

“An Insiders Guide to Hiring an Honest, Competent, Responsive and Fairly Priced Computer Consultant”

Don't Trust Your Company's Critical Data and Operations To Just Anyone! This Business Advisory Guide Will Arm You With 21 Revealing Questions You Should Ask Any Computer Consultant Before Giving Them Access To Your Company's Network

Choosing the wrong computer consultant to support your network can not only be incredibly frustrating and expensive, but you could end up costing you in downtime, data loss, and expensive repair bills, not to mention the headaches and frustration!

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- ✓ The “dirty little secret” to the computer repair industry that most people don't know and will never be told by their IT guy (knowing this ALONE could save you from wasting tons of money and untold aggravation when outsourcing your computer support).
- ✓ 21 Revealing questions that will help you instantly spot an unethical or grossly incompetent computer repair/support technician in minutes.
- ✓ 4 Costly misconceptions most business owners have about computer maintenance and repair; one you will need to know BEFORE even picking up the phone.
- ✓ Viruses, worms, spyware, and hackers: what you need to know to protect yourself.
- ✓ 5 Mistakes to avoid when choosing a computer consultant.
- ✓ Why “cheap” or “lowest price” computer repair shops aren't the bargain they initially appear to be.
- ✓ The one surefire sign that you should run – not walk – away from a computer support firm.

Provided as an educational service by:

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From The Desk of: Fred Reck
President of InnoTek Computer Consulting

Dear Colleague,

Choosing a computer support company isn't easy. There are no shortages of horror stories about incompetent computer repair “gurus” bungling jobs and causing MORE problems as a result of their loose morals or gross incompetence. I'm sure if you talk to your own friends and colleagues you will get an ear-full of the unfortunate experiences they have encountered in this area.

Why is this? Because the computer repair and consulting industry, along with a lot of other industries, has its own share of incompetent or unethical businesses who will try to take advantage of trusting business owners who simply do not have the ability to determine whether or not they know what they are doing. Sometimes this is out of greed for your money; but more often it's simply because they don't have the skills and competency to do the job right, but won't tell you that up front. From misleading information, unqualified technicians, poor management and terrible customer service, we've seen it all...and we know they exist in abundance because we have had a number of customers come to us to clean up the disasters they have caused.

Buyer Beware: The Computer Repair and Consulting Industry Is NOT Regulated

Here's an embarrassing (and little-known) fact about my industry: it is not regulated like many other professional service industries which means ANYONE can claim they are a “computer repair expert.” **In fact, a lot of the businesses in this industry started because the owner was FIRED or laid off from their job and couldn't find work anywhere else. That means many of the so-called experts are useless and make the sleazy auto repair shops look like the pinnacle of virtue and competence.**

Automotive repair shops, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, realtors, dentists, doctors, accountants, etc. are heavily regulated to protect the consumer from receiving substandard work or getting ripped off. However, the computer industry is still highly unregulated and there aren't any laws in existence to protect the consumer – **which is why it's so important for you to arm yourself with the information contained in this report.**

Anyone who can hang out a shingle can promote themselves as a computer expert. Even if they are honestly *trying* to do a good job for you, their inexperience can cost you dearly in your network's speed and performance or in lost or corrupt data files. That is why we decided to offer this report. The information in this Guide is provided to help raise standards within the computer repair and support

industry, and to give YOU useful information to help you guard against the unethical or incompetence of some companies and technicians.

Dedicated to serving you,
Fred Reck

21 Questions You Should Ask Your Computer Consultant Before Hiring Them To Support Your Network

Customer Service:

Q1: Do they answer their phones live or do you always have to leave a voice mail and wait for someone to call you back?

Our Answer: We answer our phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and give all clients an emergency after hours number they may call if a problem arises, including weekends. Why? Because many of the CEOs and executives we support work outside normal hours and find it to be the most productive time they have. If they cannot access their computer network AND can't get hold of anyone to help them, it's incredibly frustrating.

Q2: Do they have a written, guaranteed response time to your calls?

Our Answer: We guarantee to have a technician working on a problem within 60 minutes or less of your call. This is written into every service agreement we give to our clients because it's standard procedure.

Q3: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek-speak), or do they come across arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?

Our Answer: Our technicians are trained to have the 'heart of a teacher' and will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms.

Q4: Do they consistently (and proactively) offer new ways to improve your network's performance, or do they wait until you have a problem to make recommendations?

Our Answer: We conduct quarterly review meetings with our clients to look for new ways to help improve their operations, lower costs, increase efficiencies and resolve any problems that may be arising. Our goal is help our clients be more profitable, efficient and competitive with these meetings.

Q5: Do they provide detailed invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?

Our Answer: We provide detailed invoices that show what work was done, why and when so you never have to guess what you are paying for. We also double check our invoices for accuracy before they are sent to you.

Q6: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Our Answer: Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn sure whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions insurance AND workers compensation – and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True Story: The Geek Squad was slapped with multi-million dollar lawsuits from customers for bad behavior of their technicians. In some cases, their techs were accessing, copying and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In

other cases they lost a client's laptop (and subsequently all the data on it) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line, make sure the company you are hiring has proper insurance to protect YOU.

