

Title:

More Computer Consulting 101 Hiring Tips (Part 2 of 2)

Word Count:

508

Summary:

Don't fall into the ultra-common trap of hiring an independent computer consultant or computer consulting firm that isn't a good fit for your business. Use these Computer Consulting 101 hiring and screening questions as the basis for making a more informed hiring decision for your computer consulting vendor. And if you have any doubts, don't be afraid to seek out a second opinion with another computer consulting company.

Keywords:

computer consulting 101, computer consultants, computer consulting business

Article Body:

Does your company need to retain the services of a competent computer consulting firm, but you have no idea how to really evaluate "competence"?

In the first part of this two-part series on Computer Consulting 101 hiring tips, we looked at why small businesses find it so difficult to hire good computer consulting companies, as well as four basic questions that you must be addressed when searching for a new computer consulting vendor.

Now in this second and final installment of this two part series on Computer Consulting 101 hiring tips, we'll look at how you can evaluate the true, often-confusing expenses of using a computer consulting company, as well as how to more thoroughly review the computer consulting company's professional credentials and experience.

Reseller, "Pure" Computer Consulting Company, or Hybrid Technology Provider

Does your company resell various technology products, such as hardware and software? Is this a profit center or do you mind if we shop for our products elsewhere? And if we do shop elsewhere, can we still purchase your needs analysis and procurement services?

Are there any other vendors, such as ISPs or telephone companies, that your firm

acts as an agent or affiliate for? In other words, do you accept commissions or referral fees for steering business toward certain vendors?

Costs, Hidden Charges, and Billing Procedures

What are your payment terms, rates and hourly billing minimums? What is billable and what is not billable?

Do you charge for your travel time? Telephone support? E-mail/online support? Remote support?

Are there any hourly rate billing premiums for after-hours or emergency service? What constitutes "after hours" or an "emergency"?

Do you offer support contracts? What are the cost and benefits?

Client Reference Accounts, Case Studies, and Testimonials

Can you tell me about one of your more long-term small business client accounts?

Can you tell me about one of your more recently signed-on clients? Can you tell me about a small business client who didn't work out and why?

Can you provide references?

Research/Developments and Keeping Skills Sharp

How do you keep up with new tech developments?

What do you bill clients for and what do you absorb internally? Are there any gray areas?

Training Approach and Knowledge Transfer

How do you feel about handholding and in-depth training with users?

What kind of user and technical training can you provide?

Will you train our internal computer administrator to become more self-

sufficient, even if it takes away from your "job security" and opportunities to bill more hours?

The Bottom Line

Don't fall into the ultra-common trap of hiring an independent computer consultant or computer consulting firm that isn't a good fit for your business. Use these Computer Consulting 101 hiring and screening questions as the basis for making a more informed hiring decision for your computer consulting vendor. And if you have any doubts, don't be afraid to seek out a second opinion with another computer consulting company.

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