

21 Questions You Should Ask Any Computer Consultant **SPECIAL REPORT**

James Pearson
President
The Computer Center



©2017 Computer Center, Inc. All rights reserved

“What Every Business Owner Must Know About 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 could end up costing you in downtime, data loss, and expensive repair bills, not to mention 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.
- ✓ 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:

James Pearson, President
The Computer Center



Dear Fellow Small Business Owner,

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,

About The Author

With over 25 years of experience in the computer industry, James purchased The Computer Center from its founder Paul Braun after being an employee for 10 years. His background has included computer sales, repair and classroom instruction. He is a Microsoft Certified Professional. James holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from Beloit College. He remains a resident of Janesville, with his wife and two daughters.

Company History

The Computer Center was founded in 1983 by Paul Braun in order to provide computer training to job seekers and employees of businesses in Rock County and the surrounding areas. With 4 locations in Southern Wisconsin, the company successfully educated its students on then new technologies such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and DOS. In the mid-90's, The Computer Center began shifting its focus to servicing small businesses in the area. Successfully adapting to the changing industry, The Computer Center transitioned to a single location and a new focus of providing quality IT support for businesses. This focus and service continues today.

Paul Braun retired in 2009 shortly after James Pearson, then a 10 year employee, purchased the business. The Computer Center has grown each year since with record sales and additional staff. The focus of providing exceptional IT support for businesses in and around the Rock River Valley in Southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois still drives the company.

The TCC Difference

There are a lot of things we do differently here at TCC that really set us apart from our peers. You have lots of choices when it comes to handling your IT needs and we know it. That's why we work very hard to stand out from our competitors.

- ✓ We speak business, not geek
- ✓ We have a Dedicated Help Desk
- ✓ Your own personal support team
- ✓ An entire IT department at your disposal
- ✓ Guaranteed service

The TCC Values Statement

Our driving goal is to provide truly outstanding, absolutely amazing, customer service – every ticket, every time.

But, don't take our word for it, see what others have to say about us:

<http://computer-center.com/about-us/>

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 emergency after hours' numbers 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 service satisfaction guarantee?

Our Answer: We guarantee to have a technician working on a problem as quickly as possible. This is written into every service agreement we give to our clients because it's standard procedure. Quite simply, we know that if we don't respond in a timely fashion to your issues, eventually you'll look somewhere else.

Further, if you are ever dissatisfied with any service for ANY reason, call and let us know. We will work with you to correct or repeat the service at no additional charge, or arrange for another technician to repeat the service at no additional charge.

If this still does not resolve the issue to your complete satisfaction, we will refund 100% of the money you've paid us. All we ask is that you notify us within 72 hours of the unsatisfactory service and before another service begins.

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 as 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. The heart of our business is that we are in the customer service business first and foremost. Our long tradition of teaching our clients continues to this day.

Handled in a very professional manner, issue was resolved immediately. [I] was asked appropriate questions and able to understand what was needed of me on my end to assist with troubleshooting.

Brenda M.
Evansville Manor

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

Our Answer: Our Business and Technology Assessments, Quarterly Network Maintenance, and meetings with our clients help us find ways to help improve their operations, lower costs, increase efficiencies and resolve any problems that may be arising. Our goal is to 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.

Further, our engineers are required to document their work so that if another engineer needs to step in, they don't have to waste time starting from scratch and repeating troubleshooting steps.

Q6: Is their Help Desk really dedicated?

Our Answer: We've worked very hard to create the premiere, truly dedicated Help Desk in the area. Our Help Desk, staffed by our very own technicians and never outsourced, was built from the ground up to provide fast resolutions to your problems. Many of our competitors claim to have a Help Desk, but their technicians are not truly assigned to the Help Desk, they just "catch calls" if they are in the office. Our technicians are actually assigned to the Help Desk each day. We have a dedicated Dispatcher whose job is to make sure your calls are properly routed, escalated and handled. Further, we've invested thousands of dollars and hours in training our staff, creating standardized procedures, and selecting the industry-best software. All this is done so that we can provide you with a single, efficient point of contact and communication for the fastest resolution to your issues.

