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# THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL.

10 vital tips on how to choose the right broadband supplier.



## → Beware of the hidden nasties.

It's easy to think that one broadband provider is like any other – after all, surely they're all just supplying a pipe connecting you to the Internet? But look a little closer, and you soon see that's not the case.

There are a whole host of providers out there, many of them offering cheap services designed for consumers. And as a small or medium-sized business, your needs are very different to the average residential customer. To avoid getting stuck with a service that doesn't make the grade, here are ten tips for finding a provider that will help make your business a smash hit.

### 1. Insist on your provider's undivided attention.

Small and medium sized businesses have very distinct requirements, and it's important that your broadband provider caters to those.

Telcos which supply a lot of residential customers may not offer services that are tailored to you. Choose a provider that focuses on your market and you'll get the features and care you need.

### 2. Demand the red carpet treatment.

When you're trying to run a business, the last thing you need is a service that grinds to a halt at peak times. Look for a provider that prioritises business traffic over its network, so that you get a good Quality of Service at all times, even when the connection is busy.

Choose a provider that can provide Assured Rates and therefore guarantee a minimum speed during the busy periods of the day, ensuring you always stay connected.

### 3. Remember all networks are not created equal.

The quality of your provider's network has a direct effect on the performance of your broadband.

A next generation, carrier-grade network designed specifically to carry business traffic will provide a much smoother, faster and more reliable service. Some consumer services, on the other hand, are transmitted over older, lower-grade networks which rely on interconnection with other providers' infrastructure, introducing more potential problem areas and points of failure.

### 4. Look for a pedigree you can trust.

The reputation and financial stability of your provider is also extremely important. It's worth considering a company with a strong track record in providing broadband, so you know they'll keep their promises and your service won't let you down at a crucial moment.

Asking whether your provider offers contract flexibility is a crucial point too. You might want a 12-month contract to see how things pan out, or perhaps you want a longer contract that offers a discount. Either way, you should have the choice.

### 5. Make sure you can pick and choose.

Every organisation has different needs, so it's important that your provider offers a range of broadband services to choose from. The features you might want to think about include upstream and downstream speeds, the number of users supported, the service levels, and the added extras on offer.

Your business won't ever stand still, so the services available to you shouldn't either. Make sure that your provider can offer upgrades or changes to your service as your requirements evolve and grow. It's also important that your provider is investing in new product development, so that you can always stay ahead of the competition with cutting-edge services.

### 6. Don't let anyone cramp your style.

Many providers cap their services or apply Fair Usage Policies, which means that if you upload or download a lot of data you could see your service restricted. Services that are genuinely business-grade should be unlimited, so make sure that your provider can offer a product to meet your needs.



## 7. Seek out the features that are right for you.

Broadband isn't just about speed – you also need additional features to help your business operate smoothly.

The best value services offer added extras as part of your broadband package, such as unlimited email addresses, free webspace and remote email access to help you communicate effectively. Look out for the protection that's available too, like spam filtering so your email server doesn't suffer under the weight of unsolicited mail.

## 8. Get real about speed.

With a new range of high-speed broadband services entering the market, many providers are offering speeds of up to 20Mbps or even 24Mbps. Be wary of companies offering this, since the number of customers that can receive these kinds of speeds is absolutely tiny. It's much more realistic to expect speeds of up to, say, 16Mbps.

Whatever speeds your provider is offering, remember that they are always advertised as 'up to' a certain rate because factors like your distance from the exchange, and the quality of the wiring in between, will affect the speed you actually receive.

## 9. Ask for service levels in black and white.

The level of performance that consumer or residential services offer simply isn't good enough for business. Your broadband service needs to have written Standards of Service covering its availability and fix times in the event of a fault.

If you're reliant on your broadband to service customers and make sales, for example, then a 24 hour fix time is going to be damaging to your business. Instead a four or five hour fix time is more suitable.



## 10. Find a provider who'll be there for you.

When you need help, there's nothing more frustrating than a provider which doesn't give you proper support. Make sure that your service includes technical assistance, by telephone as well as email, so that you can have questions answered and faults logged quickly. And when you call, you should be speaking to an expert so you get issues resolved efficiently and promptly.

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## All the details, without the devil.

### About Digital IP

Digital IP is a specialist in IT and Telecommunications, our portfolio of products and services embrace the very latest in Digital and IP technology allowing us to design and implement integrated voice and data solutions that are customised to the needs of your business. Digital IP has built an unrivalled reputation as a centre of excellence by providing high quality, reliable IT and Telecommunication products to all sectors of the business community. Our fully trained and accredited technical Staff and our own approved maintenance team closely support our customers across the country. Our range of clients is varied and diverse. We cater for the needs of large 'blue chip' companies and SMEs as well as clients in the public sector and elsewhere.

## What next?

To find out more about how to choose the right broadband service for your business, contact us on

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