

Hiring an All-In-One IT Partner



**TAYLORED
SYSTEMS**



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Too Many Vendors Spoil the Tech: Your IT Solution Needs a Solution

IT outsourcing is supposed to cut costs and save time, but it often creates just as many problems as it solves.

Picture this: It's 1989, and Kodak has just brokered a landmark deal with struggling technology company IBM to manage its IT functions. With the stroke of a pen, it's just become the first organization to adopt an IT outsourcing strategy, an innovative practice that is soon to become commonplace.

Now flash forward to the 1990s. As the digital revolution advanced, and computing and networking became more complicated, more and more companies realized it no longer made sense to manage their information technology through an internal department. It was too difficult to compete with companies that specialized in IT. Not to mention the resources and budget it took to hire, train and manage a whole IT department — especially when they didn't contribute directly to organizational goals. Meanwhile, computing advances and high-speed communication were ramping up the pace of commercial production; clients now expected deliverables to be completed even faster than before, which wasn't always feasible with an in-house team.

Enter IT outsourcing (ITO). ITO gave companies the chance to manage complicated technology without a dedicated internal team by delegating the work of technological disaster recovery, application hosting, data entry, customer support, and even software and application development to teams that specialized in each area. They could scale up and scale down as needed, without a ton of layoffs. It seemed like a no-brainer: If you didn't have the time and resources to train up a team of field experts, you could simply hire a vendor to handle your day-to-day technical operations and special projects.

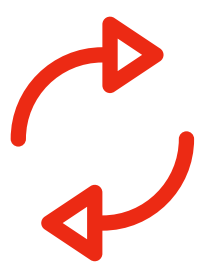
Except ITO didn't always deliver exactly as promised. Instead of receiving expert work at a discounted price, companies got burned by poor quality, bungled communication and the "blame game" — when vendors pointed fingers instead of resolving the issues at hand. Accountability was low, and multiple IT vendors complicated planning for future integrations and projects. ITO, once the height of technological vision, had degraded into a necessary evil, an inconvenience to be endured if you wanted to survive in the digital era.

Outsourcing to Multiple Vendors Breeds Complications

It's every company's nightmare: It's the big release day for your company's newest product, and your website goes down. Immediately, your inbox floods with angry customers who can't access your site. As soon as you catch the first whiff of trouble, you call your hosting service. They tell you the problem is with your code, so you call your off-site developer. "No, it's not our code," they say. "It's a problem with your eCommerce API." And on and on. Meanwhile, your help desk team has been sending customers all kinds of responses, and the Twitter backlash is severe. You finally get to the root of the issue and get it resolved, but your product just doesn't make the big splash you had hoped for.

Sound familiar? This kind of confusion happens all the time in modern businesses, the result of finger-pointing and miscommunication between multiple vendors. When your IT resources are split between seven different teams — none of which talk to each other or share a common vision or goal — it's easy for your products to get caught in the crosshairs.

Specifically, companies that outsource to multiple IT vendors experience the following kinds of common issues:



Continuity concerns. You talk to a different engineer every time you have an issue, which means you have to explain everything about your network to a new representative, at a moment when time is of the essence.



Poor quality. Applications aren't built to spec, text files and markup from data entry services is garbled at best, wireless networks lag when you host multiple teleconferences at the same time and your help desk responses don't make a ton of sense — these or a number of other quality issues may plague your outsourced products.



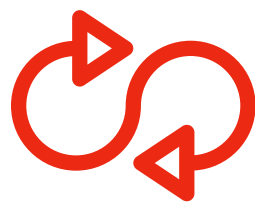
Trust Issues. Because you've never seen or spoken to this technician before, you have no idea whether or not you can trust his or her diagnosis and professional opinion. You wind up second-guessing a majority of what the engineer says.



Response time problems. You have to ping-pong between vendor A and vendor B before you can figure out what triggered an emergency event and who's responsible. Each time you go back and forth, you spend more valuable time catching up the next rep who answers your call.



Communication struggles. Your instructions are relayed from a vendor contact to his or her team members — none of whom have ever spoken directly to you. Since the workers aren't under your management, you've noticed that a lot of your direction seems to be lost in translation.



The blame game. No one wants to own up to an error, making it all the more difficult to pinpoint the source of a problem. It's hard to hold vendors accountable for their work, since they frequently point to other services you use when something goes wrong.

