#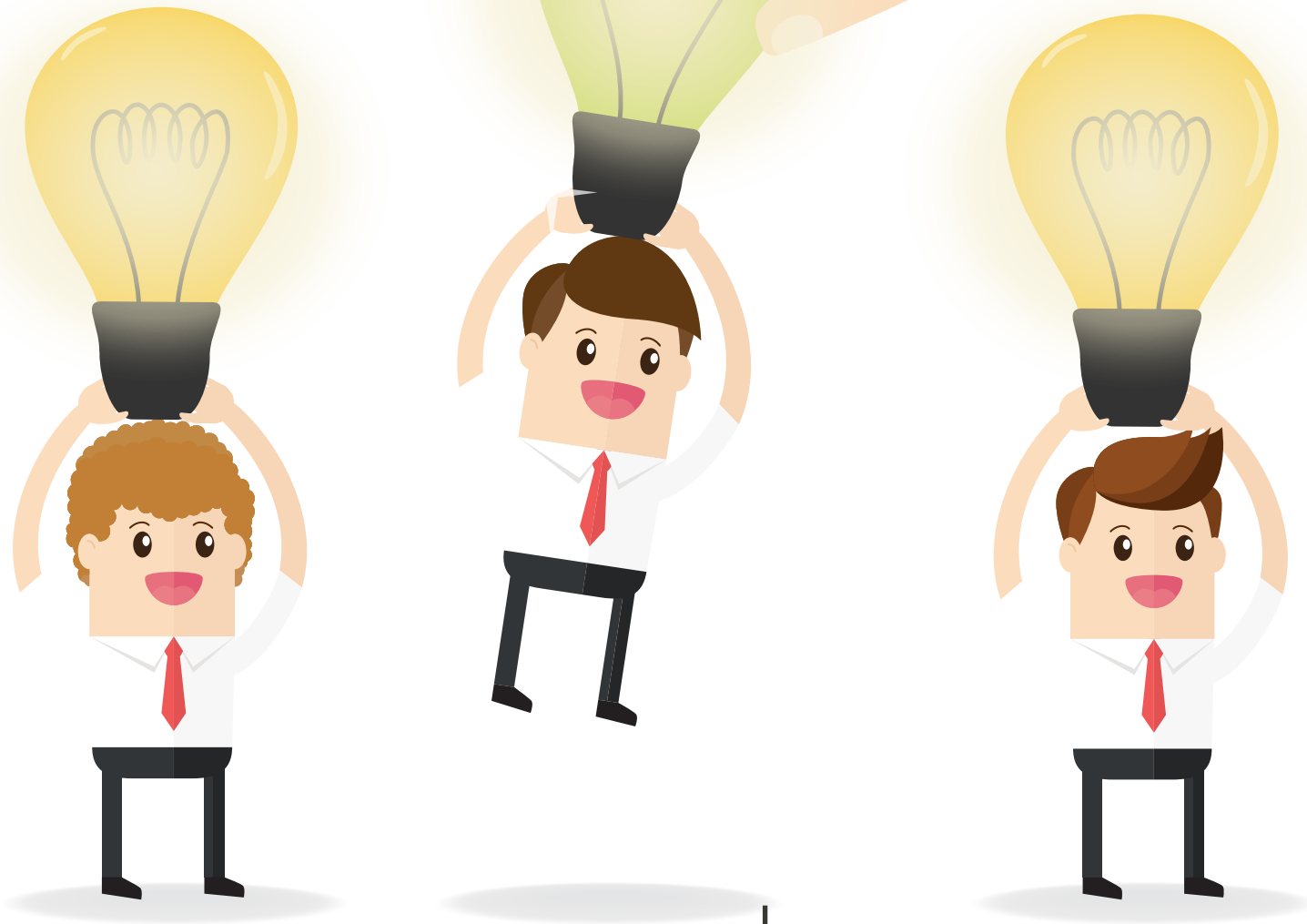 What Every Business Owner Should Know About Hiring An Honest, Competent, Responsive And Fairly Priced Computer Consultant

James Moore
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*Don't trust your company's critical business information 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 be incredibly frustrating and expensive, and 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 truth about the computer service 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 spot an unethical or incompetent computer repair/support technician.

- Costly misconceptions most business owners have about computer maintenance and repair.

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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 we know many business leaders work outside normal business hours and find it the most productive time they have. If you can't access your computer network AND can't reach anyone to help, 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 our standard procedure.

Q3: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand?

Our Answer: Our technicians are trained not to talk down to you and to take the time to answer your questions and explain everything in common, non technical 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 regular meetings with you to discuss your business and technology, looking for new ways to help improve your operations, lower costs, increase efficiencies and resolve any problems that may arise.

