

50 MSP QUESTIONS

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50 QUESTIONS ABOUT Managed Server Provider (MSP)

Company Background

Understanding a company's background, viability, market strength and overall strategy is the first step toward choosing a MSP. The inquiries below can help benchmark companies against one another and provide insights into a company's industry standing and experience.

1. Is your organization owned or affiliated with a staffing company? If so, which one?
2. How does your organization's technology enable the managed service providers (MSPs)?
3. What is the background of MSP's management team? How many years of industry-specific expertise do they have, and how many years have they been with the company/branch?
4. Gather detailed financial information about the MSP and parent company, if applicable.

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Program Structure

Because each organization has as a different structure and management, it's imperative to determine if the solution has the ability to work with a variety of MSPs or if capabilities are limited.

5. Do you want multiple MSPs or a combination of MSPsupported programs and self-managed programs?
6. Do you allow for multiple MSPs or a combination of self-managed/MSPs?
7. Gather examples of clients who have employed a multi-MSP model successfully.
8. Gather an overview of additional services (outside of the MSP program) your company can provide to our organization that will reduce our overall cost and improve performance.
9. Be informed how workflows are set up and sustained.

Product Information

Total Workforce Management

From the initial requisition to invoice, a MSP should provide a process that is cost effective, efficient, ensures quality and certifies compliance. When selecting a MSP, it's important to understand how each phase of the process will work. The questions below will help determine how a MSP will help streamline workflow and provide visibility into your workforce.

Requisitions

10. Describe the automated processes available for the end user. How does your application allow for easy adoption and simplify processes for the user?

Requisition Distribution

11. How are requisitions distributed to suppliers? Can the distribution list be composed of "tiers" with preferred suppliers getting requisitions first, followed by second and third tier suppliers? Does the MSP also look at your own staff and available skills?

12. What criteria or business rules will be used to define when information is passed to subsequent tiers?

Interview Process

13. What is the process for using the application to schedule and track interviews?

Hiring Process

14. Does your solution allow for rate negotiation?

15. How is the onboarding process handled?

16. Is the application flexible to support the multiple hiring practices in different countries and the unique processes across the organization? Gather examples of both scenarios.

17. Are there companies in the same regions where your organization does business?

Timesheets

18. How do you assist with time entry to ensure hours are categorized properly?

19. Describe the process for addressing complex rates and tax rates in various countries and provide specific examples of how this has been accomplished.



Invoicing

20. How do you make sure invoicing data is correct and immediately available (to the client)?
21. When an MSP is involved, how does the application create the three-way invoice?
22. How do changes to a large number of worker assignments happen all at once? Suddenly a big project with demand for resources: what will be the process?
23. Can the final invoice and any applicable taxes be generated within the system without any external processing or input? Does this also apply to an SOW?

Services Procurement

In addition to Total Workforce Management, a MSP should be capable of handling the sourcing and procurement of service providers, including RFx processes and creation of a Statement of Work (SOW) and its distribution to suppliers and vendors and as a neutral service provider she should also monitor and check the client's resources. Each services engagement is different so a MSP must allow for various levels of configuration.

24. Does the solution offer RFx capabilities? If so, how can you control the suppliers authorized to respond to an RFx? Can you ensure that only approved suppliers receive the RFx?
25. Can you utilize a library of terms and templates when creating a contract or SOW? Can you inherit terms from previous contracts or SOWs and reuse?
26. Are RFP templates available so that users do not have to start from scratch? Can portions of the template be marked as required?
27. Describe the different payment structures that can be utilized within an SOW.
28. How can multiple people (internal and external) come together to negotiate an SOW?

Product Administration

Matching MSP capabilities with your specific needs can help streamline business processes and ensure every step of the supply chain is managed effectively. Because no two programs are alike, the questions below help clarify the configuration options and how the MSP might provide the end-user insight and data.

29. Has the solution been created using third-party software (for instance, report writers, etc.)?
30. If third-party software is required, please describe any additional licenses or infrastructure required, as well as how third-party software releases are introduced to the users.
31. How configurable is the workflow embedded within the system? Can the workflow be configured to support data-driven events, such as the cost of a transaction, overtime entered on a time sheet and the value of a customer-defined field on the transaction?
32. Does the program allow program offices to upload and download tools?
33. Business Intelligence and (Management) Reporting which you need?

Reports

The ability to derive intelligence from a MSP can help you make more informed business decisions that will improve efficiency and lessen costs down the road. Users should be able to access real-time reports easily and these reports should be configurable to your business needs.

34. Describe the architecture of the reporting system. Are third-party tools used?
35. Does the application support customized or ad hoc queries?
36. Can report definitions be saved for future use?
37. What user types can create ad hoc reports? Is there an additional fee?
38. Is it possible to create role-based dashboards to report more data besides basic functions such as scorecards and KPIs? If so, please describe this process.
39. Can clients working locally download and email reports? Which format (pdf, csv, excel)?
40. Describe the process for benchmarking and if it's possible to benchmark against market data.

Technology

As with any technology solution, security is an ongoing concern with any VMS/MSP and should be addressed during the RFP process. Among the issues to address are architecture, hosting and recovery processes.

41. Describe the computer system security, intrusion detection, audit procedures, backup procedures, fault recovery procedures and disaster recovery plans.
42. Where do you will the system be hosted and what level of security is provided at the center?
43. Define an overview of the technical architecture of the system.

Implementation and Integration

Once you've decided on a MSP, the next steps are deploying the solution and integrating it into existing environment. Making sure there are streamlined processes that will ensure users to have an optimal experience using the VMS/MSP.

44. Define the key elements required in order to assure a smooth and successful implementation.
45. What ERP, e-procurement or HR systems have to be integrated with the system?



Customer Support

The program office and end users shouldn't be left stranded once the VMS/MSP has been implemented. They need to be supported regularly with a variety of training tools and guided resolution management. You'll want to verify that the VMS/MSP is transparent about software releases as well as any additional costs these services might incur.

- 46. Describe any assistance available to users such as self-help tools, user guides, tutorials and customer service support lines.
- 47. How will future releases be made available to you? Approximately how often is the solution upgraded? Are the upgrades considered part of our maintenance package or are there additional fees?
- 48. Describe any sort of assistance such as a decision wizard, video-instructions, trainings or similar feature that can help users determine the type of work required.

Consultative Services

Outside of technical customer support, program sponsors and program office staff can benefit from best practice expertise and benchmarking to craft strategy and define larger long-term goals. Access to this sort of knowledge base can be a key differentiator in the RFP process.

- 49. What expertise can be provided regarding industry best practices?
- 50. Describe the rate, supplier and performance benchmarks that can be made available.

Many organizations use suppliers of temporary staff. Suppliers that use 25 to 60% margin. You may have tried to reduce this by offering lower rates from your suppliers, but at most this results in a small decrease.

A Managed Services Program, with its own Vendor Management Software and a diversity of innovative modules that have arisen from the practical need, makes it possible for larger (inter)national organizations to realize long-term and structural improvements in the areas of purchasing and managing outsourcing and working/hiring external parties.

This gives full insight into complex services, bottlenecks, improving the skills of deployed employees (whether internally/externally) and compliance.

Final question. Do you want to know more? Herewith the invite to exchange ideas. We also offer options such as seminars, workshops and on-line demonstrations.