Excellent customer service and faster than expected turn around! Life saver in fixing my laptop!

Jason Yost
Fetch Graphics

Maintenance of Your Network:

Q7: How many layers of security do they offer in order to protect your network and you and your customers' data from hackers and identity thieves?

Our Answer: We recommend 6 core layers of security for all our clients. Your data is one of your most important assets and small businesses are common targets for cyber criminals. You are seen as “easy prey.” Most IT companies will only touch on the most common layer, antivirus software, and might even recommend email spam filtering. However, if all you have are these two layers, then you’re leaving the other 4 layers exposed.

We take security very seriously. For example, our antivirus program alone actually adds 2 layers of security. But, we also monitor (with a real live human being in our office) our clients' antivirus software and are alerted of potential threats that we then follow up on, personally.

Q8: Do they believe that “set-it-and-forget-it” is good enough for your business? So often we run into companies who are paying their IT guys for “network monitoring” each month. And yet, we find that all this means is that the IT company has installed some software to do all this for them. I’m here to tell you that, after years of working with and monitoring our banks (and having to answer to the FDIC), we’ve learned that you simply can’t install a piece of software and then ignore it. If that were the case, you wouldn’t need an IT guy at all!

We know that software, even the kind meant to monitor your network, can fail and produce incorrect reports. Further, if a live, physical person, is not checking on it, these kinds of issues can go unnoticed, and uncorrected, for weeks or even months!

This is true of monitoring software, patch management software, anti-virus software, and even your critical backups. Every week we come across people that call us to resolve an issue, only to find out that their backup, which their current IT guy was charging them for and supposed to be watching, had failed days ago!

Instead, we take a different approach. Whether it’s our monitored backup solution, antivirus, or monitoring products, we are actually watching these. Plus, we document, every day, what we found, so that you can see what we have done to make sure that things are truly running smoothly.

It was nice to know you were already on top of it when we called and it came up quickly. Thanks Colleen Whaley Settlers Bank

Q9: Do they work to proactively stabilize and improve your network, or wait for expensive issues to crop up and then go into “emergency mode?”

Our Answer: Our proactive monitoring services, truly flat-fee IT support, and regular **Business and Technology Assessments** help us to stop network “fires” before they can start. Our philosophy is that smoke detectors are less expensive than fire engines. That means that we constantly work with you to create a stable, trouble-free network that is both cost effective and efficient.

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 pride ourselves on having some of the best documentation procedures in the industry. We fully document our client’s networks, including pictures. Further, we are constantly updating this documentation as we work with you. This documentation is yours and an updated copy can be provided to you at any time, including all passwords, IP addresses, domain names and more.

Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you have the suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this information 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. We have a formal training session with our engineers whenever we onboard a new client. This makes sure that you will always have an entire IT TEAM at your disposal, not just “a guy.”

Yes, its network upgrade time at Genesis Counseling Services. Time to get rid of the dirt road and install top of the line interstate highway! With the help of Michael Arnold from The Computer Center we are now up to speed and state of the art. A big thanks to them and a hats off for a fantastic job well done! Michael professionally custom built our server, transferred our data, upgraded our network, internet, essentially all of our technology. All while putting up with my questions and calls. Thanks much guys!

James Burns

Genesis Counseling Services

Q12: Do they have a support solution designed around YOUR business needs, not theirs?

Our Answer: We know that every business has different needs, at different points in their lifecycle. We have support plans designed to meet those needs within your budget. Our

services are - and the way we support your network - carefully selected based on what YOU need and can afford.

One of the keys to making sure that our solution is properly aligned with your business goals is our thorough **Business and Technology Assessment**. Our BTA process is a deep dive into your business, your culture, and how YOU work. All new clients are required to go through this process before we work with them. The **Business and Technology Assessment** helps us truly understand YOU and YOUR business, before we even begin to offer a solution. Once this process is completed, we then sit down to design a solution that will meet your business goals.

