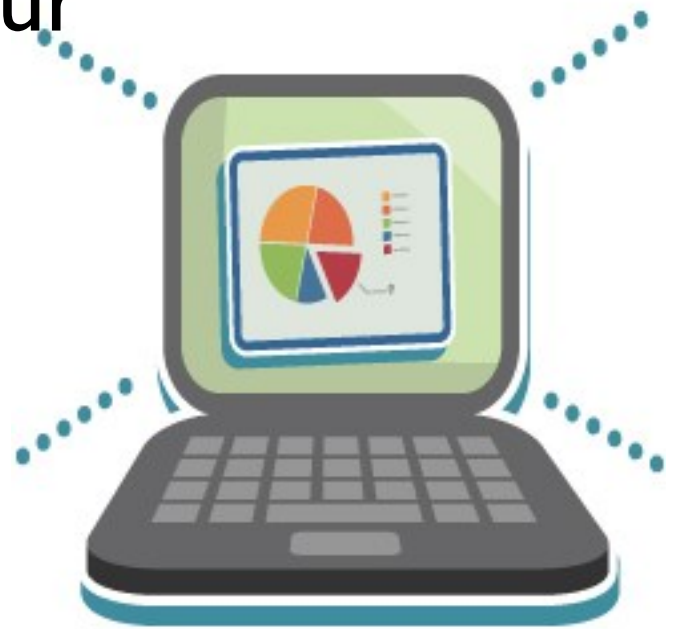


28 Questions You Must Ask Before Hiring Any IT Company

“If You Depend On Your Computer Network To Run Your Business, This Is One Report You DON’T Want To Overlook!”



Extremely Helpful Strategies And Tips Every Business Owner Must Know Before Giving Anyone Access To Your Computer Network

“28 Critical Questions You MUST Ask Before Hiring Any IT Company”

If You Depend On Your Computer Network To Run Your Business, This Is One Report You DON'T Want To Overlook!

This free report will explain in simple, non-technical terms what you need to look for when outsourcing your IT support, as well as cost-saving strategies, insider tips and 28 revealing questions you MUST ask any computer consultant before giving him access to your computer network. If your current guy can't answer a confident "Yes" to all 28, it might be time to look for someone else.

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- The most expensive mistake most small business owners make when hiring an IT consultant.
- The surprising reason most small businesses fall victim to sub-standard support.
- How to avoid a fundamental conflict of interests between you and your IT consultant, and still get all the computer support you need for a low, fixed monthly rate.
- How to determine whether or not your computer network is being properly supported.

A Free Education Guide By:

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**From the Desk of:
James R. "Rick" Boyles, President
Computer Networks, Inc.**

Dear Fellow Business Owner,

Hi, my name is Rick Boyles and I am the President of Computer Networks, Inc. As a business owner myself, I know how insanely busy you are so I'll get right to the point of this report.

Although we've never met, I'd be willing to wager a bet that your computer network – and the critical data it holds – is not nearly as secure as you think it is. **How do I know that this is the most expensive mistake most small business owners make?**

Because 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 month 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.

That's why I've decided to write this report for all the business owners in our area to EDUCATE them about what to look for in an IT consultant. Quite honestly, I'm shocked at the oversights and sloppiness of most self-proclaimed "experts" and want to see the standards raised.

Comparing Apples To Apples: The Predominant IT Service Models Explained

Before you can accurately compare the services and deliverables of one IT services company to another, you need to understand the 3 predominant service models in use today. Some companies offer a blend of all 3, while others are strict about offering only one service plan. The 3 predominant service models are:

- **Time and Materials.** In the industry, we call this “break-fix” services. Essentially, you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to “fix” your problem when something “breaks.” Under this model, you might be able to negotiate a discount based on buying a block of hours. The scope of work may be simply to resolve a specific problem (like removing a virus), or it may encompass a large project like a computer network upgrade or office move that has a specific result and end date clarified. Some companies will offer staff augmentation and placement under this model as well.
- **Network Administration (Managed IT Services).** This is a model where the IT services company takes the role of your “IT department” and not only installs and supports all the devices and PCs that connect to your server(s), but also offers phone and on-site support, antivirus, security, backup and a host of other services to monitor and maintain the health, speed, performance and security of your computer network.
- **Software Vendor-Supplied IT Services.** Many software companies will offer IT support for their customers in the form of a help desk or remote support for an additional fee. However, these are typically scaled-back services, limited to troubleshooting their specific application and NOT your entire computer network and all the applications and devices connected to it. If your problem resides outside of their specific software or the server it’s hosted on, they can’t help you and will often refer you to “your IT department”. While it’s often a good idea to buy some basic-level support package with a critical software application you use to run your business, this is not enough to provide the full IT services and support most businesses need to stay up and running.

