



18 Questions You Should Ask Your Computer Consultant Before Hiring Them To Support Your Network

Choosing a computer support company isn't easy. There is no shortage 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 earful of the unfortunate experiences they have encountered in this area.

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 lack of ethics or incompetence of some companies and technicians.

Customer Service: It is our goal to provide service right the first time and as soon as possible to ensure no down-time in your business processes.

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? What about an online contact method?

Our Answer: We answer our phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. As part of our 'New Client' orientation, the best contact methods and response time guarantee is covered in great length with your SLA to ensure you always know how to get in touch with us and what you can expect. If you cannot access your computer network AND can't get hold of anyone to help, it's incredibly frustrating- so we are always accessible. Our best method for when an emergency arises is to complete an online ticket via Email. When we receive the 'Support' email, a ticket is created in our system. We guarantee within minutes of your created ticket to have contacted you with a plan of attack. After hours when leaving a voicemail for support, a ticket is automatically generated in our system and you can expect to hear from one of our Engineers promptly.



Q2: 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.

Q3: 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?

Our Answer: We conduct quarterly review meetings with our clients to look for new ways to help improve their operations, lower costs, increase efficiencies and resolve any problems that may be arising. Our goal with these meetings is to help our clients be more profitable, efficient and competitive. At the quarterly review, reports of findings are also provided outlining topics such as statistics, network threats and upcoming hardware or network updates- proactively taking care of all issues to ensure you lose no down-time. In addition to the quarterly review, a monthly onsite visit is conducted by a Network Engineer as a “check-up” time to address any issues and simply to add to our relationship of personable hands-on, face-to-face care.

Q4: Do they provide detailed invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?

Our Answer: We provide detailed monthly 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.

Q5: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers’ compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Our Answer: Yes, we hold these certificates to protect YOU. You better make sure whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions insurance AND workers’ compensation – and don’t be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True story: A few years ago, Geek Squad was slapped with multimillion-dollar lawsuits from customers for bad behavior by their technicians. In some cases, their techs were accessing, copying and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers’ PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In other cases, they lost a client’s laptop (and subsequently all the data on it) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line: make



sure the company you are hiring has proper insurance to protect YOU.

Maintenance Of Your Network: You can rest assured that we are monitoring your systems 24/7, providing proactive maintenance and frequent reviews with you on-site to ensure you are always up-to-speed with your network.

Q6: Do they insist on remotely monitoring your network 24-7-365 to keep critical security settings, virus definitions and security patches up-to-date and PREVENT problems from turning into downtime, viruses, lost data and other issues?

Our Answer: Yes, our remote network monitoring system watches over your network to constantly look for developing problems, security issues and other problems so we can address them BEFORE they turn into bigger problems.

Q7: Do they provide you with a monthly report that shows all the updates, security patches and the status of every machine on your network so you know for SURE your systems have been secured and updated?

Our Answer: Every month along with a monthly “check-in” onsite visit, our clients get a detailed report that shows an overall health score of their network and the updates to their antivirus, security settings, patches and other important network checks (like hard-drive space, backups, speed and performance, etc.).

Q8: 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.?

Our Answer: All clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost. We also make sure certain key people from your organization have this information and know how to use it.

Q9: 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.



Q10: When they offer an “all-inclusive” support plan, is it TRULY all-inclusive, or are their “gotchas” hidden in the fine print?

Our Answer: Our “all-inclusive” support plan is just that – all-inclusive. One of the more popular service plans offered by consulting firms today is an “all-inclusive” or “all-you-can-eat” managed services plan. These are actually a good thing because they’ll save you a lot of money in the long run.

Backups And Disaster Recovery: On-site and Off-site Backup plans are crucial in the recovery of your valuable data should a disaster or unforeseen emergency arise.

Q11: Do they INSIST on monitoring an off-site as well as an on-site backup, or are they letting you rely on outdated tape backups?

Our Answer: We do not recommend our clients to use tape backups because they are incredibly unreliable. We insist that all of our clients have an appliance on-site for their on-site backup, which we set up and manage fully. This on-site server then updates the off-site cloud backup for double measure. Having an off-site backup plan in place ensures that in case of disaster in-house, all valuable data is safe and retrievable. All clients receive a disaster recovery plan for their data and network. It is our goal to ensure that in the event of a disaster that all data is retrievable and done so quickly. The on-site backup, when activated, will serve as a virtual server while we work quickly to retrieve all data with little as possible down-time to your daily business processes.

Q12: 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?

Our Answer: We perform a monthly “fire drill” and perform a test restore from backup for our clients to make sure their data CAN be recovered in the event of an emergency. After all, the WORST time to “test” a backup is when you desperately need it.

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.



Technical Expertise And Support: Our experts are here for you 24/7, providing top-notch service and data management.

Q14: Is their help desk US-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 for keeping your data secure.

Q15: Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in ongoing training – or are they learning on your dime?

Our Answer: Our technicians are required to keep the most up-to-date vendor certifications in all the software we support, always on our dime.

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.

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.

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.