Title:
Computer Consulting: Weeding Out Time Wasters

Word Count:
501

Summary:
Computer consulting involves selling your time. That's why it's important to
pre-qualify every customer service call to determine if it's urgent, within
their budget and if they're in pain to justify computer consulting.

Keywords:
computer consulting, IT consulting, small business computer consulting

Article Body:
When you're in the computer consulting business, you're selling your
personality, you're selling your charisma, and you're certainly selling your
business knowledge. Most specifically, however, at the end of the day, you are
selling your time. You can't afford to waste it. You need to be able to account
for every hour that you spend, regardless of whether it's billable, whether it's
sales function, whether it's prospecting, or whether it's administrative. In
this article you'll learn how to determine whether a service call is a good use
of your time.

Computer Consulting: Is It an Emergency?

If you're looking at how to weed out the time wasters to work more efficiently,
you need to know what their sense of urgency is as soon as you hear from them:
over the phone, email, or in person. Maybe it's a server down issue that's
crippling 27 workers and completely destroying the productivity of the company.
That's a pretty strong sense of urgency.

Or maybe it is something more mundane that they don't seem that excited or
concerned about, like maybe a link is not working between a salesperson's gold
mine and a PDA. Something that affects one person in the company isn't be a big
deal. So, figuring out their sense of urgency is a very important way to point
out the time wasters.

Computer Consulting: What is Their Budget?

Another big way to weed out the time wasters is to know what their budget is

going into it. If they're broke and they don't have any money, guess what? You're wasting your time. Put them on a follow-up list for three to six months to find out if they have more money to spend on IT. If they're broke and they have no money, you're wasting your time.

Computer Consulting: Are You Being Tactful?

You can't go around saying, "Gee Bob, I'd like to help you, but are you broke? Do you have money?" A much more subtle way of doing this is to ask if they get computer consulting support now? How have they gotten it in the past? If they've only used volunteers or moonlighters at bargain basement rates, you'll know they don't have a big IT budget.

However, if you find out they're working with another VAR, with another someone that you consider a legitimate competitor of yours that would charge a legitimate professional rate, then you can make the assumption that they have the funds in their IT budget to use you.

Computer Consulting: How Much Pain Are They In?

What's their pain and can you pitch an effective solution to fix it?

The Bottom Line about Computer Consulting

Remember your time is your inventory, so don't give it away. Guard it very, very carefully.