When looking to outsource your IT support, the two service models you are most likely to end up having to choose between are the “network administration” (managed IT services) and “time and materials/break-fix” models. Therefore, let’s dive into the pros and cons of these two options, and then the typical fee structure for both.

Managed IT Services Vs. Break-Fix: Which Is The Better, More Cost-Effective Option?

You've probably heard the famous Benjamin Franklin quote, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". I couldn't agree more — and that's why it's my sincere belief that the **Network Administration (managed IT) approach is, by far, the most cost-effective, smartest option for any small business.** The only time I would recommend a "time and materials" approach is when you already have a competent IT person or team proactively managing your computer network and simply have a specific IT project to complete that your current in-house IT team doesn't have the time or expertise to implement (such as a network upgrade, installing a backup solution, etc.). Outside of that specific scenario, I do not think the break-fix approach is a good idea for general IT support for one very important, fundamental reason: **you'll ultimately end up paying for a pound of "cure" for problems that could have easily been avoided with an "ounce" of prevention.**

Why Regular Monitoring And Maintenance Is Critical For Today's Computer Networks

The fact of the matter is that computer networks absolutely, positively need ongoing maintenance and monitoring to stay secure. The ever-increasing dependency we have on IT systems and the data they hold — not to mention the *type* of data we're now saving digitally — have given rise to very smart and sophisticated cybercrime organizations and who work around the clock to do one thing: compromise your networks for illegal activities.

In most cases, their intent is to access financial information and passwords to rob you (or your clients), create fake identities for credit card fraud, etc. In other cases they may want to use your computer network to send illegal spam, host pirated software, spread viruses, etc. And some do it just for the "fun" of being able to make computer systems inoperable. These criminals work around the clock in teams, constantly finding and inventing new ways to get around your antivirus software and firewalls; that's why you have to remain ever vigilant against their attacks.

Of course, this doesn't even take into consideration other common "disasters" such as rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures (which are the #1 reason for data loss), fire and natural disasters and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure and the data it holds. Then there's regulatory compliance for any business hosting or touching credit card or financial information, medical records and even client contact information such as e-mail addresses.

Preventing these problems and keeping your systems up and running (which is what managed IT services is all about) is a LOT less expensive and damaging to your organization than waiting until one of these things happens and then paying for emergency IT services to restore your systems to working order (break-fix).

Why “Break-Fix” Works Entirely In The Consultant’s Favor, *Not* Yours

Under a “break-fix” model, there is a fundamental conflict of interests between you and your IT firm. The IT services company has no incentive to stabilize your computer network or to resolve problems quickly because they are getting paid by the hour; therefore, the risk of unforeseen circumstances, scope creep, learning curve inefficiencies, and outright incompetence are all shifted to YOU, the customer. Essentially, the more problems you have, the more they profit, which is precisely what you DON’T want.

Under this model, the IT consultant can take the liberty of assigning a junior (lower-paid) technician to work on your problem who may take two to three times as long to resolve an issue that a more senior (and more expensive) technician may have resolved in a fraction of the time. There is no incentive to properly manage the time or efficiency of that technician, and there is every reason for them to prolong the project and to find MORE problems than solutions. Of course, if they’re ethical and want to keep you as a client, they *should* be doing everything possible to resolve your problems quickly and efficiently; however, that’s akin to putting a German shepherd in charge of watching over the ham sandwiches. Not a good idea.

Second, it creates a management problem for you, the customer, who now has to keep track of the hours they’ve worked to make sure you aren’t getting overbilled; and since you often have no way of really knowing if they’ve worked the hours they say they have, it creates a situation where you really, truly need to be able to trust they are being 100% ethical and honest AND tracking THEIR hours properly (not all do).

And finally, it makes budgeting for IT projects and expenses a nightmare since they may be zero one month and thousands the next.

The following are 28 questions you can use to determine whether or not your network really IS being supported properly. Some of these items may not be that important to you, while others (like response time, adequate insurance, and uptime guarantees) may be critical **and MUST be asked prior to giving any computer consultant access to your network.** Make sure you fully understand each of these items before making a decision about who the right provider is for you; then make sure you get this IN WRITING.

