

Managed IT Pricing & Buyer's Guide for Vancouver Island Businesses

What managed IT really costs, what's included, and how to compare providers with confidence.

TYPICAL MONTHLY BUDGET

CAD / MONTH

10–20 supported users/workstations

\$1,500–3,000

Single office, Microsoft 365, standard support

20–50 users/workstations

\$3,000–7,000

Office plus field crews, mobile devices, one yard/shop

50–100 users/workstations

\$7,000+

Multi-location, compliance, strategic planning

Planning ranges in Canadian dollars (CAD), not a formal quote. Your actual cost depends on your environment, risk, and the level of support you want. Full breakdown below.

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

Built for owners, general managers, operations managers, office managers, finance leaders, and the “accidental IT owners” who inherited IT responsibility — and need practical guidance before choosing an IT partner.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 01 How managed IT pricing works
- 02 What should managed IT cost?
- 03 Real-world pricing scenarios
- 04 What's included vs. what costs extra
- 05 Managed IT vs. internal IT
- 06 What trades & field-service businesses need
- 07 Switching providers & red flags
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This guide is designed for small and mid-sized Vancouver Island businesses, especially construction, trades, field services, environmental services, fuel, industrial, and other operations where office and field teams work together. If your business runs across an office, shop, yard, trucks, job sites, and mobile crews, managed IT pricing is not just about the number of employees. It's about how much your team relies on cloud services like Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace, shared files, mobile devices, field apps, vendors, backups, and fast support to keep work moving.

Use this guide to understand what managed IT usually costs, what should be included, what may cost extra, and what questions to ask before comparing providers. If IT quietly became the office manager's second job, it's also meant to give you back some clarity and control before you talk to anyone.

① HOW TO USE THE PRICING IN THIS GUIDE

Every number here is a **planning range in Canadian dollars (CAD)**. Use these ranges to sanity-check quotes and set expectations, not a formal quote. Your actual cost depends on your environment, risk, and the level of support you want.

How Managed IT Pricing Works

Managed IT pricing can be hard to compare because providers don't all price the same way. One provider may quote per user. Another may quote per device. Some include cybersecurity, Microsoft 365 support, backup monitoring, vendor coordination, and strategic planning, while others treat those as add-ons.

The goal isn't to find the cheapest monthly number. It's to understand what you're paying for, what's excluded, and what level of support your business can expect.

What actually drives the price

PRICING FACTOR	WHY IT MATTERS
Number of employees	More users usually means more support, onboarding, licensing, security, and account management.
Number of devices	Laptops, desktops, servers, phones, tablets, firewalls, switches, and wireless equipment all require management.
Number of locations	Multiple offices, shops, yards, warehouses, or job sites increase support complexity.
Cybersecurity needs	Stronger protection, monitoring, training, and response planning can affect pricing.
Microsoft 365 environment	Email, file sharing, collaboration tools, permissions, licensing, and security all require ongoing management. Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace are common examples.
Backup & recovery needs	Cost depends on what needs to be protected and how quickly it needs to be restored.
Support expectations	Business-hours support usually costs less than extended or emergency coverage.
Current IT condition	Older systems, poor documentation, or unresolved issues may require more upfront work.
Strategic support	Some providers only handle tickets. Others help with planning, budgeting, vendor management, and leadership guidance.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The lowest monthly price is not always the lowest-cost option. A lower quote may mean important services are missing, reactive, or billed separately.

What Should Managed IT Cost?

Most buyers think about managed IT pricing in terms of people: “We have 25 employees. What should IT cost?” That’s a useful starting point. Behind the scenes, providers may price using users, devices, locations, service tiers, tools, complexity, or a combination of these factors.

All ranges in this guide are in Canadian dollars (CAD). Managed IT pricing is often discussed by employee count, but most providers also consider workstations, servers, locations, support expectations, cybersecurity needs, backup requirements, onsite support, and environment complexity. The ranges below are planning ranges, not formal quotes.