“[The Computer Center] spent a large amount of time before we ever sat down at a meeting analyzing and assessing our company needs. There was time spent with all of our office personnel as well as all the site managers so the solutions they proposed were designed to meet our needs based upon the information they gathered in the time spent with our people... This time spent allowed [The Computer Center] to put together a program that met our needs.”

Tim Buchheit
Farm City Elevator

Q13: 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.

We hope we never need to recover files from our nightly back-ups, but if we must, we can be confident having these illustrated, step by step instructions that even a novice computer user can follow. Karen did a great job providing us what we needed to have on hand for an emergency situation!

Scott Frazer
Advanced Engineered Systems

Technical Expertise and Support:

Q14: Is their help-desk U.S. 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.

Tom’s follow-up on this issue was very prompt and resolved the issue on the first shot.

Q15: Is their flat-fee service, truly flat-fee?

Our Answer: Many IT companies offer some sort of “flat-fee” or monthly service contract. Honestly, these types of contracts can truly put YOUR interests ahead of the IT company’s. You see, with any type of flat-fee agreement, the IT company is forced to work efficiently in order to be profitable. It works much like an insurance plan. The more “claims” that are made against an insurance policy, the less profitable the policy is.

However, beware! Not all flat-fee services are the same! As a matter of fact, any company that comes in and can quote you a flat-per person, or per-device price, has not spent enough time learning about your company, and cannot possibly be providing you great service. You see, many of my peers rely on “network monitoring” software that they set up, and then forget. However, as I’ve mentioned before, even though they can give you a ridiculously low price, there’s no value in the service, because they aren’t proactively doing the work that should be done. And, as I’ve mentioned, software fails.

Also, most flat-fee programs may seem like a deal at first because they are so low. But, when you look deeper into the contract, the company actually excludes more things than they include. It’s common for a flat-fee monthly contract to only include remote support between 8 and 5. What tends to happen in very restrictive agreements like this is that you start getting nicked-and-dimed with extras. Licenses, on site visits, repairs, parts, all start to add up.

A truly trustworthy IT company that has YOUR best interest in mind, will spend a large amount of time up front getting to know you, and your company (like we do in our **Business and Technology Assessment**) before giving you a price. Further, that flat-fee price should have very, very few “extras”.

Simply by having one consultation with The Computer Center I have a clear understanding of how I can adjust my office technology use and equipment to increase my business performance. Certainly it is a great value to have an expert IT person whenever I need them without having one on staff.

Jim Spude
Fish Window Cleaning

Q16: 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.

Unlike the cable company, and so many service providers, we are able to schedule exact times with our clients, not “windows”. This means that we are there, working on your issue (even if it’s remotely), right when we say we will. We know your time is valuable and, in business time is money. We combine our robust scheduling software with a dedicated dispatcher to make sure your tickets are handled in a timely fashion.

Q17: 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. All of our businesses rely on some sort of key program. Our documentation and training process helps us efficiently work with other vendors to resolve even the toughest problems. We are accustomed to working with other vendors and know that, because we can speak geek with them, it’s more efficient for us to call that vendor and work to resolve any issues than it is to have you call them and try and muddle your way through a problem.

Q18: 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.

I had problems accessing my email after switching to U-Verse from AT&T. I called AT&T and they were unable to help me. One call to The Computer Center and it was taken care of. They never seem to have a problem that they can't solve. I can't say enough of the help they offer.

Char Nieuwenhuis
Nieuwenhuis Bros., Inc.

Q19: Do they have experience with HIPAA and the FDIC and PCI compliance?

Our Answer: We do. Many of our clients are banks and we are accustomed to dealing with, and defending our networks, to the FDIC. Further, we also deal with a variety of customers in the medical field. This means that we are no strangers to HIPAA and privacy laws. As a matter of fact, all of our staff has signed privacy and non-disclosure agreements to further protect you, your patients’ and clients’ confidential information. Further, we regularly work with our client’s to ensure that their businesses are PCI compliant so they can accept credit cards and protect their customers’ sensitive data.