If your technician does not score a “yes” on every point, you could be paying for substandard support AND be wide open to a very expensive, very frustrating computer disaster:

- ☐ Do they insist on monitoring your network 24/7/365 to PREVENT problems from turning into downtime, viruses & other issues?
- ☐ Do they have a written, guaranteed response time of **15 minutes or less**?
- ☐ Do they take the time to explain things in plain English? No “Geek Speak”?
- ☐ Do they offer new ways to improve your network performance?
- ☐ Do they hold **Quarterly Business Review** meetings to talk about your technology and plan for the future?
- ☐ Do they provide detailed invoices explaining what you are paying for?
- ☐ Does their plan include a **FREE** high-end Unified Threat Management (UTM) firewall with all of the Security Subscriptions paid for the life of the contract?
- ☐ Does their plan include **FREE** antivirus and antispyware for the life of the contract?
- ☐ Does their plan include **FREE** factory warranty for all of your eligible servers for the life of the contract?
- ☐ Does their plan include all other support and subscriptions renewals for any other devices **FREE** for the life of the contract? (Barracuda SSL, etc.)
- ☐ Do they strongly insist that you have a Disaster Recovery Plan that moves your business data offsite?
- ☐ Do they insist on monitoring and reporting on your onsite AND offsite backups?

- ☐ Do they insist on doing periodic test restores of your backups so that you know the backups are working?
- ☐ Do they insist on backing up your data **BEFORE** performing any major project or upgrade? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ Do they help you develop a written plan for getting your network restored fast in the event of a disaster? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ If you are a medical office, do they have evidence of **their** HIPAA compliance, such as copies of **their** Policies, Procedures and Forms? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ Can they provide a copy of **their** current **Security Risk Analysis**?
- ☐ Do they provide a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) that complies with the 2013 Omnibus laws? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ Does their plan include regular firewall monitoring? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ Does their plan include regular Windows user login monitoring? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ Does their plan include regular monitoring of user access to shared folders that contain PHI? **(HIPAA requirement)**
- ☐ Do they have proof of current Errors and Omissions Insurance at \$2M or greater?
- ☐ Do they have proof of current Workman's Compensation Insurance
- ☐ Do they have proof of customary Business Owner's Insurance?
- ☐ Do they guarantee to complete projects on time and on budget?
- ☐ Do they provide a weekly report so you know for sure that your systems are secure & protected?
- ☐ Is their Help Desk based in the United States?
- ☐ When something goes wrong, do they own the problem through to completion?

If Your Current IT Guy Failed This Test, I Want to Give You A FREE Network Audit To Make Things “Right”

I know you are so darn busy running your business that you simply forget to think about the security and health of your computer network UNTIL something major happens.

If that's you, consider this a “friendly reminder” to get your network checked out – if nothing else, it's a good way to get a third party review of your network's security.

And to make it a complete “no-brainer,” from now until February 15th, I'm offering a Network Check-Up for FREE so you have no excuse for making sure that your computer network is safe not only from spyware and viruses, but also hackers, spam, data loss, hardware failure, software corruption, and a number of other disasters.

For free, we will come to your office and...

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

- Check your firewall's security settings to make sure you are protected from the latest hacker attacks, worms, and viruses.
- 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.
- Verify that you have the most up-to-date security patches installed properly; miss one critical update and you're a “sitting duck.”
- Diagnose slow, unstable PCs.

Why Should You Care About This?

Because there are literally dozens of ways hackers and viruses can access your network—undetected—to access and remotely control your network, corrupt your data, and use your network as a conduit for spreading spam, viruses, and even illegal software.

There are numerous system checks and updates that should be done on a regular basis to ensure maximum speed, performance, and security. Ignore them and your system will get progressively slower, unstable, and susceptible to viruses, spyware, and hackers. Tape backups have a failure rate of 100% --that means all tape drives will fail at some point, often without warning. You don't want to find out that your backup was not working the day after your hard drive fried.

After All, Don't You Just Want Your Darn Computer 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:

"I can honestly say that we have never had better customer service from a computer company."

"Thank you for providing us with a great team of computer experts and IT products.

Your IT support team is highly trained and always responds quickly. I truly appreciate that you are always a phone call away, and that your response time is unmatched. Your computer company keeps a vital part of our business working smoothly -- IT!"

I have recommended Computer Networks to many companies in Hampton Roads, medical and non-medical, and they have been extremely satisfied.

Elizabeth T. Lester, Practice Administrator
Wardell Orthopaedics, P.C., Suffolk, VA

"We truly appreciate all that you do for us when it comes to our IT needs."

"The IT services you have provided us these past years -- whether in the form of network administration, disaster recovery services, or hardware maintenance -- have allowed us to operate smoothly and grow steadily."

