

Money Saving Secrets Your Computer Network Consultant Doesn't Want You To Know

Learn how to avoid hiring the wrong computer consultant, shave thousands of dollars off your computer support bill, and make smart decisions about your company's technology.

Provided to you by:



**12460 Crabapple Rd.
Suite 202-203
Alpharetta, GA 30004
(770) 924-9833
www.ascgrp.com**

Introduction:

Finding an honest and capable IT Consultant is a lot like finding an honest mechanic; they both operate in fields where the system engineer can easily rip-off a client because they play on their customer's lack of technical knowledge. The problem is you won't know you've hired the wrong consultant until you are half way into your project and already invested a considerable amount of time and money.

But sometimes it's not even that obvious. A consultant may *look* like they are doing a good job, but unless you are technically savvy yourself, you simply have no way of knowing if they over billed you or recommended technology that you could have lived without just to pad the bill a little.

On the flip side, a good Computer Consultant will save your company a considerable amount of time, money, and frustration while increasing office productivity, lowering overall operation costs, improve customer service, and help you avoid devastating data losses and viruses.

That is why I've decided to write this paper.

As a small business owner and consultant myself, I wanted to arm other business owners with a few good pointers to help them avoid getting the short end of the stick when outsourcing any IT project or support.

After all, your computer network is the nerve center of your business. It largely affects productivity, security, and even the competitive advantage of your organization. One bad decision can severely cripple an organization through lost productivity, data, or even in excessive costs.

Below are **7** critical things you should know, research, or ask before signing any contract or inviting a consultant to work on your network. By practicing or being aware of these 7 simple tips, you can:

- Determine if outsourcing IT services is right for your size company
- Begin saving your organization a considerable amount of money.
- Avoid making a bad decision by hiring the wrong consultant or firm.
- Save yourself hours of frustration and time that comes with making a bad decision.

Check Point #1: Ask them to let you or your staff to get involved with the project so you can learn to be more self-sufficient and shave off billable hours.

One of the easiest ways to save money on technical support is by learning how to handle many basic, routine computer support problems that arise in house. That is why you want to be involved with any project being rolled out.

Many consultants or firms will want to keep you in the dark because the less you know, the more billable hours they can rack up on mundane tasks that could have just as easily been handled in house. But we don't think this is correct, and that's why we always try and involve our clients.

Let me illustrate this point with a story: One client of ours needed to upgrade their network of 50 workstations to Windows 8. After installing and setting up the server, we needed to go through an upgrade on every PC. But instead of having us configure every machine, we suggested that our consultant teach 2 other their own employees how to do it.

By doing this, we saved this client over **\$10,000 in billable hours, taught their own internal employees how to support the machines we just upgraded for free, and made their IT Manager a hero.**

We have been able to save several of our clients a considerable amount of money by teaching them how to solve and fix problems while we do it. And, unless you just don't want to get involved, we highly recommend this as a way to save a considerable amount of money on tech support.

Check Point #2: Always ask for fixed pricing.

This is one area that I see a lot of companies getting burned. When most consulting companies quote a project, they give you an estimated cost for completion with an hourly rate added in for "unexpected events" that may arise during the project. Be very careful about signing these contracts.

A good consultant should be experienced enough to have thoroughly investigated your situation and thought through problems and issues that may arise before issuing a proposal. Adding on a clause where they can charge you for extra hours is a safety net for them. If their consultant screws up, takes longer than he should, or if they overlooked something when quoting the job, YOU end up paying the price.

Next thing you know you're well into the project and the bill ends up being twice as much as you expected.

Check Point #3: Make sure whoever you hire is certified or endorsed by the software vendor.

If you are upgrading or installing new software, it's always a good idea to work with a consultant or company that is certified or authorized by that vendor to support their software. This is a good idea for two main reasons:

1. Certified consultants and companies are required to uphold higher standards in service and support than their non-certified counterparts because they are regulated by the vendors. You may be able to find a good, non-certified consultant, but you are gambling.
2. Certified vendors have more in-depth knowledge about the products they support because not only are they required to (by the vendor) but also because they work with it frequently.