IT Outsourcing by the Numbers

If ITO is so awash with management issues, why do companies continue to use it? Well, the results still beat internal teams, all-and-all:



92% of organizations say they saved money when they outsourced their disaster recovery response, while 82% have found outsourced desktop support to be more cost-effective than hiring and training an in-house team. ([Computer Economics](#))

59% of companies say outsourcing helps them reduce costs. ([Deloitte](#))

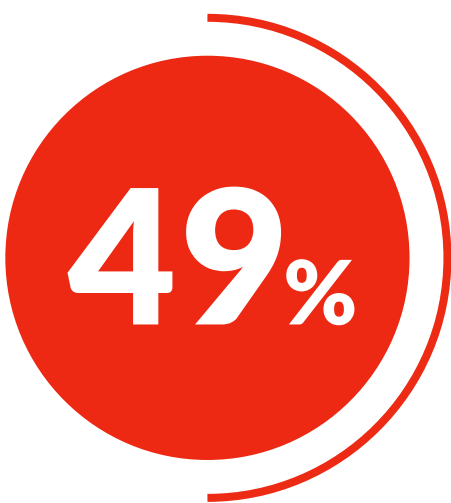
75% of internal IT departments regularly exceed their response time targets during an emergency event. ([Information Management](#))

34% of companies find that outsourcing gives them access to more knowledgeable IT personnel, while 31% say they use it to free up resources to devote toward company objectives. ([LinkedIn](#))

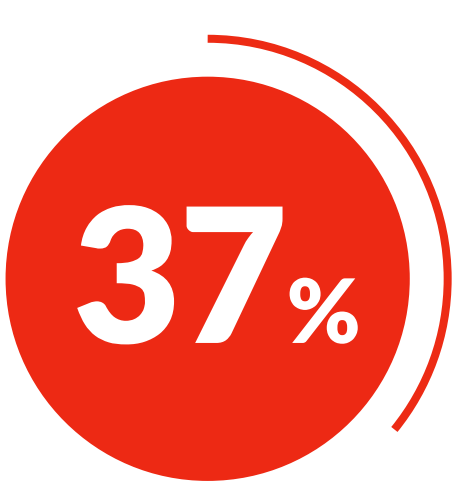
Still, there are definitely issues with conventional ITO management.



of companies that use outsourced vendors say they have difficulty with service integration and management. ([KPMG Institutes](#))



wish that IT vendors would strategize to avoid preventable issues before they occur. ([LinkedIn](#))



don't think their IT providers are all that innovative. ([LinkedIn](#))



All-In-One IT Partners: An Alternative to Traditional Outsourcing

ITO may provide significant cost savings, but outsourcing to multiple vendors puts the administrative burden squarely back on your team. An all-in-one IT management solution offers a happy medium between the two sides — and gives you a single point of contact for all your IT needs.

As you've probably gathered, most teams stick with conventional outsourcing because the capital gains and efficiency improvements vastly outweigh the administrative oversight and managerial burden of running an internal team. Still, it's safe to say there's room for the industry to improve. Especially since it means handing over the management of some of your company's most precious infrastructure and crucial operational equipment.

That's where all-in-one IT (AIO IT) partners come in. Think of it like ITO 2.0 — a middle ground between external outsourcing and internal IT. Having an AIO IT partner is like hiring your own team, except you don't have to worry about training, oversight and human resources.

One Vendor to Manage It All: The Virtual CIO

AIO centralizes your IT management to a single vendor: your "Virtual CIO," whose job it is to implement new IT projects and functionality; oversee daily operations; schedule routine maintenance and upgrades; respond to emergency events; and provide regular updates to keep you informed about your network performance, phone systems and more.

The Virtual CIO is sort of like your digital concierge, a company employee that’s not paid by your company. He or she can even manage other IT-adjacent services, such as your printing and copying provider or your data entry vendor. That way, your team can focus on its core objectives, so your company can concentrate on what you do best.

How a Virtual CIO Enhances Your Team

As your IT project manager, your Virtual CIO performs multiple functions that help your services and infrastructure operate more smoothly — from the first design planning sessions to the maintenance phase. Specifically, the Virtual CIO takes these tasks off your team members’ plates throughout the project lifecycle:



Project planning. After a sales team member assesses your needs, Virtual CIOs drill down into the minute details of a network redesign, server implementation, phone service setup and more.



Implementation. Virtual CIOs communicate between you and other IT team members to make sure project objectives are fulfilled in a timely manner.



Vendor Management. Virtual CIOs also collaborate with other external vendors to ensure that operations proceed without a hitch. If something does go wrong, they’ll even add tickets and oversee the resolution process so your vendors can get the technical information they need without any back-and-forth on your part.



Report checks. Once a project is implemented, Virtual CIOs conduct monthly meetings to review report data with you and keep you up to speed on your IT operations after they go into “maintenance mode.”