"We also appreciate that you and your staff are always available to answer our questions quickly and correctly. You and your IT experts are terrific!"

Shelly Joyner, President & CEO
Express Billing Systems

"Computer Networks has provided us with the most reliable, knowledgeable and prompt IT service that we have ever experienced from an IT company."

"They professionally installed our new network, which allowed us to upgrade to a new computer system that handles our Electronic Medical Records and Electronic Health Records. Computer Networks also maintains the network and the hardware for our four medical office locations in Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Chesapeake.

They are hands down the best of the best. Can't thank them enough. We recommend Computer Networks with pleasure and absolute confidence."

Marianne Perry CRS, Administrator
Allergy & Asthma Specialists, Ltd., Virginia Beach, VA

Think About This...

What else in your business is more valuable than the data on your network? Just imagine how devastating it would be to lose it! That's why this Check-Up is so important. We'll conduct a comprehensive review of your network's security settings to make sure your data is safe and secure.

Okay...So What's The Catch?

I bet you're wondering why I'd be willing to give this away for free, so please allow me to explain. First off, 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.

We are simply offering this Free Network Check-Up as a risk-free "get to know us" offer to people we haven't had the pleasure of doing business with.

Here's How It Works...

To get your FREE, no-strings-attached, Network Check-Up, simply complete and fax the enclosed response form back to our office. Or if you prefer to speak to me directly about this, call my office at 757-333-3299, extension 200, email me at Rick.Boyles@computernetworksinc.com or call David Edge, Computer Networks, Inc.'s Business Development Manager at 757-333-3299, extension 203 or email David.Edge@computernetworksinc.com. You can also go to www.computernetworksinc.com/criticalquestions.

After we receive your request, we'll schedule a convenient time for one of our technicians to come on-site and conduct a 27-Point Audit of your network. When we're done, we'll give you a comprehensive, easy-to-read report that will show any problems, threats, or vulnerable areas that need to be addressed.

If we discover a problem, we'll also provide you with a recommended action plan and fixed-fee quote on what it will cost for us to resolve it. No hidden fees; no bait and switch. If you decide to hire us to do the repair (you're under no obligation), we'll get to work on it immediately.

And if we find out everything is safe and secure, you'll breathe a big sigh of relief knowing the true state of your network's health and security.

What do you have to lose? Don't let another day go by without verifying the health and security of your network! We're making this as easy as possible to say yes – all you have to do is take 60 seconds to fax back the enclosed form or call our offices and we'll do the rest!

Sincerely,

James R. "Rick" Boyles
President, Computer Networks, Inc.
Phone: 757-333-3299, ext. 200
www.computernetworksinc.com

P.S. Remember, this offer for a FREE Network Check-Up expires on February 15th! You are under no obligation to do or buy anything, but you must respond NOW or you will miss out!

P.P.S. To respond, simply fax back the enclosed form or call me direct on 757-333-3299, extension 200 or David Edge, Business Development Manager at 757-333-3299, extension 203.

P.P.P.S. Are you a medical practice in need of a HIPAA Risk Analysis? Call TODAY for additional information and to schedule a time for a meeting to discuss how we can assist your practice! We perform all of our IT responsibilities with HIPAA rules, regulations and compliance in mind!

☐ **YES! Please Reserve a FREE Network Check-Up to Make Sure My Network IS Actually Secure!**

I understand that I am not obligated to do or buy anything by signing up for this offer. For free, one of your technicians will schedule an appointment to conduct a complete health check of my network to:

- Diagnose any computer network problem I am experiencing.
- Check my network's security against hacker attacks and viruses.
- Scan and remove spyware.
- Check my network back-up system to make sure it is working properly.
- Diagnose slow, unstable PCs.
- Perform a quick network "tune up" to make programs and files load faster.
- Discuss a project or upgrade I am considering, or even give me a second opinion on a quote I've received.

Upon completion, I'll receive a report that will show any problems, threats, or vulnerable areas that need to be addressed. If a problem is discovered, I will receive a recommended action plan. Again, I am under no obligation to hire you to do any work.

**Need To Speak To Someone Right Away? Call:
1-757-333-3299, extension 200 or 203**

Please Complete This Form:

Your Name:

Title:

Company:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

E-mail Address:

Number of PCs:

**Fax This Completed Form To: 1-866-496-9303
You Must Respond On Or Before February 15th**

Phone: **Rick Boyles** 757-333-3299, ext 200
Email: rick.boyles@computernetworksinc.com
Website: www.computernetworksinc.com

Phone: **David Edge** 757-333-3299, ext 203
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