Seven questions your CIO wants answered.

Start the outsourcing discussion with your CIO using these questions as a guideline. They cover all the hot-button issues – from the changing role of IT and the challenges it brings, to the solutions needed to meet them.

1. **Are the expectations of the IT department's role really changing?**

   According to the Gartner report "Reimagining IT: The 2011 CIO Agenda," by 2015 the annual compensation of most Global 2000 CIOs will be determined by the new revenue IT generates each year. There's no denying it: business value is the new benchmark for success.

2. **How can I meet operational obligations, as well as new expectations for enabling revenue-generation?**

   You'll need to free up resources to focus on innovation and process improvements. With an outsourcing strategy, maintaining availability, resiliency and continuity of the network can be offloaded to a trusted partner. Your team can concentrate on projects that are business drivers, such as data analytics or social media initiatives.

3. **How can I sell outsourcing to my C-suite colleagues?**

   Frame the outsourcing argument by its business value, not just its budget requirements. Use metrics that are related to the end-user experience, a specific organizational goal, or a measurable return on investment.

4. **I want to outsource. Where do I start?**

   Outsourcing is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Evaluate the technical as well as the business needs of the organization and see where a managed service could be a fit, with consideration for:

   - **Finance**: Does it deliver cost savings, or valuable benefits that outweigh costs?
   - **Strategy**: Is it in line with or contribute to the organization's goals?

5. **What should be included in a cost comparison of in-house solutions versus outsourcing?**

   When evaluating your in-house solutions, ensure you look at the total cost of ownership, not just the price of a server. Include capital investment for housing, energy bills, maintenance, and staffing, plus any costs associated with future upgrades (included in an outsourcing service).

6. **How can I mitigate outsourcing risk?**

   Secure outsourcing begins with picking the right partner. One that knows the strengths and limitations of managed services, and can help design a selective outsourcing strategy that meets not only your needs, but also your risk comfort level.

7. **How does outsourcing change the way the IT department works?**

   The goal of outsourcing is to enable the IT department to move away from operations tasks, and focus on business-driving innovations. This requires team members with the ability to see the business value in IT initiatives, and who have a desire to embrace IT's changing role, contributing as integral players to business success and growth.