Typical monthly IT budget ranges

SUPPORTED USERS / WORKSTATIONS	TYPICAL MONTHLY IT BUDGET RANGE
10–20 supported users/workstations	\$1,500–\$3,000 per month
20–50 users/workstations	\$3,000–\$7,000 per month
50–100 users/workstations	\$7,000+ per month

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IMPORTANT NOTE

Managed IT pricing is rarely determined by total employee count alone. For trades and field-service businesses, “supported users/workstations” may include office staff, managers, and field team members who rely on supported computers, mobile devices, Microsoft 365, email, shared files, business apps, or regular IT support. Cybersecurity requirements, number of devices, Microsoft 365 complexity, server infrastructure, locations, backup needs, onsite support, and industry software can all affect the final price.

Common pricing models

MODEL	HOW IT WORKS	WHAT TO WATCH FOR
Per user	Flat monthly fee per employee supported.	Clarify part-time staff, shared accounts, mobile devices, and included support scope.
Per device	Monthly fee based on computers, servers, and managed equipment.	Can become harder to estimate when users have multiple devices.
Flat monthly fee	One monthly cost for a defined environment and service scope.	Make sure the scope is clear and exclusions are documented.
Hybrid	Combination of users, devices, locations, service tiers, and projects.	Ask for a plain-English breakdown of what drives cost.

Real-World Pricing Scenarios

These scenarios help you recognize your own situation. They’re examples only. Your actual cost depends on your environment, risk, and the support you want.

Scenario 1: 15-Person Professional Services Firm — \$1,500–\$3,000/month

BUSINESS PROFILE

- 15 employees, single office
- Microsoft 365; laptops and desktops
- Cloud-based business applications
- No internal IT person
- Standard business-hours support

TYPICAL PRIORITIES

- Fast user support
- Microsoft 365 administration
- Security best practices
- Reliable backups
- Predictable monthly costs

WHAT IS OFTEN INCLUDED

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ✓ Help desk support | ✓ Device monitoring and maintenance |
| ✓ Microsoft 365 administration | ✓ Endpoint security |
| ✓ Backup monitoring | ✓ Vendor coordination |
| ✓ Technology reviews | |

🔗 BUYER INSIGHT

A lower-cost provider may offer basic support but charge separately for onsite visits, projects, cybersecurity improvements, or strategic planning.

Scenario 2: 25-Person Construction or Trades Company — \$3,000–\$7,000/month

BUSINESS PROFILE

- 25-person company with 15-20 supported users/workstations
- Office staff plus field crews using mobile devices
- Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace
- Shared files and project documentation
- Multiple vendors and subcontractors
- One office and one yard/shop

TYPICAL PRIORITIES

- Support for field staff
- Mobile device management
- Email, file sharing, and cloud account security
- Reliable file access from job sites
- Fast response when operations are impacted

WHAT IS OFTEN INCLUDED

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ✓ Help desk support | ✓ Microsoft 365 support |
| ✓ Endpoint security | ✓ Backup monitoring |
| ✓ Mobile device support | ✓ Vendor coordination |
| ✓ Cybersecurity tools | ✓ Technology planning |

🔗 BUYER INSIGHT

Ask specifically how the provider supports field staff, mobile devices, job-site access, and operational issues that affect dispatching, scheduling, billing, or crew productivity.

Scenario 3: 75-Person Multi-Location Business — \$7,000+/month

BUSINESS PROFILE

- 75 employees; multiple locations
- Hybrid and remote workers
- Microsoft 365; business-critical applications
- Larger cybersecurity requirements
- Growing compliance and reporting needs

TYPICAL PRIORITIES

- Security oversight
- Consistent support across locations
- Backup and recovery planning
- Vendor management
- Strategic technology planning & budget forecasting

WHAT IS OFTEN INCLUDED

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Managed IT support | ✓ Microsoft 365 administration |
| ✓ Cybersecurity tools and policies | ✓ Backup monitoring and recovery oversight |
| ✓ Vendor coordination | ✓ Strategic Business Reviews |
| ✓ IT roadmap development | ✓ Leadership-level reporting |

🕒 BUYER INSIGHT

At this stage, the conversation usually shifts from fixing tickets to reducing risk, improving visibility, supporting growth, and creating a long-term technology roadmap.

