

Money-Saving Secrets Your Computer Consultant Doesn't Want You to Know

**This Free Business Advisory Report Will Show You How to
Avoid Hiring The Wrong Computer Consultant, Shave
Thousands of Dollars Off Your Computer Support Bill, and
Make Smart Decisions About The Technology That Runs
Your Company**

Read this guide and you'll discover:

- ✓ 7 critical things you should know, research, or ask before signing any contract or inviting a consultant to work on your network.
- ✓ The one type of consulting contract you NEVER want to sign.
- ✓ The single best way to avoid misunderstandings that delay your project, frustrate you, and add to the overall costs.
- ✓ A little-known way to save thousands of dollars in ongoing support costs.
- ✓ Surefire ways to know if the consultant you are hiring is competent AND honest.

Provided as an educational service by:

David Steger, President
ManagePoint, Llc
10437 Innovation Dr
Milwaukee, WI 53226
www.manage-point.com
(414) 456-9837



**From the Desk of: David Steger
President, ManagePoint, LLC**

Dear Colleague,

Finding an honest and capable computer consultant is a lot like finding an honest mechanic; they both operate in fields where the technician can easily rip-off a client because they play on their customer's lack of technical knowledge. The problem is that you won't know you've hired the wrong consultant until you are halfway into your project and have already invested a considerable amount of time and money.

Sometimes it's not even that obvious. A consultant may *look* like they are doing a good job, but unless you are technically savvy yourself, you simply have no way of knowing if they have over-billed you or recommended technology that you could have lived without just to pad the bill a little.

On the flip side, a good computer consultant will save your company a considerable amount of time, money, and frustration while increasing office productivity, lowering overall operation costs, improve customer service, and helping you avoid devastating data losses and viruses.

That is why I've decided to write this paper.

As a small business owner and consultant myself, I want to arm other business owners with a few good pointers to help them avoid getting the short end of the stick when outsourcing any IT project or support.

After all, your computer network is the nerve center of your business. It largely affects productivity, security, and even the competitive advantage of your organization. One bad decision can severely cripple an organization through lost productivity, data, or excessive costs.

Below are **7** critical things you should know, research, or ask before signing any contract or inviting a consultant to work on your network. By practicing or being aware of these 7 simple tips, you can:

- Begin saving your organization a considerable amount of money.
- Avoid making a bad decision by hiring the wrong consultant or firm.
- Save yourself hours of frustration and time that come with making a bad decision.

#1: Ask computer consultant to let you or your staff to get involved with the project so you can learn to be more self-sufficient and shave off billable hours.

One of the easiest ways to save money on technical support is by learning how to handle the many basic, routine computer support problems that arise in-house. That is why you want to be involved with any project being rolled out.

Many consultants or firms will want to keep you in the dark because the less you know, the more billable hours they can rack up on mundane tasks that could be handled in-house. We don't think this is correct, and that's why we always try and involve our clients.

We have been able to save several of our clients a considerable amount of money by teaching them how to solve and fix problems while we do it. Unless you just don't want to get involved, we highly recommend this as a way to save a considerable amount of money on tech support.

#2: Always ask for fixed pricing.

This is one area where I see a lot of companies getting burned. When most consulting companies quote a project, they give you an estimated cost for completion with an hourly rate added in for "unexpected events" that may arise during the project. This is often called "time and materials". Be very careful about signing these contracts.

A good consultant should be experienced enough to have thoroughly investigated your situation and thought through problems and issues that may arise before issuing a proposal. Adding on a clause where they can charge you for extra hours is a safety net for them. If their consultant screws up, takes longer than they should, or if they overlooked something when quoting the job, YOU end up paying the price. Next thing you know you're well into the project and the bill ends up being twice as much as you expected.

#3: Make sure whoever you hire is certified or endorsed by the software vendor you are using.

If you are upgrading or installing new software, it's always a good idea to work with a consultant or company that is certified or authorized by that vendor to support their software. This is a good idea for two main reasons:

1. Certified consultants and companies are required to uphold higher standards in service and support than their non-certified counterparts because they are regulated by the vendors. You may be able to find a good, non-certified consultant, but you are gambling.

2. Certified vendors usually have more in-depth knowledge about the products they support because they are required to (by the vendor), and because they work with it frequently.

However, a vendor's seal of approval doesn't excuse you from doing any of the necessary background checks on their consultants.

Check the level of expertise and experience with the consultants that will be working on your project. Don't assume that your tech support company will be providing you with top-notch consultants.