However, a vendor's seal of approval doesn't excuse you from doing any of the necessary background checks on their consultants.

Check the level of expertise and experience with the consultants that will be working on YOUR project. Don't assume that your tech support company will be providing you with top-notch consultants.

Find out exactly which individual consultants will be put on your project, and check their backgrounds, experience, and certification. If at all possible, get assurance in writing that at least one senior level consultant will be a key player in your project.

This up-front homework will help you avoid making a bad (and expensive decision) when hiring a computer consultant or firm.

Check Point #4: Ask to speak to a few of their recent clients with similar problems or projects.

This seems obvious but a lot of companies skip over this step. Ideally, you want to speak to other clients that had a similar project or problem, but this isn't always possible since every company's network and computing needs are different. But you do want to speak to a few recent clients to find out:

- Did they deliver on what they promised?
- Were they responsive and easy to get hold of in times of emergency?
- Did they bill accurately?
- Did they stay within the projected budget?
- Would you use them again? Why or why not?

You might also ask if there were any problems that arose and how they handled it. Not every project goes perfect; but it's not the problem so much as how they handled the problem when it arose. If your consultant seems hesitant to provide you with references, take that as a red flag.

Check Point #5: Make sure you're completely clear on your end before signing any contract or spending a dime.

A lot of businesses are reluctant to outline a complete high-tech project because they lack confidence in the area of technology, but we can't stress the importance of this enough.

Don't be afraid to ask your consultant to explain terms or parts of the project in "layman's terms" that are unclear to you. Ask questions like, "Tell me why this is absolutely necessary?" or, "What does that mean exactly?", or "Explain to me exactly how this will work once it is done on a user level."

A good consultant will welcome these questions and be more than happy to answer them because it will eliminate a lot of disappointment and frustration for both of you.

By doing this you avoid expensive "misunderstandings" that can pop up in the middle of a project putting you way over budget.

Check Point #6: Get everything in writing.

Once you are clear on the end result you want and how it is going to happen, get everything in writing to avoid confusion and disappointment further down the road. If your consultant feels that particular goals are unachievable, then it is their responsibility to tell you so up front. By getting them to put everything in writing you can hold them accountable for the promises they make and responsible for outcomes not achieved.

Here are the main details you want to agree to in writing:

- **Confirm payment terms.** This includes up front deposits, fee structure, and payments on completion of project. Most consultants work with an up front down payment, then percentages of the total cost as phases of the project are completed.
- **Deliverables.** What do you expect to be able to do when the project is done? How should the work flow? What does it look like? Don't assume anything; if you expect it to happen, get it in writing as specifically as possible.
- **Work schedule and pace.** Make sure you outline a date for completion as well as the phases of delivery.

Again, any professional and experienced computer consultant will be more than happy to outline these items in writing prior to a project. If they hesitate or make excuses, it is a sign they are not confident in their ability to deliver on their promises.

Check Point #7: Do business with “one-man-bands” carefully.

One big mistake we see a lot of business owners make is hiring a very small one man band consulting firm, or relying on someone who is supporting your network on the side (moonlighting).

By doing this they think they are saving a lot of money because these individuals typically charge less than established computer networking firms.

The challenge comes in when they can't respond to your emergencies or complete your projects on time because they have too many clients. Or, they simply go out of business because they can't make payroll or decide to move to another state leaving you high and dry.

Basically, as with all things in life, you get what you pay for. If you have mission critical applications and data that must be protected and working 24x7, then it makes sense to hire a well-established firm with a good track record and enough system engineers on staff to quickly respond to any technical emergencies that arise.