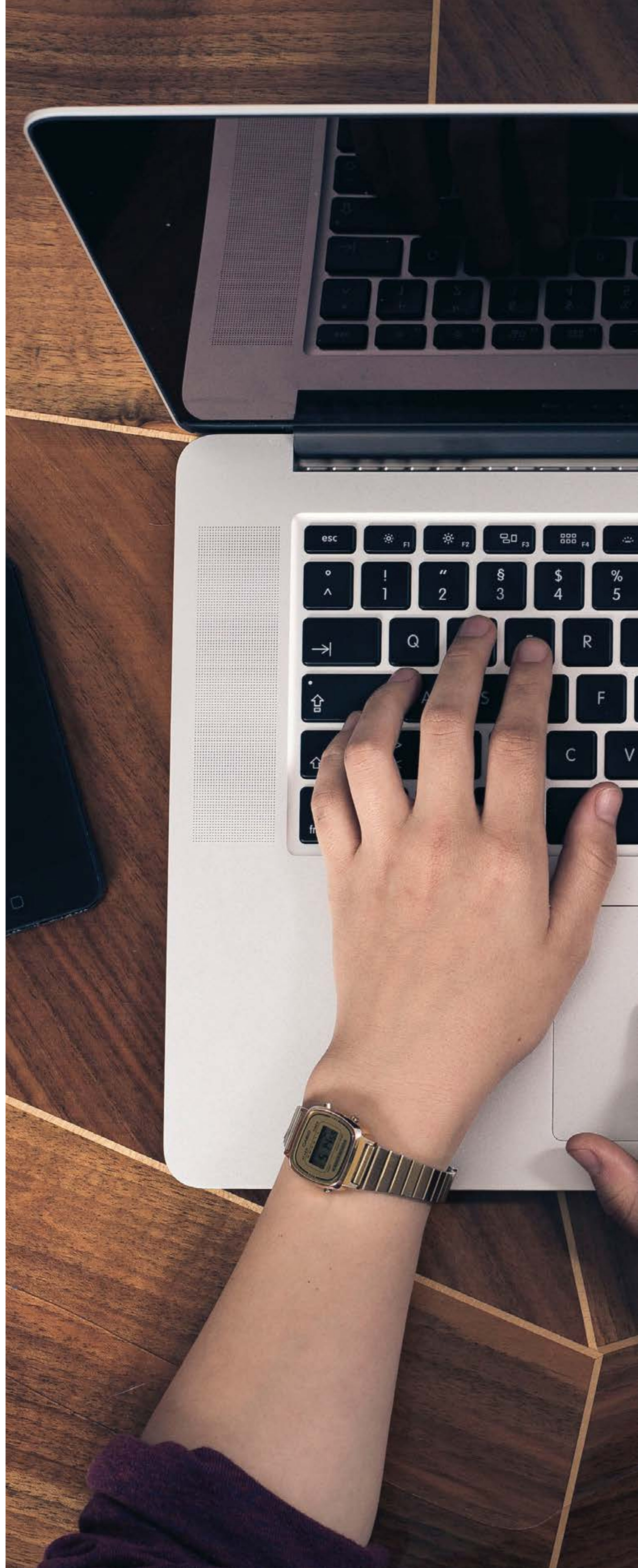
Future planning. Virtual CIOs stay with you for as long as you need them, creating proactive plans to resolve ongoing issues or integrate new features. Working with you as your company grows, they develop a six, twelve or twenty-four month roadmap — and alert you to new technology as it becomes available.

Automation: The Next Wave of IT Oversight

How is all this virtual IT management possible? It's all thanks to automation and advances in reporting technology. Highly sophisticated reporting allows sites to be remotely controlled, so you don't need someone on-site to visually inspect servers, devices, networks and connections.

Instead, AIO IT team members create reports to monitor your IT functioning. When a system reaches a report threshold, an alert is automatically sent out to notify technicians and engineers via email or text. Maybe it's a notification that a voicemail box is full, or a hard drive is reaching its limit.

Or maybe it's a more serious alarm: a full-scale outage or server failure. Technicians are then able to escalate the alert — and the problem is frequently resolved before you even realize that anything went wrong. No weekend interruptions to deal with a technical headache? That's worth its weight in gold!



In a Nutshell: Key Benefits of AIO IT

We know you're busy, so here's a brief summary of managed IT partnership benefits.



Consulting

All-in-one IT partners act as your technical advisors. They perform site tests, evaluate your company's business model and future needs, and look at your existing technology to formulate unique suggestions and future planning.