🕒 A NOTE ABOUT PRICING

These examples are planning guidelines. The right comparison is not based on the monthly fee alone. It should also consider scope, support quality, cybersecurity posture, backup coverage, response expectations, visibility, and the likelihood of surprise costs later.

→ NEXT STEP

Not sure where your business lands in these ranges? A free 15-minute IT Check-Up will tell you.

What's Included vs. What Costs Extra

One of the most important questions to ask any IT provider is simple: *“What’s included in the monthly fee, and what’s billed separately?”*

Commonly included in strong managed IT plans

- ✓ Help desk and user support
- ✓ Remote monitoring and support tools
- ✓ Device monitoring and maintenance
- ✓ Patching and updates
- ✓ Cloud service administration
- ✓ Endpoint security
- ✓ Vendor coordination
- ✓ Backup monitoring
- ✓ Reporting and reviews

Common additional or separately scoped costs

- + Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace licensing
- + Onsite support beyond the included service level
- + Backup storage
- + Hardware purchases
- + New hardware deployments
- + Major projects and cloud migrations
- + Office moves
- + Server deployments or major infrastructure changes
- + After-hours support
- + Major line-of-business software upgrades
- + User training
- + Advanced cybersecurity services

Some providers include a defined level of onsite support in certain plans, while others bill onsite visits separately. Ask what’s included, what’s extra, and how onsite support is handled for urgent issues.

🚩 RED FLAG

If a provider can’t clearly explain what triggers additional billing, ask more questions. A good proposal should be easy to understand.

Managed IT vs. Internal IT

For many organizations with 10–100 employees, managed IT can provide access to broader expertise than a single internal hire. The decision shouldn't be based only on salary versus monthly fee. It should be based on coverage, business risk, continuity, and long-term value.

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WHY PAY FOR IT WHEN NOTHING IS BROKEN?

The point of managed IT isn't to fix what's already broken. It is to keep the things that quietly cost you (downtime, security gaps, an untested backup) from breaking in the first place. Much of what you're paying for is the problems that never reach you.

OPTION	STRENGTH	LIMITATION
Internal IT person	Dedicated resource who knows the business.	Usually more expensive than managed IT at this size, and limited by one person's skills, availability, vacation, and capacity.
Break-fix IT	Pay only when something breaks.	Reactive and unpredictable. Without documentation or ongoing context, fixes may take longer and become temporary workarounds instead of root-cause solutions.
Managed IT provider	Team-based expertise, proactive support, predictable budgeting.	Requires selecting the right partner and service level.

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CONSIDER THIS

One internal IT person may be expected to manage cybersecurity, Microsoft 365, networking, backups, vendors, user support, strategy, documentation, and emergencies. That's a very broad responsibility for one role.

Price is only one part of the cost

A lower monthly IT fee may look attractive until downtime affects scheduling, dispatch, billing, payroll, drawings, email, or field communication. When comparing providers, ask what the monthly fee includes and what happens when something business-critical stops working.

What Trades & Field-Service Businesses Need

A construction company doesn't operate like a traditional office. Your team may work across offices, shops, trucks, yards, job sites, and remote locations. That changes what good IT support needs to cover.

🕒 A QUICK EXAMPLE

It's 6:00 a.m. A crew can't log into the dispatch app before rolling to a job site. Who do they call, and how fast does someone actually pick up? That's the kind of moment that separates IT that understands field operations from IT that only understands desks.

