



We work with businesses who want the best technical solutions and support

## *10 Tips for Hiring a Computer Consultant*

*An article by the Independent Computer Consultants Association*



### **About Peiser Solutions**

Peiser Solutions works with businesses who want the best technical solutions and support. Since we opened our doors in May, 2001, we have grown and served over forty businesses in San Diego with our blend of technical and business expertise.

Our goal is to help businesses avoid computer headaches, by providing our unique process of evaluation, implementation and support. We provide a wide range of services, follow-thru and maintenance so our clients can focus on their core business and leave the technical issues to us.

We provide our services in three ways:

- One-on-one consulting and training
- On-site system evaluation and problem resolution
- On-going maintenance programs

In addition to our on-site services, we stay in touch with our clients through regular informational newsletters, seminars and membership in local organizations. We are active members of the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce, Encinitas Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Support Network and the Independent Computer Consultants Association.



### **Principal - Dave Peiser**

Dave brings with him 18 years of technology and business experience working for large, midsize and small companies. He has extensive experience with the application of technology in serving business needs, while working in technical and management roles.

Prior to starting Peiser Solutions, Dave worked as a project manager for Scripps Health, where he led a Y2K (remember that?) project that included replacing all the PCs in the Scripps Health System (2800 PCs), as well as coordinating with simultaneous upgrades of network and server infrastructure. He also managed a web redesign project for Scripps which culminated in an entirely new, attractive and usable website ([www.scripps.org](http://www.scripps.org)).

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## **10 Tips for Hiring a Computer Consultant**

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As business-related technology becomes increasingly sophisticated and complex, many business owners, office managers and systems operators are turning to independent computer consultants to develop high tech business solutions that keep a company ahead of the competition and ensure their operation has the tools and training needed to run smoothly and efficiently.

But how do you go about finding and hiring a qualified consultant who understands your business needs?

The Independent Computer Consultants Association (ICCA), a national not-for-profit organization which promotes ethical professionalism within the industry, offers these 10 tips for choosing a consultant:

1. Be wary of the consultant who attempts to `snow you' with technical jargon. A consultant should be able to explain things clearly in terms you can understand. You should feel comfortable with your consultant and believe that he or she has your best interests at heart.
2. Listening is a virtue. A consultant should listen to your needs and objectives, before offering solutions. A consultant's primary task is to understand your needs and translate them into system solutions that will work for you.
3. Check references carefully. It is not necessary that a consultant has done exactly the same work for someone else, but it is important that his clients are happy with the results and continued service.
4. Ask about the consultant's relationships with vendors. Vendor ties often mean that the consultant has better access to the technical support needed to complete projects. Some vendors offer extra training and technical support to consultants with whom they have an on-going relationship.
5. Inquire about the consultant's objectivity. Ask the consultant to specify any special allegiances or financial incentives tied to computer products. The ICCA code of ethics specifies that as independent computer consultants, members do not have undisclosed interests in client decisions, and are objective in their recommendations for each specific client situation.



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6. Determine who the consultant's backup will be. Discuss up front who will complete the project if something happens to the consultant. Many smaller consulting practices have agreements with colleagues or through their associations to provide backup for them.
7. Consultant Accountability. Regular status reports are a good safeguard against the unexpected. They should keep you up-to-date on the consultant's progress, as well as the costs being incurred.
8. An hourly or daily rate doesn't tell the whole story. An experienced consultant at a high hourly rate can usually justify that rate by producing value in a lot less time than a lower priced consultant. Plus, a good job will lead to lower maintenance costs in the future.
9. Membership in a computer association adds legitimacy. Consultants in organizations such as ICCA pledge to uphold a high business standard and are often backed by professional liability insurance. ICCA, for example, functions as a nationwide business support forum composed of nearly 1,500 member firms. Through the network, a consultant is able to obtain business and technical support to provide the best possible service. Consultants also exchange referrals to help clients find a proper fit between their needs and a consultant's expertise. Association involvement demonstrates a dedication to professional development, which is essential to staying on the cutting edge of the computer industry.
10. Ask how long the project will take. The consultant should be able to give you an idea of the time that is involved. This is what he or she will base the cost estimate on. Make sure you also establish a way for the consultant to notify you of delays.



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