Innovation

AIO IT providers are technical specialists who are constantly developing new technology and perfecting IT management techniques. Partners keep you aware of new industry standards and products to help you stay competitive in your market.



Accountability

No more back and forth. With one central contact, you know exactly who to contact when something goes wrong. In fact, in most cases, your AIO IT partner is on the case before you even make the call.



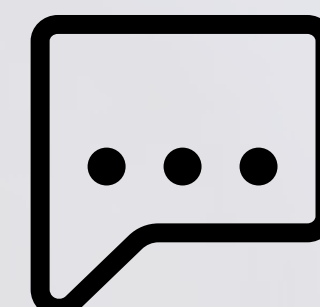
Consistency

Virtual CIOs are used to managing IT teams, so your direction comes from one unified voice — instead of playing a game of telephone.



Quality

AIO IT partners are experts in the information technology business, not tech chop shops that cut corners to get you a cutthroat price.



Clarity

You don't have to filter your conversations through a background of chatter. It's one voice, one contact, one message.



Cost Savings

Just like with standard outsourcing agreements, AIO IT provides clear-cut cost savings over internal IT.



Strategic Partnerships

As leaders in the IT field, partners have the ability to connect with other industry experts and leverage their technical expertise, manufacturing capabilities and products.



Putting It All Together: Hiring An AIO IT Partner

Avoid being burned by a bad company by asking your provider the right questions.

IT management may not be part of your organization's core focus, but that doesn't make it any less critical. Bad network design or server management can seriously cripple your ability to do business. And when you decide to hand off your IT needs to a single company, it's much more difficult for a new vendor to take over if something goes wrong. Additionally, your AIO IT partner often has access to your company's sensitive data and is frequently your first line of defense for cybersecurity and data recovery. To say they take on a tall order is a massive understatement.

You need to be confident that the provider you choose has the knowledge and management skills to serve as your ancillary IT department. That means doing your due diligence during the initial research and hiring phases. In particular, you'll want to ask the following questions from anyone you partner with — before you sign on the dotted line.

What's your emergency response process?

If there is a major IT incident or outage, you need assistance fast. Your provider should have an articulated process in place to handle any kind of high-priority event, and should be able to explain it to you clearly, so there's no question of how to proceed. There should be a team member assigned to resolve issues 24/7, with a phone number you can call, not just a ticketing system.

How busy are the team members assigned to my account?

Who works on your account — a dedicated team, or just anyone in the company with some free time? Is there a cap on the number of projects assigned to a team at once? Obviously, you don't want to go with a company whose resources are spread too thin.

Tell me about your monitoring and alerts system.

You need to know the kinds of events that set off an escalated response. Ideally, the company you choose should ask for your input when determining what's considered "priority." Good AIO IT partners also have some kind of automation in place to send high-level alerts automatically — you should definitely find out all about that process before you sign any SLAs.

How regularly is infrastructure reviewed, inspected and assessed?

Once your new network or cloud storage solution goes live and all the loose ends have been tied up, your service provider should provide formal progress reports and touch base with you on a regular basis to design solutions for future integrations, updates and event resolution.

How is data stored and backed up?

Disaster recovery can make or break a company. How will your new provider ensure that you have system backups in case of a major event? How regularly are backups created? You need to know that you won't lose any important information.

What sort of protections does your company use to keep sensitive data safe?

Company financial documents, policies, products and internal communications aren't meant for the public eye. But with more businesses transferring their day-to-day operations to the cloud, there's an elevated risk of hacking and leaks. You should feel confident that your AIO IT partner uses industry best practices to secure data. Ask them about their IT Security Policy — they should have a standard document with concrete requirements, and adhere to standards dictated by IT governing organizations. Additionally, your provider should be able to guarantee their confidentiality when external employees access secure data.

What are your areas of expertise?

Even all-in-one providers usually have a special concentration within the IT industry. Your partner's expertise should fit your needs. For instance, if your needs are mainly for application development or SaaS integration, you want to choose a company that has knowledge in that arena. If you need virtualization, data storage or wireless networks, you might want to go with someone else, and so forth.

Do you outsource or subcontract any part of your business?

It's not unusual for AIO IT providers to leverage strategic partnerships to fulfill any functions they can't cover themselves. However, a partnership is different from an outsourcing agreement. A good AIO IT partner will be forthcoming about the companies they partner with, and transparent about who does the actual work on each part of your projects. Ideally, they should have a local, on-site team who fulfills the bulk of their contractual obligations.

How long have you been in business?

It's not unusual to find IT startups who have only been in the business for a few years, which is usually not enough time to work out all the kinks in a process. You want a company that brings long-term experience and stability to the table. At the same time, you don't want to hire anyone who's stuck in a 2000s mindset. The partner you hire should be able to integrate leading technologies, like cloud services and virtualization.