🏠 ASK ABOUT CYBER INSURANCE

More trades and construction businesses now need cyber insurance to bid work or renew coverage. Insurers may ask about multi-factor authentication, endpoint protection, backup testing, and recovery planning before they approve coverage or respond to a claim.

QUESTION TO ASK	WHY IT MATTERS
Can the provider support office and field staff?	Your business doesn't only operate from a desk.
Can they help manage phones and tablets?	Field teams often rely on mobile devices to access schedules, files, photos, and apps.
Do they understand job-site downtime?	Delays can affect crews, billing, customer timelines, and cash flow.
Can they work with industry software vendors?	Dispatch, estimating, accounting, fleet, and job-management tools often require vendor coordination.
Are they local enough to come onsite?	Some issues can't be solved remotely.
Can they help standardize systems?	Growth often creates messy permissions, devices, file storage, and software processes.

🗨️ KEY TAKEAWAY

Fixing tickets is only part of the job. The better question is whether your IT provider understands how your crews work, move, communicate, and access information in the field.

Switching Providers & Red Flags

A well-managed transition should reduce disruption, not create more confusion. Before switching providers, ask what the first 30 days will look like.

🕒 WHAT IF OUR CURRENT PROVIDER WON'T COOPERATE?

This is one of the most common worries and a fair one. A well-run transition should never depend on your outgoing provider's goodwill. Ask how a new provider documents and recovers access, resets administrative control, and takes ownership of your cloud services, domain, and backups even if the previous provider is slow to hand things over. In many cases, a responsible incoming provider will recommend an overlap period with your current provider to reduce risk, validate access, and avoid unnecessary disruption.

What good onboarding looks like — the first 30 days

STAGE	WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN
Discovery	Review users, devices, vendors, systems, backups, and recurring issues.
Documentation	Validate access, passwords, administrative roles, vendors, processes, and system information.
Security review	Identify obvious risks, missing protections, and urgent gaps.
Stabilization	Address high-priority issues and reduce immediate risk.
Roadmap	Create a practical plan for improvements, budget, and next steps.

Red flags to watch for

- 🚩 The monthly price is low, but the scope is vague.
- 🚩 Cybersecurity is mentioned but not clearly defined.
- 🚩 Backups are included, but testing and recovery aren't explained.
- 🚩 Response times are promised verbally but not documented.
- 🚩 Cloud service support is unclear, or the provider has no clear local presence when onsite support is needed.
- 🚩 Project work and extra fees aren't clearly explained.
- 🚩 The provider doesn't ask about your operations, field staff, vendors, or business goals.
- 🚩 The proposal focuses only on tools, not business outcomes.

→ NEXT STEP

Reviewing a proposal or renewal right now? A free 15-minute IT Check-Up is a fast way to pressure-test it before you sign.

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Questions to Ask Any IT Provider

Use this checklist when comparing providers. The strongest proposals make these answers clear before you sign.

QUESTION	WHY TO ASK
What's included in the monthly fee?	Avoid surprise costs.
What is not included?	Understand the real total cost.
How do you handle urgent issues?	Confirm response expectations.
Do you provide onsite support on Vancouver Island?	Validate local support.
How do you support field staff and mobile devices?	Make sure the provider fits your operations.
How do you secure Microsoft 365?	Protect email, files, accounts, and collaboration tools.
Are Microsoft 365 backups included?	Avoid assuming Microsoft covers everything.
How often are backups tested?	Backups only matter if they can be restored.
What happens in the first 30 days?	Understand onboarding and transition.
How do you work with our current IT provider?	Reduce switching risk.
Do you provide IT planning and budgeting?	Move beyond reactive support.
What reporting will we receive?	Get visibility and accountability.
What contract terms should we expect?	Understand commitment and flexibility.

🕒 BUYER INSIGHT

Bring this page to every provider conversation. If the answers are clear, documented, and specific to how your business runs, that's a strong sign. Vague answers are a signal to keep asking.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does managed IT typically cost?