Q5: Do they provide 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 workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Our Answer: We are bonded and carry standard insurance policies to protect our employees and you. Here's something 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 sure whomever you hire is adequately insured – and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

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

Our Answer: All projects are fixed-price based on a clearly defined scope of work and guaranteed in writing. This is important because if you are only quoted "time and materials," then the vendor has free rein to nickel-and-dime you, as well as take as much time as they want on completing a project or even train their staff on your network. With the defined scope of work and fixed project price the expectation is we will put our best team members on the project to get it done efficiently and right the first time.

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Maintenance Of Your Network:

Q8: Do they remotely monitor your network 24-7-365 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions and security patches up-to-date and PREVENT problems from turning into downtime, lost data or other issues?

Our Answer: Our remote network monitoring system watches over your network, constantly looking 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 reports that show the status of your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?

Our Answer: Every month you will get detailed reports that show an overall health score for your network and the updates to your 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: We create and update detailed network information for your network at no additional cost. We also perform a quarterly update on this material and make sure 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 the only access to that information. While it should be safeguarded and kept confidential always remember it is in your information.

Q11: Do they have a team of 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) any of our technicians can pick up where another has left off.

Q12: When they offer an "all-inclusive" support plan, is it truly all-inclusive, or are there "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 computer 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/email help desk included or extra?
- What about adding/removing users or resetting passwords?
- What about third-party software support?
- What are the costs/consequences of early cancellation?
- What if you aren't happy with their services? Are you locked into a contract with them?
- If the hardware and software is included, what happens if you cancel the contract?
- Are off-site backups included? To what degree?
- If you have a major disaster, is restoring your network included or extra?
- What about on-site support calls? Or support to remote offices?
- Are home PCs used to access the company's network after hours included or extra?
- Is all their work remote, or do they work in your office on a regular basis?
- Do they have an upcharge for emergency support?
- How often can you expect to see your account manager?

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Backups And Disaster Recovery:

Q13: Do they actively monitor off-site backups as well as the onsite backup?

Our Answer: We pro-actively manage your backups to ensure they are working as expected. Data backup is arguably the most important task a business can do to protect themselves, but it is also the most overlooked or ignored process in the business. This is why James Moore takes ownership of the backup process and provides an industry standard solution as part of the monthly fee. We monitor the backups, and conduct monthly test restores to ensure your backups are working and your data is protected.

Q14: Do they insist on periodic test restores of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and can be restored in the event of a disaster?

Our Answer: We perform a monthly test restore from your backup. We log the results in a service ticket that you can review and we report and correct any deficiencies. 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 disaster recovery plan that explains how your data will be restored FAST and/or one that enables you to work from a remote location?

Our Answer: All clients receive a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage you to do a full disaster recovery plan for your business; but at a minimum, your network will be covered should

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something happen. We can help you develop a full plan.

Technical Expertise And Support:

Q17: Is their help desk U.S. based or outsourced to an overseas company?

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 for keeping your data secure.

Q18: Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in ongoing training, or are they training on your dime?

Our Answer: Our technicians are required to keep the most up-to-date vendor certifications in all the software we support. Being a part of an accounting firm has its advantages. For example, we are required to complete over 80 hours of Continuous Professional Education each year – although we often complete much more. While most of our competitors are not regulated and therefore only have one or two people with real training, all of our technicians are certified and James Moore is a Certified Microsoft Partner. Plus, our hiring progress is so stringent (background check, skills testing, problem resolution, etc.) most of the applicants who apply do not get offered a position.

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; if they cannot for some unforeseen reason, we will notify you immediately. We believe these are minimum requirements for delivering 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 system, 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 strongly that we own the problem for you so you don't have to try and resolve any of these issues on your own. That's just plain old good service.

James Moore has been providing technology solutions to businesses for more than 25 years. We understand that business technology is about business first and technology second. We also understand that time is money and we have built a reputation for delivering proven solutions in a timely manner.

James Moore is a Microsoft Certified Partner. We are a full service IT provider offering solutions such as break fix support, special projects and managed IT services. Managed IT Services allows businesses to outsource some or all of their day-to-day IT operations and includes services such as:

- 24x7x365 Critical Event Monitoring
- Onsite and remote service
- Cloud solutions
- Business technology planning
- Business information backup and disaster recovery
- Threat management and protection

No matter what your business technology needs are, we can help. Our team of trustworthy, trained and experienced professionals can meet your needs. You focus on running your business, let us focus on your technology.

Contact us today at 800-455-5676 to see how our Technology Solutions Consulting team can help you.

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