Q7: Do they guarantee to complete projects on time and on budget?

Our Answer: All projects are fixed priced and guaranteed to be completed on time, in writing. This is important because many unethical or incompetent computer guys will only quote "time and materials," which gives them free reign to nickel and dime you as well as take as much time as needed on completing a project.

Maintenance Of Your Network:

Q8: Do they insist on remotely monitoring your network 24-7-356 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions and security patches up-to-date and PREVENT problems from turning into downtime, viruses, lost data and other issues?

Our Answer: Yes; our remote network monitoring system watches over your network to constantly look for developing problems, security issues and other problems so we can address them BEFORE they turn into bigger problems.

Q9: Do they provide you with a weekly report that shows all the updates, security patches, and status of every machine on your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?

Our Answer: Upon request every week our clients get a detailed report that shows an overall health score of their network and the updates to their antivirus, security settings, patches and other important network checks (like hard drive space, backups, speed and performance, etc.).

Q10: Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written, network documentation detailing what software licenses you own, critical passwords, user information, hardware inventory, etc., or are they the only person with the "keys to the kingdom?"

Our Answer: Upon request our clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost. We also perform a quarterly update on this material and make sure certain key people from your organization have this information and know how to use it, giving you complete control over your network.

Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their control as a means of job security, get rid of them (and we can help to make sure you don't suffer ANY ill effects). This is downright unethical and dangerous to your organization, so don't tolerate it!

Q11: Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Our Answer: Yes; and since we keep detailed network documentation (basically a blueprint of your computer network) and updates on every client's account, any of our technicians can pick up where another one has left off.

Q12: When they offer an "all-inclusive" support plan, is it TRULY all-inclusive, or are their "gotchas" hidden in the fine print?

Our Answer: Our "all-inclusive" support plan is just that – all inclusive. One of the more popular service plans offered by consulting firms today is an "all-inclusive" or "all-you-can-eat" managed services plan. These are actually a good thing because they'll save you a lot of money in the long run –

HOWEVER, make sure you REALLY understand what is and isn't included. Some things to consider are:

- Is phone/e-mail help desk included, or extra?
- What about network upgrades, moves, or adding/removing users?
- Is hardware and/or software included?
- What about 3rd party software support? (We recommend that this IS included).
- What are the costs/consequences of early cancellation?
- What if you aren't happy with their services? Do they offer a money-back guarantee?
- If the hardware and software is included, what happens if you cancel the contract?
- Is offsite backups included? To what degree?
- If you have a major disaster, is restoring your network included or extra?
- What about onsite support calls? Or support to remote offices?
- Are home PCs used to access the company's network after hours included or extra?

Backups And Disaster Recovery:

Q13: Do they INSIST on monitoring an offsite as well as an onsite backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated backup technology?

Our Answer: We do not allow our clients to use tape backups because they are incredibly unreliable. We make sure all of our clients have reliable, verified onsite and offsite backups.

Q14: Do they INSIST on doing periodical test restores of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?

Our Answer: We perform a monthly "fire drill" and perform a test restore from backup for our clients to make sure their data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency. After all, the WORST time to "test" a backup is when you desperately need it.

Q15: Do they insist on backing up your network BEFORE performing any type of project or upgrade?

Our Answer: We do; and that's simply as a precaution in case a hardware failure or software glitch causes a major problem.

Q16: If you were to experience a major disaster, do they have a written plan for how your data could be restored FAST and/or enable you to work from a remote location?

Our Answer: All clients receive a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage them to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office, but at a minimum, their network will be covered should something happen.

Technical Expertise And Support:

Q17: Is their help-desk US based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?

Our Answer: We provide our own in-house help desk and make sure the folks helping you are friendly and helpful. We consider this one of the most important aspects of customer service, plus we feel it's important to keeping your data secure.

Q18: Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in on-going training – or are they learning on your dime?

Our Answer: Our technicians try to keep the most up-to-date vendor certifications in all the software we support. Plus, our hiring process is so stringent, 97.5% of the technicians who apply don't make it through (guess who's hiring them?)

Q19: Do their technicians arrive on time and dress professionally?

Our Answer: Our technicians are true professionals that you would be proud to have in your office. They dress professionally, show up on time and if they cannot (for some odd, unforeseen reason) we always notify the client immediately. We believe these are minimum requirements for delivering a professional service.

Q20: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line of business applications?

Our Answer: We own the problems with all line of business applications for our clients. That doesn't mean we can fix faulty software – but we WILL be the liaison between you and your vendor to resolve problems you are having and make sure these applications work smoothly for you.

Q21: When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or do they say “that’s not our problem to fix?”

Our Answer: We feel WE should own the problem for our clients so they don't have to try and resolve any of these issues on their own – that's just plain old good service and something many computer guys won't do.

InnoTek is here to take care of your Business and Computer Network. If you don't feel that you are getting the service you and your company deserve please give us a call RIGHT NOW at 570-316-0385!!!