

Help Your HelpDesk Help YOU

Computer problems can be extremely frustrating – and mysterious. You’re working along, often in a hurry (OK, *always* in a hurry), and all of a sudden, something completely unexpected happens. The screen goes blank (or blue), or your data disappears, or the formatting goes awry, or files no longer seem to be where they were. Your productivity (and your chances of meeting your deadlines) just came to a screeching halt. What do you do? You scream for help!

Where do you turn for help? It might be an in-house resource, someone on your staff whose job it is to handle problems like this, or it may be an outside service your company uses for “helpdesk” services. Regardless of who it is, you want to get that help fast and get back on track. But while you depend on that resource for the technical help you will need, there are things you can do to make that process go as smooth and as quickly as possible. Here are some tips to help you get the quickest, best help possible:



- 1. Take a Deep Breath** – You wouldn’t be calling unless a problem was severely affecting your ability to work, and with that always comes frustrations. But your technical help resource is for technical help, not psychological counseling. Try and get your emotions under control so your interaction with your technical resource will be focused and technical in nature. There’s nothing wrong with communicating the urgency of the situation, or even mentioning how frustrated you are, but in the end, it is a technical issue and that’s how it will be solved.
- 2. Be Prepared to Describe What You Did** – It won’t help you get technical help if your description of the problem is simply “it’s broken”, or “I pressed the whatchamacallit and everything went away”. Know what program or application you were using, and what you were doing when the problem occurred. If you did anything out of the norm, or were trying something for the first time, let your technical resource know this. If you were doing something you’ve done numerous before, and the problem was completely unexpected, that’s important for the technician to know, too.
- 3. Be Prepared to Show What You Did** – The things you do as a matter of routine may be hard to describe sometimes, because you don’t think about them anymore. So when something goes wrong, you may be hard pressed to provide details about what led to the problem. Some things you believe are self-evident may not be to the technician. So often, the best way to describe the steps that led up to the problem is to do it again, in the presence of the technician. Fortunately, even in the case of remote helpdesk services, there are tools that will allow them to view your screen and gain a better understanding of what might have caused the problem.
- 4. Be Satisfied the Problem is Solved** – Sometimes, a technician can seem overeager to move on to the next call, and quickly suggest something you could do to fix what you describe. Ask them to hang around while you try their advice and verify the problem is solved, and save yourself the trouble of having to seek help all over again for the same issue. It should only take a few minutes and can save an enormous amount of time and frustration.

Keep in mind, your technical resources, whether in-house, or over the phone, are there to help you. You both want the same thing – to get you back to doing your job! These simple tips will help you maximize the benefits you get from your technical resources, and minimize your downtime (and frustrations)!

Written by Bruce Campbell © 2010 Clare Computer Solutions