Q20: Do they have a stringent hiring processes and standards?

Our Answer: Yes. Because of the confidential nature of our clients’ data, we do background checks on all new hires that include criminal checks. Your data and privacy are as important to us as they are to you. That’s why we are very selective about who we hire.

Additional Benefits

Q21: What other value do they add to their services?

Our Answer: Lots! We don't stop at providing you with just IT support. Our clients receive extra benefits all the time. These include our weekly Tuesday Tidbits newsletter, full of helpful computer tips and tricks; Printed monthly newsletter; Educational Lunch and Learn sessions; our Technology Open House; access to an entire team of professionals (not just "a guy"), and more.

The Computer Center Team is amazing! They are always so positive, sounds like they have a smile on their face when they answer the phone, courteous and right on the money when "fixing" our issues-no matter how small. I can't say enough of how well they do the job. I wish more companies we work with are as great as them.

Kim Boyd
Boyd Consulting Group

The 4 Most Costly Misconceptions About Computer Maintenance and Repair

Misconception #1: My computer network doesn't need regular monitoring and maintenance.

This is probably one of the biggest and costliest misconceptions that business owners have. Usually this is because they've been fortunate enough to have never encountered a major disaster; but that's similar to someone thinking they don't need to wear a seat belt when driving a car because they've never had an accident.

Computer networks are complex and dynamic systems that need regular updates and maintenance to stay up, running fast and problem-free. In fact, it's surprising how fast a brand-new PC will slow down after a few weeks of use without proper updates and maintenance. Here are just a FEW of the critical updates that need to be done on a weekly – if not daily – basis:

- Security patches applied – with NEW viruses and hacker attacks cropping up DAILY, this is a CRITICAL part of maintaining your network
- Antivirus updates and monitoring
- Firewall updates and monitoring
- Backup monitoring and test restores
- Spam-filter installation and updates
- Spyware detection and removal
- Monitoring disk space on workstations and servers
- Monitoring hardware for signs of failure
- Optimizing systems for maximum speed
- Internet speed monitoring

Your computer network is just like a car: if you don't change the oil, replace the filter, rotate the tires, flush the transmission and perform other regular maintenance on your car, it will eventually break down and cost you FAR MORE to repair than the cost of the basic maintenance – and a car is far simpler than a computer network!

If your computer support tech does not insist on some type of regular, monitoring and maintenance of your network, then DO NOT HIRE THEM. Lack of system maintenance is the NUMBER ONE reason most people end up losing valuable files and incurring heavy computer repair bills. If your technician isn't offering you these services, you need to find someone else to support your computer or network for two reasons:

1. Either they don't know enough to make this recommendation, which is a sure sign they are horribly inexperienced, OR
2. They recognize that they are profiting from your computer problems and don't want to recommend steps toward preventing you from needing their help on an ongoing basis. After all, they'll get paid MORE to remove a virus than to make sure your system is patched, updated and secured (which can be done quickly and inexpensively with good monitoring).

Either reason is a good one to get as far away from that person as possible!

Misconception #2: My nephew/neighbor's kid/brother-in-law/office manager knows this computer stuff and can take care of our computers.

Most people look for a part-time "guru" for one reason: to save a few bucks. But this often comes back to haunt them. We frequently get calls from business owners who desperately need our help to get them back up and running or to clean up a mess that was caused by an inexperienced neighbor, friend or relative who was just trying to help.

If the person you have working on your machine does not do computer repair and support for a living, there is a good chance they won't have the knowledge or experience to truly help you – they are a hobbyist at best. And do you really want a part-time, inexperienced person responsible for handling something as important as your data and computer network? As with everything in life, you get what you pay for. That's not to say you need to go broke to find a great technician, but you shouldn't be choosing someone based on price alone.

