1. Let’s start simple, could you introduce yourselves and let me know why you would like to move into an office space?
   1. “We’ve been producing quilts for all of our families and our friends. Word of mouth has gotten around, and we have so much to make right now that being in a more official capacity and structure would be good. We have gotten so much positive feedback from everyone that we’d like to share it with as many as we can. Basically, we would like to use this platform as a way to potentially expand outside of friends of friends/family. It started there and we want to hold our roots but we would like to share these gifts with the everyone.”
2. So, it sounds like you have a vision of where you want to be and are using this as a place to start, which is a really good place to be. To build off of this the next thing I’d like to know is how much you already know about what is needed for your office space. Basically, outside of traditional office supplies, desks, chairs, quilting equipment. You want a platform, which is going to require a lot computing power, how much of that side do you know?
   1. “Collectively as a group we are not all that familiar with what is needed to make something like that work. We know how to use a computer; we know how to navigate but we are not all very efferent.”
3. Okay, since you are not too familiar with what might be needed here, have you put any thought into your budget for the devices and software you will need? Not what exactly you need, but I’m more looking for what you think is a good budget? This is going to be an investment and very helpful to getting you to a functional place on the web. I don’t expect an exact answer on anything hear but if I have a ballpark on what you are thinking I can put together a list of products that could try and stay within your budget.
   1. “Since we already have a decent amount of revenue from what we have been able to sell and we have secured an investor we are looking to spend around 20 to 30 thousand on necessary computer equipment for the 10 employees and anything for the website, and other software that might be required.”
4. That is a solid budget for your setup alone. I will see what I can do to keep you on the low end while getting you the best equipment possible for your needs. The next thing I am wondering is does that budget include your monthly ISP charges or any monthly subscriptions that could be required from the software used?
   1. “As part of our budget we had clumped all of technology into one area of the budget. We really aren’t too familiar with what all will be required in that regard”
5. Perfect, that can get me on the right track to pull together a proposal for what you might need and potential costs. As part of that I would need to know where your office building is, is that something you already have figured out or are you still working out the details of your office space?
   1. “We are currently closing on our future building it is located xyz”
6. Alright that helps narrow down a few area specific ISP options for you. Since you say you are currently closing, do you have a time frame on when you are going to want this equipment up and ready for you to be working in the office? Keep in mind some more technical things might take time to be fully functional but others can be ready quicker.
   1. “We are being told we should access to this office space on (insert date) which is about 2 months out. We were expecting to have the ability to at least make the product at shortly after that time. We were also anticipating a bit of a waiting period for necessary technology.”
7. You seem to be in a good spot and I want to be able to provide you with what you need the best I can as quickly as I can. Since you are about 2 months out from having the office space that is plenty of time to have a lot of the basic technology ready to go around start up. Now, like I had said, there are some more technical things that could take some more time to set up. Are you partial to any services or websites at this point in time? Basically, is there anything you aren’t willing to use?
8. Also, another key question, what are you more comfortable with, Apple’s Mac, or Windows PC?
   1. “If we are going to pay for any service, we want to make sure they line up with our values. We don’t want to use anyone that takes advantage of their people or has unethical business practices or has any other negative connotations against them. As far as Mac or Windows, we are more partial to Mac but are comfortable with either device. To be more specific, if the budget allows for it with other aspects, we would prefer Mac but understand that Windows is also a viable option.”
9. Okay, to back things up a bit, to your office space specifically. Do you have access to any building plans, or pictures, or would it be possible to get a tour ahead of you actually owning the place? This would also be helpful to know what already exists and what additional equipment will be needed.
   1. “We are in touch with our realtor constantly with updates, we will call them later today and see if we can set up a time that we can all go see it.”
10. This is all very good information to help narrow down specific options for you and your needs. I would like to stay in touch on any developments and keep an open line of communication. Please feel free to question anything I give you for any reason. Or if I suggest something you aren’t willing to use. I’m sure as time moves along and I put together a proposal I will have some more specific questions. Like I said, feel free to reach out at any time with any questions you have for me. With that said, do you have any for me at this point?

Required hardware:

* Modem
  + This is required to talk to the ISP (internet service provider) which will connect you to the internet.
* Router
  + This takes the signal from your modem and sends it to all of your devices that you would like to connect to. This is basically your Wi-Fi.
* Firewall
  + The firewall is essentially the gatekeeper. This monitors all incoming and outgoing traffic on your network and will block anything you do not like.
* Switch
  + The switch connects to your router/modem and is the hub of all wired traffic on your network. This is what manages any devices network level authentication that is hardwired.
* LAN Cable / Patch Cable
  + These are also known as ethernet cables. This is what is ran from your switch/patch panel to all devices that are hard wired into the network.
* Access Point(s) – Multiple if office space is large enough
  + Access points you can think of as a switchboard for the wireless side of things. These are running all across an office building and are hardwired to the main router to provide a wireless signal and helps prevent a connection loss.
* Repeater(s) – If office space is large enough
  + Repeaters you can think of as a range extender. This connects to your base switch and rebroadcasts your wireless signal allowing for you to move seamlessly throughout the building and not lose connection to your network, all without the use of any cabling being ran. This also helps to prevent dead spots in the office building.
* Patch Panel
  + The patch panel would be connected directly to the Switch. The patch panel houses all of the Patch cables that are ran to any and all of your devices. This is able to manage the traffic based on the needs of the users.

Diagram of all the above parts working together to provide you with your Local Area Network (LAN)

