From the Desk of: Nathan Viveiros
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Dear Fellow Business Owner,

"Is Your IT Guy Holding You Prisoner?"

Here's a question you've probably never thought about: If your IT guy went away, would you know where all the passwords, data, software licenses and disks, key codes, and other important information were stored? Do you know how to log into your server? Do you know the passwords to all your employee's workstations? Do you know where your offsite data is stored and how to access it? Is your network documented so that another IT person could come in and pick up where they left off? If not, your IT guy is holding you prisoner.

If he's doing a good job, you might not mind too much; however, you should STILL have him or her document your network in case they didn't show up one day for work. And if you AREN'T really happy with their work and aren't sure if they are doing a good job, that's all the more you should have this done.

Occasionally I've run across potential new clients who aren't really happy with their IT guy's work, but stay with them out of fear. As one business owner to another, this is NEVER a good reason to stay with your current provider.

If you can't trust the person with the most access and power over your computer network – the core of your business – you need to find someone you CAN trust. A truly professional person or provider would NEVER hold their client hostage or do any harm in handing over the "keys to the kingdom" to another company. And any good IT firm should be able to walk you through the transition to prevent that person from doing any damage.

How to Know if Your IT Guy is Doing a Good Job

Another reason business owner's stay with their current IT person is simply because they don't know what good service really IS, and therefore lowered their expectations. Over and over again I'm absolutely HORRIFIED by the incompetence and irresponsibility I discover when I audit most business networks. In 98% of the computer networks I review, I find faulty or non-existent backups, security loopholes, shoddy reporting, and flawed systems that simply cost more to maintain and don't align with the operations of the business.

Plus, not a week goes by where we don't get a '911 crisis call' from a business owner with a major technical disaster that COULD have been prevented. Why do so many businesses pay for substandard computer support? Simply because they don't know how to truly verify that their network IS secure and end up having to take someone at their word.

Here's a quick quiz to know if your IT guy IS doing a good job. If your technician does not score a "yes" on every point, you could be paying for substandard support:

☐ Do they answer their phones "live" and respond to support issues in one hour or less?

☐ Are they remotely monitoring your network 24-7-365 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions, and security patches up to date?

☐ Do they INSIST on monitoring an offsite as well as an onsite backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated tape backups?

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

☐ Have they provided you with written, network documentation detailing what software licenses you have, critical network passwords, and hardware information, or are they the only person with the "keys to the kingdom?"

☐ 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?

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

☐ Do they explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek-speak)?

☐ Do they complete projects on time and on budget, or does every project end up taking longer and costing more than you expected?

☐ Do they offer any guarantees on their services?

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

☐ Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in ongoing training, or do you feel as though they are learning on your dime?

☐ Do they take calls from other clients while working on your network (and on your dime)?

☐ Do you have to manage their progress on projects, or do they provide frequent updates, status reports, and follow-up calls and e-mails?

☐ Do they offer flat-rate or fixed-fee project quotes, or do they give themselves a wide open playing field with "time and materials?"

If Your Current IT Guy Failed This Test, I Want to Give You a FREE Network Health Check to Make Things "Right"

If you're NOT happy with your IT person and have a sneaking suspicion that they aren't doing the best job possible, then call us in for a second opinion. At no cost or obligation to you, we'll come to your office and conduct a network health check to look for problems with your backup, security, speed, and any other problems that could lead to data loss, downtime, and high repair fees.

To claim this free service, simply call us at 508-992-2541.

Happy networking,

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