

WARNING: Don't Call Anyone For Computer Support Until You Read This.....

7 Critical Characteristics You Should Demand From Your IT Consultant

- 1. Don't let your IT Consultant cost you money by trying to Save you Money.** Many technicians are so focused on getting the job done for the least amount possible; they end up costing you big time in lost productivity or simply throwing good money after bad.
 - No long-term IT strategy is a killer.
 - Using home-level equipment in a business environment is cheaper in the short run but always more expensive in the end.
 - Always rushing and taking shortcuts, failing to document or simply jury-rigging a short term solution.
 - Failing to document the network or the work done. This is especially important if there are work arounds involved.
 - Opening your organization to increased business risk or worse to litigation, possibly from improper software licensing.
 - Failing to recommend usage policies such as acceptable email, internet, and network usage.

We all know you need to spend money to make money, and there are ways to save money on IT support. However, the best way to save money is by being proactive and planning to save.
- 2. Demand they have partnerships and strategic alliances with your hardware and software manufacturers.** A good Technician needs backup and support. There is no possible way they can know it all. They absolutely can not do their jobs effectively without access to spare parts, software upgrades and patches. They may not be able to provide current more efficient technology due to lack of access, training and level of comfort with the new product. Make sure they are, at a minimum, Certified Microsoft Partners and have their industry certifications such as A+ and MCSE.
- 3. Don't pay your IT Consultant to learn on your system.** You don't want to be one of their biggest clients. Any good technician will stand back and say "I've never seen that one before" but they will know who to call and get you back up and running quickly. If they are interested in the problem, they will research it

afterwards, and not on your nickel. Too often techs end up having so much fun learning new things on your system that they forget why they were called in the first place.

4. **Watch out for the one-man-band!** You can not be an effective Network Support Technician if you are a single practitioner. How does one person take vacations, maintain training, take sick leave, and handle emergencies? Their skill sets drop every day as they do not have other technicians to bounce ideas off of or discuss new products. Sure you can speak with other techs over the internet, but in reality, it does not work. Your system requires a primary and backup technician. It requires a primary who is being monitored and coached and a backup who has the knowledge of your system and skill sets to step into the primary's place if required.
5. **Sloppy workmanship seems to be easy to hide in IT Consulting.** There are industry standard implementations and configurations. "I don't know what happened, but it seems to be working now" should make you nervous. Often techs are in a rush and do not correctly diagnose the core problem and end up putting a Band-Aid on a symptom. This leads to non typical configurations, nonexistent documentation, lack of standardization and lack of long term planning. If every workstation is different then every time something goes wrong they have to fix a different puzzle? This always ends up with unscheduled emergency calls and inevitably increases support costs. Jury-rigged systems are much less reliable and have reduced functionality. All this dramatically increases your business risk
6. **They must understand the importance of IT to your organization and understand the potential risks they may be putting your business in.** Whether we like it or not, our IT systems are often mission critical to our business. It is so important that a Technician understands business risk in operating an IT system. This risk must be monitored and managed. Regular assessment, management, minimization, and briefing Management is required. No one wants to find out they have an IT problem through a lawyer or a banker.
7. **You only see the tech when there is a problem.** Proper IT management is a proactive process. If you are calling your tech to come in frequently, most likely you have a larger IT issue. Start by insisting on an organized proactive preventive maintenance program. Regular system monitoring can catch problems before they become nightmares helping to better manage your business risk. In this case you need to spend money to save money. Having an IT Strategy and budget for your organization is a good place to start.

In the end, what you are after is peace of mind. Make sure your IT Consultant can deliver it.

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