Pricing depends on users, devices, locations, cybersecurity requirements, support expectations, and business complexity. As a planning guide, many small and mid-sized businesses budget between \$1,500 and \$7,000+ per month depending on size and scope.

What is usually included in managed IT services?

Common inclusions include help desk support, remote support, monitoring, patching, Microsoft 365 administration, endpoint security, vendor coordination, backup monitoring, reporting, and regular technology reviews.

What costs extra?

Licenses, hardware, major projects, backup storage, cloud migrations, after-hours support, office moves, and advanced cybersecurity services may be billed separately.

Is managed IT cheaper than hiring internal IT?

For many businesses with 10–100 employees, managed IT can provide broader coverage than one internal hire. The better comparison is cost, coverage, continuity, risk reduction, and operational fit.

Why pay for managed IT if nothing is currently broken?

Because the goal is to catch problems before they interrupt your business. A monthly retainer supports proactive monitoring, patching, security, and backup testing. It can also uncover issues that are already there but not obvious yet, such as failed backups, outdated systems, weak passwords, or devices that are no longer protected. Reactive, “fix-it-when-it-breaks” support is usually cheaper on paper, but it can be far more disruptive when something business-critical stops working.

Do I need backup for Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace?

Usually, yes. Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace include some retention and recovery features, but many businesses still need a separate backup strategy for email, files, shared drives, OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams, or Google Drive data. Ask whether your provider monitors backups, tests recovery, and can restore data after accidental deletion, ransomware, or account compromise.

How long does it take to switch providers?

Most transitions can be managed smoothly when the provider has a clear onboarding process, documentation plan, and first-30-days approach.

What if our current IT provider won't cooperate when we switch?

A good transition plan reduces dependence on your old provider, but there are situations where their cooperation is still required. Ask how a new provider documents access, validates administrative control, identifies gaps, and plans the handoff. In many cases, an overlap period with the outgoing provider helps reduce risk, confirm access, and avoid unnecessary disruption.

What response times should I expect?

Ask how urgent, high-impact, and routine issues are prioritized. Make sure response expectations are documented, not just discussed verbally.

Can a managed IT provider support field staff and mobile devices?

Yes, but capabilities vary. If your business has crews, trucks, job sites, mobile devices, and remote access needs, ask specifically how that support is handled.

What are the biggest red flags in an IT proposal?

Vague scope, unclear response times, undefined cybersecurity coverage, unexplained extra fees, no backup recovery details, weak onboarding, and no discussion of how your business actually operates.

Will hackers really target a business our size?

Yes, and usually not on purpose. Most attacks on small and mid-sized businesses are automated, hitting whoever has weak passwords, no multi-factor authentication, or unpatched systems. Trades and construction firms are attractive because they move real money, rely on email approvals, and often assume they're too small to be a target. The practical goal isn't fear. It's knowing what's protected, what's exposed, and what to fix first.

Do managed IT providers require long-term contracts?

Contract terms vary by provider. Some use month-to-month agreements, while others require one-year or multi-year commitments. Before signing, ask what the term is, what happens if service expectations aren't met, and whether onboarding, projects, licenses, or hardware are separate from the monthly agreement.

Should we choose a local Vancouver Island IT provider or a national company?

A national provider may offer scale, but a local provider can be easier to reach, better understand Island business realities, and provide onsite support when remote help isn't enough. If your business depends on physical locations, field crews, shops, yards, or job sites, ask how often onsite support is available and where technicians are actually based.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Book your free 15-minute IT Check-Up with ALPHA IT

You've seen what to look for. In 15 minutes, we'll help you talk through your current IT concerns, identify the most obvious red flags, and recommend the next best step for your business.

Book your free IT Check-Up

NO PITCH. NO OBLIGATION. JUST PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM A LOCAL VANCOUVER ISLAND TEAM.

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