

The 10 Questions You've Got to Ask Before Hiring a Small Business

Computer Consultant

By Joshua Feinberg

The 10 Questions You've Got to Ask Before Hiring a Small Business Computer Consultant

Joshua Feinberg
customersvc@smallbiztechtalk.com

Smallbiztechtalk.com <http://www.smallbiztechtalk.com>

Article Title: The 10 Questions You've Got to Ask Before Hiring a Small Business Computer Consultant

Author: Joshua Feinberg

Contact/Author: <mailto:customersvc@smallbiztechtalk.com>

Joshua Feinberg

[Please DO NOT PUBLISH THIS E-MAIL ADDRESS. Your readers can easily contact us from <http://www.smallbiztechtalk.com> - this will help cut down on our "spam overhead".]

Web Site Address: <http://www.smallbiztechtalk.com>

Publisher of "Tips":

KISTech Communications - Morganville, N.J., USA

Word: 610 words

This article is also available online at

<http://www.smallbiztechtalk.com/news/archives/tips081301-ht1.htm>

Keywords: small business computer consultants screening hiring interviewing questions

=====
The 10 Questions You've Got to Ask Before Hiring a Small Business Computer Consultant

Worried about getting "ripped off" or "scammed"? Use these screening techniques to separate the "winners" from the "losers".

By Joshua Feinberg, Editor of Smallbiztechtalk.com <http://www.smallbiztechtalk.com>

Copyright (C) 2001, KISTech Communications Corporation

August 13, 2001

We often get questions from small business owners about how to deal with difficult computer consultants. However, if you're able to uncover potential problems at the start of your relationship with a computer consultant, you can avoid many of these unpleasant issues altogether.

While many small business owners and managers know exactly what to ask when it comes to hiring a salesperson or bookkeeper, hiring a tech person can be more difficult -- especially when that tech person is an independent contractor, or works for a systems or network integrator.

So on top of dealing with the myriad of legal issues surrounding how you retain the services of contractors, as opposed to hiring employees on your payroll, you'll need to know how to ask the "right" questions. Don't make the common mistake of focusing on the wrong things. Use this issue's "How To" Tips as a checklist for doing your homework before you sign on the dotted line.

1. Part-time or Full-time Services for Hire -- Do you have a "day job"? Are you moonlighting?

2. Solo Practitioner or True Consulting Firm -- What do you mean by the "we"? Are there any other people who work at your company? Are they employees or contractors? What are their names, specialties, and backgrounds? How long have they been with the company? Will they be involved with this account?

3. Small Business or Large Company Experience-- What "size" is your typical client, in terms of number of PCs, employees, and annual revenue?

4. Generalist or Specialist -- What industries have you worked with and in what particular aspects and software applications? What types of products and services does your company shy away from? Do you work with specialty vendors?

5. Reseller, True Consultant, or Hybrid -- Does your company resell products, such as hardware and software? Is this a "profit center" or do you mind if we shop for our products elsewhere? Are there any other vendors, such as ISPs or telephone companies that your firm acts as an agent for?

6. Costs and Billing Practices -- What are your payment terms, rates, and minimums? What type of work is billable vs. non-billable? How do you charge for travel time? Phone support? E-mail/online

support? Remote support? Are there any rate premiums for after hours or emergency service?

7. Reference Accounts -- Can you tell me about one of your more long-term accounts? Can you tell me about one of your more recent accounts? Can you tell me about a client who didn't work out and why? Can you provide references?

8. R&D and Skills Development -- How do you keep up with new tech developments?

9. Training Approach and Philosophy -- How do you feel about handholding? 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 revenue opportunities?

10. Fancy Cars, Fancy Offices or Spartan Business Model -- What kind of overhead is built into your rate structure? What am I paying for?

The Bottom Line

Don't fall into the trap of hiring a computer consultant or consulting firm that isn't a good fit for your small business. Be sure to use some of these questions as the basis for making a more informed "hiring" decision. And if you have any doubts, don't be afraid to seek out a second opinion.

Copyright (C) 2001, KISTech Communications Corporation

You have permission to reprint this article from "Tips" in your newspaper, magazine, trade publication, e-zine or web site as long as you use the article in its entirety, without editing and you include the following information:

Copyright (C) 2001, KISTech Communications Corporation, Used by Permission

AND

Joshua Feinberg is an internationally recognized small business technology expert, consultant, columnist, author, keynote speaker, and trainer. He is a published Microsoft Press author, as well as the creator of and two-year veteran writer of the Microsoft Direct Access "VAPVoice: Notes From the Field" column. Learn what your highly paid computer consultant doesn't want you to know! Subscribe to Joshua Feinberg's FREE bi-weekly Smallbiztechtalk.com "Tips" e-zine at <http://www.smallbiztechtalk.com> and receive two FREE mini-reports by e-mail.

ALSO

You must notify us, or send us a copy of the publication or hyperlink where the article reprint has

appeared. If this will be a hard copy of a tear sheet, contact us at customersvc@smallbiztechtalk.com for information on how to send us a copy of your publication. Any deviation from the above is a violation of U.S. Federal and International Copyright. ISSN# 1535-0428.

If you are unable to comply with the above, please contact customersvc@smallbiztechtalk.com so that we can give you a price quote on non-exclusive reprint rights. (100% compliance with the above article reprint instructions gives your publication free non-exclusive reprint rights.)

KISTech Communications reserves the right to modify this policy in the future, for any articles that have not yet been published. Any questions? Please contact our Business Manager Jennifer Feinberg at customersvc@smallbiztechtalk.com.

=====

Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)