

SLA Reality Check

Most businesses think they have an SLA. Most don't. Use these four steps to check what your IT provider has actually committed to in writing.

1 IS IT REAL?

Start With the Signed Contract

☐ Find the commitment in writing:

- In the signed agreement, not the proposal
- Not implied by a website, deck, or demo
- Not a verbal "we're responsive"
- A clear clause, not buried fine print
- Signed, dated, and still current

☐ Confirm response times actually appear in the contract itself

☐ Check that it's the current agreement, not an expired one

☐ Note who is accountable for meeting it

☐ Define what the SLA must guarantee for:

- First response: guaranteed time by severity
- Until resolved: updates, escalation, and a miss policy

Know What You're Comparing Against

☐ Define what "good" means for you, including:

- Cost of an hour of downtime
- Systems you can't work without
- Your tolerance for uncertainty

☐ Identify your most critical systems

☐ Decide which issues count as urgent

☐ Write down what you expect before you ask

2 READ THE NUMBERS

Look for Specifics, Not Adjectives

Check the agreement for real, measurable commitments:

- ☐ Specific response times
- ☐ Priority by severity
- ☐ Defined coverage hours
- ☐ A written escalation path

Before you trust it:

- ☐ Reject vague language like "prompt," "reasonable," or "timely"

3 TEST ACCOUNTABILITY

Ask the Hard Questions

☐ Ask directly what happens if they miss a target

☐ Listen to the answer:

- Confidence signals real accountability
- A dodge signals none
- Priority order for competing issues

Confirm They Measure It

☐ Ask to see reporting on their SLA performance

☐ Confirm they can actually produce that report on request

4 MAKE THE CALL

Decide What You Have

- ☐ Confirm whether commitments are enforceable or just implied
- ☐ Flag any gaps between what you were told and what's written
- ☐ Rank the risks you're currently carrying
- ☐ Decide what you're no longer willing to accept
- ☐ Build a plan around:
 - Getting commitments in writing
 - Closing coverage gaps
 - Requiring regular reporting
- ☐ Decide whether to renegotiate or switch
- ☐ Set a date to review it again



Common Risks to Avoid

Trusting the Sales Pitch Over the Contract

What a salesperson promised isn't enforceable. Only what's written in the signed agreement counts.

Mistaking Adjectives for Commitments

"Prompt" and "reasonable" mean nothing you can hold them to. Insist on specific times.

Ignoring What Happens When They Miss

If there's no consequence for a missed target, it isn't a commitment. It's a hope.

Accepting an SLA You Can't See Measured

If they can't produce a performance report, they aren't tracking it. Don't take it on faith.



Next Steps

Not sure what your current agreement actually promises?

Decision Digital provides managed IT services in Atlanta. We'll read through your agreement with you and tell you straight where you stand, no jargon, no pressure.



Visit decisiondigital.com to learn more.

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