



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

When you are looking to hire a professional, competent, honest, considerate, on-time, fairly-priced and dependable computer consultant think about these simple questions.

## 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?**

**Answer:** We answer our phones live from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and give all clients an emergency after-hours number they may call if a problem arises, including on weekends. Why? Because many of the CEOs and executives we support work outside normal hours and find it 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 written, guaranteed response time to your calls?**

**Answer:** We guarantee to have a technician working on a problem within our SLA. This is written into every service agreement we give to our clients because it's standard procedure. And we monitor our response times to ensure we meet them.

**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?**

**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.

**Q4: 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?**

**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.

**Q5: Do they provide detailed invoices that clearly explain what you are paying for?**

**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.

**Q6: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?**

**Answer:** Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn 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.

**Q7: Do they create and IT roadmap and yearly IT budget?**

**Answer:** All BoomTech clients receive a yearly IT Budget with an IT roadmap this way you will never be surprised at any upcoming software hardware or warranty renewals. In addition, we review all IT related invoices and perform a communication audit to make sure you are not paying too much for any other IT services like communication, Internet access, webhosting, printer repair and toner any cloud solutions or specific Line of Business applications.

# Maintenance Of Your Network:

**Q8: 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?**

**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.

**Q9: 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?**

**Answer:** Every month 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.).

**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”?**

**Answer:** All clients receive this in written and electronic form at no additional cost. We also perform a quarterly update on this material and make sure certain key people from your organization have this information and know how to use it, giving you complete control over your network.

*Side note:* You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this 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?**

**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.

**Q12: When they offer an “all-inclusive” support plan, is it TRULY all-inclusive, or are their “gotchas” hidden in the fine print?**

**Answer:** Our “all-inclusive” support plan is just that – allinclusive. 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 – HOWEVER, make sure you REALLY understand what is and isn't included. Some things to consider are:

- Is phone/e-mail help desk included or extra?
- What about network upgrades, moves or adding/removing users?
- Is hardware and/or software included?
- What about 3rd-party software support? (We recommend that this IS included.)
- What are the costs/consequences of early cancellation?
- What if you aren't happy with their services?
- Do they offer a money-back guarantee?
- If the hardware and software is included, what happens if you cancel the contract?
- Are off-site backups included? To what degree?
- If you have a major disaster, is restoring your network included or extra?
- What about on-site support calls? Or support to remote offices?
- Are home PCs used to access the company's network after hours included or extra?

## Backups And Disaster Recovery:

**Q13: 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?**

**Answer:** We do not allow our clients to use tape



backups because they are incredibly unreliable. We make sure all of our clients have a full image backup with at least 90 days of local retention and automatic offsite cloud storage. This way we can ensure we can restore you mission critical data back to operation. Our recommended solution is our Backup Disaster Recovery (BDR) Solution this will bulletproof your data and we can ensure you we can restore in a timely manner local or in the Cloud.

**Q14: 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?**

**Answer:** We perform daily 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.

**Q15: Do they insist on backing up your network BEFORE performing any type of project or upgrade?**

**Answer:** We do; and that’s simply as a precaution in case a hardware failure or software glitch causes a major problem.

**Q16: If you were to experience a major disaster, do they have a written plan for how your data could be restored FAST and/or one that enables you to work from a remote location?**

**Answer:** All clients receive a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage them to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office, but at a minimum, their network will be covered should something happen.

## Technical Expertise And Support:

**Q17: Is their help desk US-based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?**

**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.

**Q18: Do their technicians maintain current vendor certifications and participate in ongoing training – or are they learning on your dime?**

**Answer:** Our technicians are required to study and pass at least one new Microsoft or software vendor certification a year. Plus, we have a 25 page hiring process that is so stringent, 99% of the technicians who apply don’t make it through (guess who’s hiring them?).

**Q19: Do their technicians arrive on time and dress professionally?**

**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.

**Q20: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line-of-business applications?**

**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.

**Q21: 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”?**

**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.