5 Guarantees We Make Our Clients That No Other Technology Firm or Consultant Would Dare To Make

1. We GUARANTEE 2-hour response time to network emergencies.

When your computer network goes down in the middle of a busy work day, you need it fixed **immediately** so your employees aren't sitting around taking a \$10,000 coffee break waiting for their computers to come back online. As a client of ours, we guarantee to respond to any crisis within 1 hour of your call if not sooner.

2. We GUARANTEE to provide you with the most cost-effective solution to your problem or we'll refund the difference. As a business owner myself, I understand the importance of keeping overhead and costs to a minimum. That's why I require that all of our system engineers are trained to find the least expensive solution to your problem without sacrificing quality.

If you find a better, more cost effective solution than the one we provided you, simply show it to us and we will happily refund you the difference. We can boldly make this guarantee because I am certain that we never over-charge clients for expensive upgrades, hardware, and solutions that aren't 100% necessary.

3. We GUARANTEE to solve your computer problem right the first time to your satisfaction or it's FREE. A money-back guarantee is unheard of for computer support companies, and you will be hard pressed to find anyone else who dares to offer one.

But we can offer this with total confidence because we take extra steps up front to make sure we thoroughly understand your problem and create a well thought out approach in advance for solving it. This enables us to avoid mistakes and overlooked issues that delay the completion of your project and cost extra in billable hours. We maintain a 99% "fix it right the first time" track record.

If you are not satisfied with one of our system engineers or the work completed, simply give us a call and we'll get it fixed at no additional expense to you.

4. Guaranteed Completion Date of Your Project. When you hire us, you can rest assured that your project won't be dragged out over days and weeks. I guarantee your project will be completed to your satisfaction on time or we will give you a \$500 rebate on your total bill.

5. Guaranteed Certified System Engineers And No "Bait & Switch" With Juniors. You can rest assured that your project will be handled by our own seasoned, qualified, and courteous technical professionals. In addition to years of hands-on experience, our senior systems engineers maintain vendor certifications in Microsoft, Citrix, Fortinet, Nexsan and AltiGen products.

We require ALL of our staff to complete on-going training to ensure we are up-to-date on the latest technologies and solutions. You won't find a better qualified team of professionals anywhere else.

2 FREE HOURS of Network Support To Help You Solve Those Nagging Computer Issues

**From: Alan Adcock, CEO
ASC Group**

Dear Colleague,

As a prospective client, I'd like to give you **2 FREE hours of network support** to prove that my staff and I can do a better job at solving your technology headaches than other computer support companies.

Just give us a call the next time you find yourself dealing with a computer or network problem. At no charge, we'll send our senior network technician to your office to diagnose and treat the problem.

Why Are We Giving Away Free Support?

Simple. While most other technical support companies will hound you to death with sales calls trying to get you to hand over your money and trust them on their word, we don't feel this is correct.

We believe in the old Zig Ziglar saying, "You can get what you want in life if you just help enough other people get what they want." Maybe it's old fashioned but we like to treat customers the same way we like to get treated.

By giving you 2 free hours, we are helping you solve a problem. At the same time, we get to showcase our expertise and introduce our services, staff, and system engineers to you.

Once you see how friendly and knowledgeable our staff is and how quickly we make your computer worries go away, we know you'll remember us the next time you have a computer problem or project that you need help on.

Some people think we are crazy for offering free services. They say, "Aren't you afraid people will just take advantage of you?" The truth is, some people might – but we know that most business owners are just honest people trying to find someone they can trust to fix and maintain their computer network.

After All, Don't You Just Want The Darn Thing To Work The Way It's Supposed To?