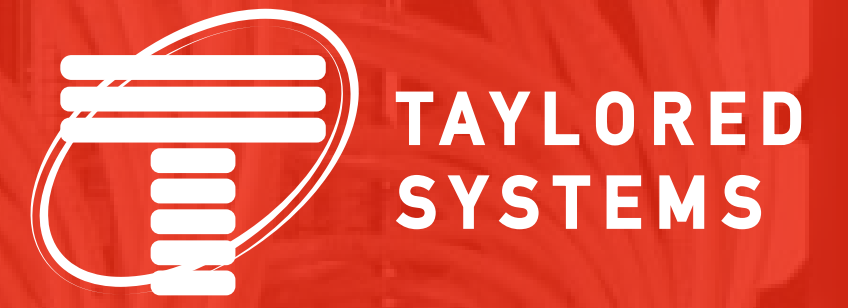
The Proof is in the Pudding: Taylored's Take on the AIO IT Model

At Taylored, we use our long-term industry experience and our own innovation team — coupled with strategic partnerships — to bring our clients dynamic, integrative IT management solutions.

Taylored Systems has been an industry leader for over 35 years, and in that time we've seen the technology sector go through its share of ups and downs. We pride ourselves on our longevity — but at the same time, we've managed to keep the technological zeitgeist from passing us by. We offer our clients the trust and personal touch of a small shop — without the lag in innovation or the ability to scale up to tackle large projects from bigger clients.



What Makes Taylored Different?



LONGEVITY

We opened our doors in 1982, when the internet as we know it was just a distant dream and networks mainly consisted of small LANs. We have a tried-and-true approach that's been working for years.

INDUSTRY RELEVANCE

Despite our long history, we still haven't lost our edge. Because of our ability to change with the times, Taylored Systems continues to provide innovative technical solutions and leading products to our clients to this day.

RELATIONSHIPS YOU CAN RELY ON

As a mid-size company, we're able to keep our client interactions personable and dependable. Our clients work day-to-day with the same technicians, developing long-term relationships rather than being transferred to a new representative every time there's an issue.

IN-HOUSE SOLUTIONS

Our clients deal almost exclusively with Taylored Systems employees, all of whom work locally on staff — we don't make you talk to a slew of outsourced teams who have little involvement in your regular operations.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Because of our reputation, we're able to partner with distinguished manufacturers and service providers like Toshiba and Zultys. We leverage our partners' expertise to get you access to the best names in the business.

TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE

Every technician you speak to at Taylored has been with the company for at least five years. They have the training and know-how to handle almost any situation that may arise.

THE "NO SHORTCUTS POLICY"

We don't believe in cutting corners for the sake of keeping our overhead low. We do our jobs to the letter, rather than taking the quickest or cheapest route.

FULL-SERVICE SATISFACTION

Nothing is "out of our scope." All of our projects are considered in progress until our clients sign off on the work. We aim to satisfy our clients at all levels, every step of the way.

Our Client Record Speaks for Itself

You don't have to take our word for it, though! Here's what our customers are saying about Taylored's All-in-One IT approach:

“

Noble Industries is a growing company. We knew we wanted a partner to help supplement our internal IT to keep us running efficiently. We partnered with Taylored Systems to help us outfit our building expansion with technology for today and the future. Taylored was a huge asset by strategically planning with us for all things touching the network — video surveillance, door access controls, IT and voice. They helped us migrate our legacy equipment as well as implement new technologies. Taylored is not a vendor, but an extension of our team — a virtual CIO.

Greg Parker
President
Noble Industries, Inc.

”

Taylorred Systems:

Where Technology Powers Business



**TAYLORED
SYSTEMS**

Taylorred Systems is an all-in-one Indiana-based technology and IT-services company headquartered in Noblesville. We have a reputation for combining leading edge technology with unparalleled customer support and have the honor of calling companies like Toshiba and Zultys strategic partners.

Taylorred Team Our Registered Communication Distribution Designers (RCDD) and our technical staff are trained by BICSI. Taylorred Systems utilizes our manufacturersto ensure the highest quality installation. By providing customized solutions and building long term relationships, we've grown to currently serve more than 2,500 customers throughout Indiana.

A reliable and cost effective communication system is critical to the success of business. That's why Taylorred Systems is structured to provide a vast array of products and services custom-designed to meet the specific requirements of each client. At Taylorred Systems, we're dedicated to delivering custom communication solutions that ensure maximum system performance and total customer satisfaction for years to come.

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