



# Three key considerations when choosing an IT staffing partner

How CIOs are solving the IT talent gap





As organizations of all sizes turn toward transformative new technologies, such as Cloud, Big Data, and Internet of Things (IoT), to unlock innovation, their IT teams are left to implement them with smaller budgets, leaner staffs, and fewer resources. And on top of all of that, the IT industry is facing a massive talent gap, making finding and hiring experienced IT professionals especially challenging.

As a result, many leading organizations are partnering with experienced IT staffing providers to help them meet their evolving business and technology needs. Whether it's recruiting a full-time, permanent IT professional to fill a role left by a retiring team member or temporarily hiring a consultant with the IT training needed to implement a new technology, IT staffing partners are being called upon to find the right IT professionals, at the right time with the right skillset for a variety of strategic business objectives.

The IT Staffing and Consulting team at CBTS has been placing IT professionals for decades in every industry across hundreds of technical specialties. This eBook outlines the three key considerations we feel organizations should keep in mind when choosing an IT staffing partner:

1. Figure out what you need first.
2. Balance the pros and cons.
3. Remember this is a business arrangement.

## 1. First, identify your IT staffing needs.

Organizations should begin with a thorough analysis of its IT resources, focusing on the following areas:

- Are there any gaps in technology skillsets among current team members?
- Are there any IT areas that are currently under-resourced?
- Are there strategic technology projects planned that would require an influx of short-term resources?
- Are there strategic technology projects planned that would require highly-skilled IT resources not available within the current team?
- Is there access to an internal recruiting team or staffing agency with sufficient expertise to find, hire, train and manage the needed IT-centric personnel?

Once complete, an organization should have a good idea of the number of resources needed, including skill levels and for how long, and can answer the question, "can I meet my objectives with my current IT organization or do I need an IT staffing partner?"



In general, IT staffing providers offer resources in the following ways:

**Project-Based Resources** – Resources are available across multiple technologies to assist with short- and long-term project-based work. The resources are engaged initially to assist with the engineering and design of a project and remain engaged through the completion of the installation.

One-off projects often require IT expertise beyond the abilities or workload capacity of an organization's full-time staff. An IT staffing partner should be able to provide the necessary, highly-skilled IT professionals an organization needs to complete a variety of projects including:

- Migrate workloads to the cloud.
- Integrate and configuring a new ERP system.
- Enable seamless shopping experiences in brick-and-mortar retail.
- Recover from a cyberattack.
- Implement an IoT environment.

**Staff Augmented Resources** – Resources are placed on-site to augment the organization's current IT team in a short-term or long-term capacity. The resources are employed, and managed by the IT staffing provider in coordination with the organization's IT organization leadership.

**Permanent Hire Resources** – Resources are recruited for the organization as a full-time staff member for the organization.

Ideally, the right IT staffing partner will help an organization find the right combination of full-time and temporary resources to meet their overall business objectives.

## 2. Then, balance the pros and cons.

Organizations considering an IT staffing partner should carefully weigh their options—reconciling the pros and the cons. Here's a look at both sides:

### Pros:

- **Flexibility.** Organizations hire only the talent they need, when they need it—saving them both time and money spent on IT resource management.
- **Expertise.** An IT staffing partner can place people with highly specific IT qualifications to handle technology challenges unique to an organization and its IT structure.
- **Perspective.** External IT experts often see things insiders miss, which helps full-timers break out of groupthink mode.
- **Pricing clarity.** Organizations pay a pre-determined price for a defined time or number of resources, which can be itemized as an operational expense rather than a capital expenditure.
- **Resource allocation.** Allows an organization's full-time IT staff to stay focused on core goals while temporary IT experts execute projects or plug expertise gaps.



## Cons:

- **Attrition and training.** Depending on the organization, industry, and IT staffing partner, you may need to devote time and money toward intensive training of temporary or contract employees. The more you spend training your external IT people, the greater the potential costs of attrition.
- **Dependence.** The allure of temps and contract workers can become an end in itself, discouraging companies from developing long-term, full-time talent. That can undermine strategic business goals.
- **Quality.** It might be more difficult to enforce quality standards with external IT resources provided by IT staffing partners who do not provide leadership or consultant oversight.

## 3. And finally, remember this is a business arrangement.

There are a number of factors to consider when an organization is choosing the right IT staffing provider. Of course, it's vital that the provider understand the industry, business needs, and how this partnership can help the organization meet their goals.

But there are also a number of differentiators that, we believe, helps guide organizations to the right provider. Location, for example: Does the provider have the appropriate resources available in the area? If not, are they available to travel?

Another factor to consider is if the provider has enough professionals with not only the skills, but also the experience level necessary to complete the assigned tasks or projects.

And finally, it's important to understand where the resources are from—are they employed directly by the provider or have they been subcontracted? This may not be a major factor for every situation, but a project may benefit from team members who have worked together before.

In addition, the day-to-day working relationship between the IT organization and a staffing provider can determine the success or failure of the overall business objective. Organizations should put in place the following to ensure success:

**Nail down the details.** An external IT staffing arrangement is most definitely a business arrangement and should always be accompanied with a contract between the two parties. The contract needs to cover the full range of tasks to be performed with a complete understanding of the economic relationship and its connection to the work performed.

**Develop a strategy.** Organizations should create a written plan describing what the partnership aims to accomplish. Define which kinds of work are best done by your internal teams and your external partners. Without a strategy, it's easy to meander from one project to the next and find your IT operations slowly spinning out of control.



**Quantify performance.** Determine what success will look like. Make sure each party agrees on the goals, metrics, and calculation methodologies. This has to be a nuanced process because it's not the organizations job to review the performance of individual IT resources. That responsibility usually belongs to the IT staffing partner.

**Assign with care.** A component of deciding on augmentation or project-based resources is ensuring the right people are doing the work most appropriate to their talents and the organizations business needs. An organization needs to ensure that their full-time team leaders understand the best ways to collaborate with the external IT experts.

## A CBTS staffing partnership in practice

When the Information Systems Committee at Dayton Public School District in Ohio was searching for a primary, experienced IT vendor to provide a unique and integrated solution for its diverse IT needs, CBTS was selected based on its understanding of the technology industry and extensive experience deploying talented IT professionals to drive the best results for its clients.

The CBTS team of nine full-time IT recruiters matched the school district's business needs with the appropriate IT talent from its more than 900 IT consultants on staff to provide help desk support, break/fix maintenance support, development of software applications and standards, hosted ERP platform support, project management, LAN/WAN solutions, training, and network monitoring and management. As with all of its staffing partnerships, CBTS assigned a project leader to ensure ongoing communication between the district's internal IT staff and the CBTS consultants. In addition, all CBTS consultants were supported by a CBTS Consultant Care Manager, who assumed all HR administration duties for the consultants.

Overall, this successful staffing partnership gave the school district access to highly-qualified IT professionals that utilize industry best practices without having to invest time and capital in IT resource management.

Source: "Ten Best Practices When Using External Staff Augmentation, Contractor or Temporary IT Resources," ©2013 Gartner Inc.  
<https://www.gartner.com/doc/2608117/best-practices-using-external-staff>



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