per user or per device?

Both models exist. Many providers price mainly per user, while others also charge for servers, shared computers, or specialty devices. Ask which model they use so you can compare quotes fairly.

### Why are two quotes so far apart?

The cheaper quote may leave out security tools, backup oversight, after-hours support, onsite help, or planning. The higher quote may include more of those items, along with a stronger service level agreement, or SLA.

### Should backup be included in managed IT pricing?

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Ask whether the backup tool, backup monitoring, testing, and recovery help are included, or billed separately. Backup details matter more than the word "included."

### Can this worksheet replace a real quote?

No. It is a planning tool to help you estimate a reasonable range and ask better questions. A real quote depends on your actual setup, locations, support hours, software, and compliance needs.

### Does NodeBridge IT need access to our systems to help?

No. We only collect basic business and contact details so we can help you find an independent managed IT provider. We do not ask for passwords, network credentials, or system access.

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