Many small businesses rely on what I call the "go-to-guy" for their technical support. This is a staff member that knows a little about computers. Often times this is an office manager or sales person. At first, this usually works out fine. However, as your organization grows, so do the computer issues. Eventually what you'll find is that your sales person is no longer spending time selling. This, of course costs you money! Not only is this person working in a field that is not their primary responsibility, increasing the chance that they will get in over their head, or do serious damage to your network, but every minute spent also reduces the profitability and revenue from your company. When this occurs, it's so much smarter, efficient, and cost-effective to have a professional tackle the IT issues for you.

Misconception #3: All computer technicians are created equal. Your best option will be the one who offers the lowest price.

As we stated a moment ago, you get what you pay for. A cheap price usually means a cheap job. Really good technicians do NOT work cheap because they are in high demand, just like every other professional service category. The only technicians that will work cheap are those who are just starting, and they are grossly inexperienced.

Some shops will hire college kids or newbie technicians because they will work for next to nothing to gain experience, OR they allow interns to support your network because they don't have to pay them at all – but what you don't realize is that an inexperienced technician like this can end up costing more because:

1. They improperly diagnose problems, which means you're paying them to fix the WRONG thing and they STILL won't resolve your problem. Case in point: A few years ago a TV reporter went undercover to 8 computer repair shops in LA with a perfectly working PC, but simply disconnected a cable in the back (a fix that the AVERAGE computer tech would have caught in minutes with a visual inspection). Several shops improperly diagnosed the problem and wanted to charge them anywhere from \$59 to over \$275 to fix it!
2. They could take 3 to 5 times as long to do the same repair an experienced technician could fix quickly. Again, you're paying for those extra hours.
3. They could do MORE damage, costing you more money and downtime.

With your client data, accounting records, e-mail and other critical data at stake, do you REALLY want the lowest-priced shop working on your machine?

We take the view that most people want value for their money and simply want the job done right. You will find that we are not the cheapest, but we don't apologize for that. As the owner, I decided a long time ago that I would rather explain our higher rates ONE TIME than make excuses for POOR SERVICE forever. That said, we're not the most expensive either. We simply feel that we should offer a good service at a fair price. That's why we have been able to stay in business for over 30 years and have hundreds of customers who've been with us for 5, 10, 15, even 20 years or more.

Misconception #4: An honest computer support company should be able to give you a quote over the phone.

I wish this were true, but it isn't. Just like a good doctor, an honest and professional technician will need to diagnose your network before they can quote any price over the phone; consider the example above where all that was needed was to plug in a simple cable. If

someone brought that to us, we would just plug it back in and not charge them; but without SEEING the machine, we could have never diagnosed that over the phone.

I'll return again to the analogy of the Doctor's office or Car Mechanic that, before being able to tell you how much something is going to cost, needs to perform his own diagnostics. Further, while you may have a good idea of what the issue is, a trustworthy IT company will still demand that they perform their own set of diagnostics, just like a Doctor would not take a patient's "word for it" about the true nature of an illness.

Even if you called around, and got 5 different hourly-rate quotes, they could range from \$40.00 to \$150.00 per hour in our area. The lowest price company may not be the quickest, most skilled, or most efficient at solving your issue. Always demand that your support company perform their own diagnostics of your situation before giving you even an estimate about resolving your issue.

5 More Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Computer Consultant

1. **Choosing a computer consultant based on a single phone call.** We recommend you invite them into your office and ask them for a written proposal. Be clear on what your expectations are and what type of problems you want them to resolve. As stated a moment ago, a competent professional should offer to do an audit of your network to diagnose your system BEFORE quoting you anything. After all, would you take a doctor's word that you need surgery if they hadn't done x-rays or other diagnostics? Of course not! Prescription without diagnosis is malpractice.

2. **Choosing a computer consultant that doesn't have a written money-back guarantee.** In our view, a good consulting firm should be accountable for their services and for fixing things RIGHT. If you aren't pleased with a job that was done, they should (at a minimum) make it right for free; and if they simply cannot resolve an issue to YOUR satisfaction, you shouldn't get stuck with the bill.