That's why I'm making this offer. I know that we are hands down the best at what we do, but I don't think it's fair for you to risk your money to find out. I don't expect everyone to become a customer, but I know that some will end up becoming loyal, long-term clients, just like these business owners:

"FQS is a small business and heavily dependent on our network for internal and remote users. ASC Group has been very responsive to our technology challenges, always listening to our desires and needs. ASC presents options to choose from and then implements the plan on schedule and within budget." – Angie Coley, Manager, Fuel Quality Services

"Our network was plagued with multiple crashes, data loss, long data restore times, and other challenges due to the aging components. ASC Group has been the technology leader we needed to provide current technology to FCS students and staff. I do not believe we could have done this as smoothly and efficiently without ASC Group."
– Steve Kelly, IT Manager, Fellowship Christian School

How Can You Use Your 2 Free Hours?

Maybe you don't have an urgent problem that needs to be fixed right now. Maybe you think you have your computer network "handled". Maybe you don't even have a regular IT support guy and think you don't need our services.

After all, "if it ain't broke, why fix it?"

I completely understand that point of view, so let me suggest how you can still profit from this offer...

Even if you don't have an immediate problem, you can use your 2 free hours of network support to have us audit your network for hidden problems developing under the surface that could turn into bigger, more disastrous events that could cost you thousands in lost productivity, downtime, and computer repair bills.

For FREE, We Will Come To Your Office And...

- Check your network's current security against hacker attacks, theft, worms, viruses, and even employee sabotage.
- Scan and remove spyware that is secretly stealing your company's bandwidth, jeopardizing the speed of your computer system, and embezzling confidential information about you, your employees, and your business.
- Check your network's back-up system to ensure it is working properly and accurately backing up all of the critical files and information you NEVER want to lose.
- Diagnose slow, unstable PCs.
- Perform a quick network "tune up" to make programs and files load faster.
- Discuss a project or upgrade you are considering, or give you a second opinion on a quote you received.

How To Get Your 2 FREE HOURS of Network Support

To qualify for this offer, you must be an IT Manager or Business Owner of a company with 10 or more PCs.

If that's you, simply do one of these 3 things to sign up for your free hours:

1. **Go to our web site** www.ascgrp.com and click on the "2 Free Hours" offer found on the home page and throughout the site.
2. **Fill in and fax back** the enclosed enrollment form.
3. **Call our offices right now** and we'll answer your questions and schedule a convenient time to visit your office: 770-924-9833 ext. 133

Good Networking,

Tara Lamboley
Client Relationship Manager
ASC Group
(770) 924-9833 x133

P.S. I want to be very clear that when you take us up on this offer, you are not expected to do or buy anything. As a matter of fact, I will give you my personal guarantee that you won't have to deal with a pushy, arrogant sales person, because I don't appreciate heavy sales pressure any more than you do. So go ahead and claim your voucher now; you'll be glad you did!

“The biggest benefit for us is that ASC Group is willing to tackle any problem we have.

They will make an attempt to resolve the issue and involve other vendors as needed, rather than taking a ‘that’s not my area’ approach. As a busy practice, we appreciate not having to waste time with vendors pointing fingers at each other!” – *Elaine Rudder, Practice Administrator, Newnan Dermatology*

OK, ASC Group. . . I'll Put You To The Test!

Please activate this voucher so I can receive 2 hours of FREE technical support and have you "on-call" to solve any unexpected technical problem I run into. I understand that I am not obligated to do or purchase anything by activating this voucher, or when I take you up on your 2 hours of free tech support.

Please Complete This Form:

Your Name: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Number of PCs: _____

What Operating System Are You Using? _____

Fax This Back To: (404) 521-4783

"ASC group is my choice for an IT company and I would recommend them to anyone that desires state of the art IT service. My company had experienced multiple IT issues with our previous IT provider. Poor service, inefficient hardware/software, questionable IT recommendations and lax backup protocols. With ASC Group, we have responsive, professional service and peace of mind that our network is protected. That is priceless!" – Dr. Glyn Lewis, Marietta Podiatry

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This certificate is good for 2 hours of free technical support. In order to qualify for this offer, you must be a company with 10 or more PCs. This voucher cannot be sold, traded, or transferred to another party. The bearer is not obligated to purchase any additional services or products upon redemption of this voucher.