Find out exactly which individual consultants will be put on your project, and check their backgrounds, experience, and certification. If at all possible, get assurance in writing that at least one senior level consultant will be a key player in your project. This up-front homework will help you avoid making a bad (and expensive decision) when hiring a computer consultant or firm.

#4: Ask to speak to a few of their recent clients who have had similar problems or projects.

This seems obvious, but a lot of companies skip over this step. Ideally, you want to speak to other clients who had a similar project or problem, but this isn't always possible since every company's network and computing needs are different. You do want to speak to a few recent clients to find out:

- Did they deliver on what they promised?
- Were they responsive and easy to get hold of in times of emergency?
- Did they bill accurately?
- Did they stay within the projected budget?
- Would you use them again? Why or why not?

You might also ask if there were any problems that arose and how the consultant handled them. Not every project goes perfectly; that is why it's important to find out how the consultant handles problems before you hire them. If your consultant seems hesitant to provide you with references, take that as a red flag.

#5: Make sure you're completely clear on your end before signing any contract or spending a dime.

A lot of businesses are reluctant to outline a complete high-tech project because they lack confidence in the area of technology, but we can't stress the importance of this enough.

Don't be afraid to ask your consultant to explain the project in simple terms that are clear to you. Ask questions like, "Tell me why this is absolutely necessary?" or, "What does that mean exactly?", or "Explain to me exactly how this will work, once it is done, on a user level."

A good consultant will welcome these questions and be more than happy to answer them because it will eliminate a lot of disappointment and frustration for both of you. Doing this will

help you avoid expensive misunderstandings that can pop up in the middle of a project and put you well over budget.

#6: Get everything in writing.

Once you are clear on the end result you want and how it is going to happen, get everything in writing to avoid confusion and disappointment further down the road. If your consultant feels that some goals are unachievable, then it is their responsibility to tell you so up-front. By getting them to put everything in writing you can hold them accountable for the promises they make and responsible for outcomes not achieved.

Here are the main details you want to agree to in writing:

- **Confirm payment terms.** This includes up-front deposits, fee structure, and payments on completion of project. Most consultants work with an up-front down payment, then percentages of the total cost to be paid as phases of the project are completed.
- **Deliverables.** What do you expect to be able to do when the project is done? How should the work flow? What does it look like? Don't assume anything; if you expect it to happen, get it in writing as specifically as possible.
- **Work schedule and pace.** Make sure you outline a date for completion as well as the phases of delivery.

Again, any professional, experienced computer consultant will be more than happy to outline these items in writing prior to a project. If they hesitate or make excuses, it is a sign they are not confident in their ability to deliver on their promises.

#7: Do business with “one-man-bands” carefully.

One big mistake we see a lot of business owners make is hiring a very small one-man -band consulting firm, or relying on someone who is supporting your network on the side (moonlighting). By doing this they think they are saving a lot of money because these individuals typically charge less than established computer networking firms.

The challenge comes when they can't respond to your emergencies or complete your projects on time because they have too many clients. Or, they simply go out of business because they can't make enough money leaving you high and dry.

Basically, as with all things in life, you get what you pay for. If you have mission-critical applications and data that must be protected and working 24/7, then it makes sense to hire a well-established firm with a good track record and enough technicians on staff to quickly respond to any technical emergencies that arise.

5 Guarantees We Make To Our Clients That No Other Technology Firm or Consultant Would Dare To Make:

1. We **GUARANTEE 1-hour response time to network emergencies.**

When your computer network goes down in the middle of a busy work day, you need it fixed **immediately** so your employees aren't sitting around taking a \$10,000 coffee break waiting for their computers to come back online. As a client of ours, we guarantee to respond to any crisis within 1 hour of your call if not sooner.

2. We **GUARANTEE to provide you with the most cost-effective solution to your problem or we'll refund the difference.** As a business owner myself, I understand the importance of keeping overhead and costs to a minimum. That's why I require that all of our technicians be trained to find the least expensive solution to your problem without sacrificing quality.

If you find a better, more cost effective solution than the one we provided you, simply show it to us and we will happily refund you the difference. We can boldly make this guarantee because I am certain that we never over-charge clients for expensive upgrades, hardware, and solutions that aren't 100% necessary.

3. We **GUARANTEE to solve your computer problem right the first time to your satisfaction or it's FREE.** A money-back guarantee is unheard of for computer support companies, and you will be hard-pressed to find anyone else who dares to offer one.

We can offer this with total confidence because we take extra steps up-front to make sure we thoroughly understand your problem and create a well thought out approach in advance for solving it. This enables us to avoid mistakes and overlooked issues that would delay the completion of your project and cost extra in billable hours. We maintain a 99% **fix it right the first time** track record. If you are not satisfied with our technicians or the work completed, simply give us a call and we'll refund that entire day's work.