Plus, the fact that they stand behind their work with a money-back guarantee shows they have confidence in themselves to make you a happy client. And don't fall for the "We don't offer one because people will take advantage of us" routine. In our experience, MOST people just want an honest service at a reasonable price. If you give them that, they are happy to pay. Are there a few unethical folks out there? Of course, but they are the minority, and we would rather bite

the bullet on the very few dishonest folks so we can gain the trust and confidence of the majority of clients, who just want their problems fixed fast and fixed right.

3. **Choosing a computer consultant without speaking to several of their current clients.**

Check their references! Don't just take the sales guy's word that they are good – ask to speak to at least 3 or 4 clients that are similar to you in size and scope. If they hesitate or cannot provide you with references, don't trust them!

Another good sign is that they should have multiple client testimonials and success stories posted on their web site and throughout their marketing collateral. A lack of this may be a sign that they don't HAVE clients who are happy enough to provide a good reference – again, a warning sign.

4. **Choosing a computer consultant that is just a one or two-man shop.** Everybody needs to start somewhere. However, when it comes to your business and IT we have found, over and over again, that companies turn to us when “their guy” simply cannot keep up, or stops responding, or gets in over his head. The problem with small IT firms is that with just one or two guys running everything (including the business and the customer service AND doing all the technical work) there comes a time when they just cannot keep up. And, just when you need them the most they will leave you hanging.

Instead, look for a company that has enough engineers and support staff to support more than a handful of clients and is able to react to you when you have a true emergency. Also, having multiple engineers on staff means that their combined experience and knowledge is greater. That means it's more likely that they will be able to handle a wider variety of problems.

5. **Choosing a computer consultant who doesn't discuss your BUSINESS goals as part of their relationship with you.** There are a lot of computer 'nerds' out there. Heck, most high school kids can handle some computer issues these days. But, not everyone understands how to run a successful, profitable business. IT companies that simply focus on fixing 'computer problems' are missing a whole, important, facet of making your business more efficient and profitable.

Look for a company that understands the relationship between your business goals, and how the right technology, running smoothly, can help you achieve those goals. If the only questions a consultant asks you are ones about your computers, or backup, or network, then it's unlikely they will build and implement systems that have your future business growth and success in mind.

A Final Word...

I hope you have found this guide to be helpful in shedding some light on what to look for when outsourcing the support of your company's network. As I stated in the opening of this report, my purpose in providing this information was to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by the many incompetent firms offering these services.

If you have any additional comments or questions, we welcome them! Have an idea to make this guide even more helpful? Let us know! And, of course, if you are looking for someone you can trust to take over the care and maintenance of "all things digital" in your office, we'd love the opportunity to EARN your business.

Below you will find information on how to request a **FREE Business and Technology Assessment** (valued at up to \$2,800.00). This is, of course, provided for free, with no obligations and no expectations on our part to qualified prospects. I want to be clear that this is NOT a bait-and-switch offer or a trick to get you to buy something. My reputation for running an honest and trustworthy business is something I hold very dear. I would never jeopardize that in any way. So why are we offering something like this for free?

Two reasons:

1. We are simply offering this service as a risk-free "get to know us" offer to people we haven't had the pleasure of doing business with. Again, our goal is to allow you to make an informed and confident decision – and offering this is one way we can help you better evaluate us.
2. This will allow us to determine if we even CAN help you. Obviously we can't help everyone, and our services might not be a good fit for you. Conducting this Assessment enables us to meet you personally and you evaluate whether or not we're the right company for you, without risking your money.

Looking forward to your call!

James Pearson, President
The Computer Center
608-755-1524

Special Offer for Readers of this Report!

Our Business and Technology Assessment Costs up to \$2,800.00! But, Here's How You Can Get it for FREE ...

As a perspective client I'd like to offer you an in-depth **Business and Technology Assessment**, up to a \$2,800.00 value, for free. During our on-site assessment, I will send one of my Solution Engineers and a Solution Advisor, to do an in-depth, deep-dive, analysis of your company's current IT health and business issues.

