

## **21 Questions you should ask your Computer Consultant before hiring them to support your network**

### **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?**

**Our Answer:** *We answer our phones live from 8:00am to 5:00pm, and give ITCare Managed Services clients an emergency after-hours number they may call if an urgent problem arises, including on weekends.*

**Q2: Do they have a written, guaranteed response time to your calls?**

**Our Answer:** *Due to the inability to predict break/fix repair needs, preference is given to clients who have entered into a Managed Service agreement with RTS. We will guarantee to have a technician working on a problem within 2 hours, depending on SLA. This is written into every managed service agreement we give to our clients because it's standard procedure.*

**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?**

**Our Answer:** *Our very strict hiring process ensures we only onboard respectful admin and technical staff with the "heart of a teacher" who will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms. We will treat all clients with respect and understanding and will NEVER tolerate any of our staff making any client feel inferior, because you certainly aren't!*

**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?**

**Our Answer:** *Depending on service plan and network size, we conduct quarterly, semi-annual, or annual 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, and help clients ensure they are getting the*

*most out of their IT budget. We know you work hard for your money and want to help you ensure you are truly utilizing your resources as efficiently as possible.*

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

**Our 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 are up front before entering a service ticket that may not be included in scope of ITCare Managed Services agreement.*

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

**Our Answer:** Here's a 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!

**Q7: Do they complete projects on time and on budget?**

**Our Answer:** *Most of our complex projects that are executed for ITCare Clients are fixed-price, and we dedicate time to arrange a timeline for each phase with the client at project kickoff. Of course, when unforeseen events come up timelines may have to be adjusted, but RTS believes in communicating as much as possible with clients to ensure success of every project.*

**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?**

**Our 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?**

**Our Answer:** Every month, our clients get a status 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”?**

**Our Answer:** All ITCare 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. 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?**

**Our 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?**

**Our Answer:** Our “all-inclusive” support plan is just that – all-inclusive. One of the more popular service plans offered by IT 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 backup procedures that are either only on premise, or only in the cloud?**

**Our Answer:** We do not allow our clients to use a single backup method, because using only one storage medium incredibly risky. We make sure all our clients follow the 3-2-1 backup method. The rule is: keep at least three (3) copies of your data, and store two (2) backup copies on different storage media, with one (1) of them located offsite in the cloud or at a different safe location.

**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?**

**Our Answer:** We perform a periodic "fire drill" and perform a 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?**

**Our Answer:** While we can't assume responsibility for any client's backups, we absolutely put forth the extra effort to backup as the first step in any project/upgrade; 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?**

**Our Answer:** RTS will consult all clients develop a simple disaster recovery plan for their data and network. We encourage them to do a full disaster recovery plan for their office (which we can also help with as an out of scope project), 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?**

**Our Answer:** We provide our own local in-house help desk and make sure the entire team 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?**

**Our Answer:** We have a variety of technicians on staff that are cross trained but specialize in different areas such as Microsoft Server, Email, Office 365, Network Components, Network Security, Backups and Data Recovery, etc. so our service coordinator team can help assign the most efficient technician for each specific service request. Plus, our hiring process 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?**

**Our Answer:** Our technicians are true professionals that you would be proud to have in your office. They are friendly, dress professionally, treat all clients with respect, and put forth great effort to show up on time. Due to the crazy world of technology, there is a chance that their prior appointment runs longer than expected. If, for some unforeseen reason, they are running late or unable to make appointment time, 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?**

**Our 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 offer to be the liaison between you and your vendor to resolve problems you are having and make sure these applications work smoothly for you. (NOTE: due to the wide variety of unforeseen issues that may occur with LOB applications, most industry-specific software are not included in ITCare)

**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"?**

**Our 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.