



Consultants Network

Why Hire a Member Frequently Asked Questions

Who are members of the Apple Consultants Network?

Members of the Apple Consultants Network are independent technical experts – skilled and certified in the setup, use, and maintenance of Apple products and solutions. In addition, many offer related third-party product solutions as well as a variety of training services.

There are more than 1,000 members throughout the U.S. and Canada. They offer a wide variety of services, from setting up an office, network, or workgroup to cross-platform network integration, digital video, publishing automation, and wireless support.

What are the advantages of hiring a member of the Apple Consultants Network?

Membership in the Apple Consultants Network demonstrates a dedication to professional development, and clients who work with Apple Consultants Network members give them top satisfaction ratings: 4.7 out of 5. Members receive training and the latest technical information about Apple and related third-party products and services, and have access to other resources that help them stay on the cutting edge of technology. Being part of a large network of consultants, they can benefit from the knowledge and experience of other members as well as exchange referrals to help clients find a proper fit between their needs and a consultant's expertise. The advantages members get by being in the Apple Consultants Network translate directly into advantages for you.

How do I know if I need a consultant?

If you're like most people, you don't have the time or ability to properly set up and maintain even a small network of computers, and you may not have someone on your payroll to whom you would entrust that mission-critical responsibility. A member of the Apple Consultants Network can bring a high level of technical knowledge and expertise in the latest Apple products and services to you and your company. The solutions they deliver often more than pay for themselves in reduced costs, increased productivity, and other tangible benefits, and there are other benefits to hiring a consultant, such as reduced payroll taxes, no pension or profit-sharing expenses, and the flexibility to use their skills on an as-needed basis. In addition, consultants can often see the "big picture," identifying opportunities for improving your business through technology that you may not have considered. If you don't know for a fact that you're maximizing the potential of the technology your business relies on, then you need a consultant.

How much will a consultant's services cost?

Consultants set their own prices and they vary considerably, depending largely on the going hourly rate in their geographic area for someone with their skills. Investigate different pricing options with the consultant you've chosen and keep in mind that the services and solutions they provide will typically deliver a long-term return on investment. The best approach is to ask the consultant for references of customers who had the same or similar types of services performed, then ask the references if the consultant delivered a valuable service at a reasonable price.

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Where can I find and learn more about individual consultants?

Members of the Apple Consultants Network can be found across the U.S. and Canada. The best way to find a consultant in your area with the skills you need is to search the directory of members at <http://www.apple.com/consultants/>.

Can a consultant provide a solution involving hardware, software, networking, and custom programming?

Overall, members of the Apple Consultants Network have the skills to meet a wide variety of business needs. Individually, most consultants have specialized skill sets and can implement solutions based on a diverse set of products from various companies. A few examples include custom FileMaker Pro databases, accounting solutions, enterprise content management, digital video editing, and cross-platform network integration. In addition, consultants can recommend and help you make your hardware and software purchases. In a survey conducted in 2000, clients of Apple Consultants Network members reported that nearly 100 percent of their purchases were influenced by their consultant, and 90 percent did not encounter any problems with their purchase.

What type of return on investment can I expect from hiring a member of the Apple Consultants Network?

Many customers who have used the services of Apple Consultants Network members report substantial returns on their investment. One advertising agency brought its video production in-house with the help of a consultant and recouped its investment within two days. While returns from other solutions might not be as dramatic, 98 percent of clients of Apple Consultants Network members said they would recommend their consultant to other businesses, according to a 2000 survey conducted by Apple.

What types of businesses use consultants?

All types. Companies of all sizes and in all industries use consultants. To avoid the high costs of a full-time IT staff, many small businesses use consultants as a “virtual” IT staff. Consultants can assess business needs, recommend solutions, implement, and support them at a fraction of the cost of hiring a full-time, in-house staff. Larger companies use consultants as well. Enterprises often have Macintosh computers, PCs, and other platforms sharing the same network. Consultants can work to integrate Macintosh systems into an overall network and provide custom solutions to creative professionals, researchers, and others using the Mac. Many members of the Apple Consultants Network have in-depth expertise in publishing and other creative markets where the Macintosh is especially strong. They can implement solutions such as workflow automation and digital asset management to increase productivity in creative environments. Other members of the Apple Consultants Network are UNIX experts who can help scientific companies make the most of Mac OS X by, for example, identifying and implementing open source research tools or spearheading custom software development.

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Can an Apple Consultants Network member help my company move to Mac OS X?

Definitely. Most members are certified by Apple in Mac OS X and are Mac OS X experts who can help your company reap the full benefits of Apple's operating system.

Do consultants typically offer training?

They certainly do. Seventy-seven percent of members of the Apple Consultants Network provide seminars and training in addition to delivering technical solutions, and 64 percent of clients hire their consultants to train their employees. Some members offer regularly scheduled seminars at training centers. Others are available to provide on-site training at your facility, either one-on-one with individuals or with groups. A broad range of training options is available. Apple Consultants Network members can train your employees to make optimal use of custom solutions implemented at your site. Or, they can deliver training in Mac OS X or in specific applications such as Final Cut Pro or FileMaker Pro. If you are a savvy user who wants to develop code, training is even available in Cocoa, Apple's newest, most powerful development tool.

How do I find out what types of seminars and training are available?

Members of the Apple Consultants Network offer a wide variety of training, from introductory classes in Mac OS X to digital video editing using Final Cut Pro. Schedules and information can be found at <http://consultants.apple.com/events/>. In addition, Apple offers seminars that you may find helpful for your business. You can visit <http://www.seminars.apple.com/> for more details.

If you are looking to maximize your use of technology, members of the Apple Consultants Network can help. Whether you need a customized solution or a simple network set-up, members of the Apple Consultants Network can add value to your business that can result in a substantial return on your investment.