During this visit we will:

- ✓ Diagnose slowness, problems or concerns you may have with your computer network and explain in plain English what your options are for resolving them quickly and inexpensively.
- ✓ Check for security vulnerabilities that could expose you to data loss, hackers, and identity thieves.
- ✓ Verify your data backups are working (Note: most times we find out that it's been days, even weeks, since you had a good backup!)
- ✓ Look for hidden viruses, spyware, and security loopholes that could allow hackers and viruses to invade your network, corrupt your data and bring your system down.
- ✓ Review your server logs to uncover developing problems and conflicts that will turn into unexpected down-time.
- ✓ Discuss how your business uses technology and what is currently holding you back from being more efficient and profitable.
- ✓ Review your processes and procedures, as they relate to technology, and where you want to be.
- ✓ Look for technology and efficiency bottlenecks that may be holding your company back from earning more profits.
- ✓ Much more ...

As a fellow business owner, you can appreciate that this is a considerable investment in time and resources for the both of us. I assure you, this is no small

undertaking. Therefore, even at \$2,800.00 a pop, I can only perform a limited number of these Assessments each month.

However, I am able to perform a certain number of these in-depth assessments each month for **FREE**, for the right prospect. Of course, my goal is to introduce you to The Computer Center, and our services. I'm hopeful that, once you've met our team and seen how we are different from the "other guys" out there, you will become a lifelong client.

But, not everyone we come into contact with is a good fit. We get that. So, in order to determine if you qualify for a **FREE Business and Technology Assessment**, all I ask is that you talk with one of our Solutions Advisors. We will have a brief conversation about your company, and a few of your current concerns. Then, we'll give you an over-the-phone quote on the cost of your Business and Technology Assessment and, more importantly, **how you can qualify to get your fee completely waived!** That's right ... if, after our brief (less than 10 minute) conversation, your company qualifies for an assessment, we'll schedule your appointment for **FREE!**

Call today to lock in your FREE Business and Technology Assessment.

Sincerely,

James Pearson, President
The Computer Center
608-755-1524

P.S. As I mentioned, I can only do so many of these FREE Business and Technology Assessments each month, so it's important that you call and request to speak with one of our Solutions Advisors today.

P.P.S Here's what some of our clients have said about our deep-dive Business Technology Assessments.

“First of all, I think that the concept is appealing to the customer. I like the idea of having the Computer Center go over our entire system once and for all to understand our entire computer set up here at the office. I had complaints with prior IT providers not doing this and not even being aware of what system that we have. The idea of having a complete inventory of my IT system has great value.”

Scott Schroeder

Scott Schroeder S.C.

“[The Computer Center] spent a large amount of time before we ever sat down at a meeting analyzing and assessing our company needs. There was time spent with all of our office personnel as well as all the site managers so the solutions they proposed were designed to meet our needs based upon the information they gathered in the time spent with our people...

This time spent allowed [The Computer Center] to put together a program that met our needs.”

Tim Buchheit

Farm City Elevator

“...you performed a deep-dive business and network audit. We had conversations with you and your staff about a variety of technology and business concerns. We also did a significant amount of technical investigation, with an engineer on-site taking pictures, and running your assessment software...Your organization expended an extreme amount of time and effort evaluating the needs of our law firm’s informational technology...”

Ed Thompson

Clair Law Offices, S.C.

“I am extremely happy that Boyd Consulting Group took advantage of your Comprehensive Care Program. From the initial meeting with your staff and the step by step technical investigation, to your running the assessment software, it was an enlightening experience. I especially liked the fact that your engineers and tech’s explained things to me in language I could understand because I am not a computer geek.”

Bill Boyd

Boyd Consulting Group, Inc.

Before you hire an IT consultant, do you know

The "dirty little secret" the computer industry doesn't want you to know?

The 4 costly misconceptions most business owners have about computer maintenance and repair?

5 mistakes to avoid when choosing a computer consultant?

The 21 revealing questions you should ask any computer consultant?

How to find a competent, fairly priced, and honest provider?



TCC President, James Pearson