4. **Guaranteed Completion Date of Your Project.** When you hire us, you can rest assured that your project won't be dragged out over days and weeks. I guarantee your project will be completed to your satisfaction on time or we will give you a \$500 rebate off your bill.

5. **Guaranteed Experienced Technicians And No Bait & Switch With Juniors.** You can rest assured that your project will be handled by our own seasoned, qualified, and courteous technical professionals. You won't find a better qualified team of professionals anywhere else.

Don't Take Our Word For It; Just Listen To What Our Customers Have To Say...

“Choosing ManagePoint was one of our best decisions.”



In today's small business environment, everyday can be a challenge. The very last event needed is a failure of our network. I have had numerous issues with previous outsourced IT and was moderately apprehensive to move forward with ManagePoint, as David made claims I have heard before but were never delivered. I can say without regret, our choosing ManagePoint was one of our best decisions last year.

David has demonstrated a unique commitment and delivered all that was promised and more. IT, to small business has become the "new health insurance". No one wants their network to get sick, but when it does with ManagePoint you have no-deductibles, co-pays and the prescription is never hard to swallow. I recommend you make ManagePoint and David Steger "your primary care provider".- **Bob Richter, Owner, Water Doctors, Waukesha, WI**



Catastrophic Failure!



The Milwaukee Outreach Center has a long standing relationship with ManagePoint. David had long been urging us to purchase a backup system, but because of budget restraints we had chosen not to implement his recommendation at that time.

We thought the quad-drive Raid Array in our server would be sufficient. But we were wrong. Terribly wrong. All four drives failed simultaneously – a catastrophic failure! We had 22 years of donor information and records stored on those drives! Donors are the life blood of our organization, so this was a true catastrophe. We were at a complete loss as to what to do and were very worried. Lost data on Raid drives are generally unrecoverable, but we called Dave to see what he could do. Dave came to our rescue in a big way, performing nothing short of a miracle and was able to recover 95% of our data. What he saved us, both in labor-hours to rebuild the database and in lost potential donations is almost incalculable. Humbled and wiser, we immediately followed his advice and had him install a backup system. Then after that incident, Dave also took it upon himself to search and find a good server for us that was within our budgetary constraints. His recommendations and solutions have always been practical in that way.”- **Will Hope, Director, The Milwaukee Outreach Center**



“I sleep a lot easier at night!”



“I thought our network was absolutely secure UNTIL one of our employees accidentally downloaded a nasty worm. Within seconds, our entire network was compromised; but thanks to ManagePoint, we were able to quickly recover and avoid a lot of embarrassment, costs and downtime. Now we have the proper security systems in place and are being monitored. Thanks to ManagePoint I sleep a lot easier at night! I would urge every business owner to let David review their network before they run into the same problem we had.” - **Angie Van Scyoc, CEO, Geriatric Support/ Pathway Care**

FREE Problem Prevention Network Audit For All New Business Clients

As a prospective customer, we would like to offer you a \$297 Problem Prevention Audit of your computer network for FREE.

During this audit we will do a comprehensive 27-point check of your entire network to look for security loopholes, spyware, viruses, and other problems that can cause your network to run slowly, act funny, crash, and lose data.

At no charge or obligation, we will send a technician onsite to:

- ✓ Scan for hidden spyware, malware, and viruses that MOST anti-virus tools and software can't detect or won't remove.
- ✓ Check for critical security updates and patches
- ✓ Review your firewall and security settings
- ✓ Check the integrity of your hard drive
- ✓ Audit your virus definitions and protection
- ✓ Review your backup system

We can also answer any questions you have, diagnose any specific problems you have been experiencing, and even give you a free second opinion on a project you are considering.

Services We Offer

IT Consulting Services
Network Design & Repair
Disaster Recovery & Backup Solutions
Virus/Spyware Protection & Removal
Network Security
PC & Server Maintenance & Support
E-Mail & Internet Solutions
Helpdesk Support
Managed Spam Filtering
Storage Solutions
Network Monitoring to Prevent Problems

How To Request Your FREE Problem Prevention Audit:

**“Yes! Sign Me Up For My Free
Problem Prevention Audit!”**

Please sign me up for a FREE Security Audit so I can make sure I am doing everything possible to secure my network. I understand that I am under **no obligation** to do or to buy anything by requesting this audit.

Please Complete And Fax Back:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

#of PCs: _____

Operating System: _____

Fax to: 414-431-1055

Call us at: 414-456-9837

10437 Innovation Dr Milwaukee, WI 53226
(414) 456-9837 www.manage-point.com