

# Successful IT / technical support

## Overview

This practical one-day workshop has a simple objective: **to raise IT and technical service and support standards**. This is done by focusing on the standards, systems and skills needed to delight customers every time they use the technical support team.

## Objectives

For the organisation, key benefits include:

- Improved customer service.
- Greater efficiency; more consistency.
- Fewer errors, problems, and escalations.
- A more inspired Technical Support team acting as a catalyst for new ideas and improvements.

This workshop will help participants:

- Establish the standards and systems that can make every customer feel special and valued.
- Understand what customers (users) want and expect from IT support staff.
- Learn a range of customer-focused communication techniques, tools and skills that will help you solve questions and problems faster.
- Understand and manage customer expectations accurately so that you deliver more than you promise and exceed expectations – in what you do and HOW you do it.
- Satisfy complainers, calm upset customers, and regain confidence and goodwill.
- Improve customer satisfaction through more accurate use of questioning and problem-solving skills.
- Learn from customer problems and complaints and help prevent them in the future.
- Manage your time and learn practical ways to prioritise customer calls and problems effectively.

## Areas of focus

Common improvement areas for IT and technical support include:

- Improved sense of purpose towards their role and responsibilities.
- Introduction of more standard telephone call openings and closing, including use of qualification questions and end-of-call summaries.
- Full and accurate opening, completing and closing of support tickets and administration.
- Greater consistency in approach, attitude and answers given; minimising the effect of users exploiting favouritism or preferring some team members over others.
- Support the implementation of customer survey forms, follow-up calls and emails.
- Far greater and more skilled use of techniques to manage expectations.
- Improved ability to read customers' emotions and real urgency and respond accordingly.
- Reduction of management or 'unhappy' escalations to a few rare exceptions.
- Improved ability to 'say no nicely', sticking to standard procedures, processes and timescales without upsetting or inconveniencing users.
- Being better able to resist and deal with aggressive, 'bullying', manipulating or charming customers and to avoid or reduce queue-jumping by these types of customer.
- Increase the use of the telephone and rely less on email as a form of communication.
- More 'ownership' of problems and seeing things through to completion.

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- Greater focus on making the customer feel valued, special and important – not just solving the technical issue or problem.
- Creating an even higher standard for VIP or genuinely more demanding customers.
- More ideas and suggestions for improvement from the team – during and after the training.
- Improved rapport and consulting skills with face-to-face customer situations.
- Documentation of 'best practice' approaches – with input by team.
- Give a perception of competence and confidence even when unsure of the technology or exact answer; not losing the customer's goodwill or patience.
- Greater use of 'two-staging' calls to better manage the peaks and troughs during a day or week.
- Develop a more empathic and personable approach to providing solutions to problems and answers to customer's questions.

The programme will be tailored to address any other issues of particular concern to your organisation.

### Who should attend?

This workshop is designed for IT and technical support staff (including managers and team leaders), particularly those who support or work with internal customers. It covers all aspects of first, second and third level support skills in a technical environment.

### Format

The training is very practical and objective. Very clear and specific skills, models and techniques are covered. The focus is on improving things that are already working, not going over old ground. Participants will discuss and plan new approaches to real-life examples taken from their own situations.

Each element of the workshop includes:

- High-quality training presentation
- Group exercises and team activities
- High degree of participation and interaction

The workshop includes regular discussion, planning and other practical exercises to develop and practise the skills and methods presented. Participants are never more than twenty minutes away from the next exercise. Presentation and exercises can be tailored to specific situations from participants' work. The style is up-beat and motivational.

### Special features

- The workshop content and topics will be tailored to include personalised examples for the communication skills and problem-solving sections. This can be achieved as part of the one-day pre-course consultancy.
- A pre-training questionnaire will be sent out to all managers, participants, and stakeholders to help the consultant tailor the training.
- A detailed workbook and other materials will be provided to all participants.
- Option to run the one-day workshop as two half-day modules a week apart.
- Option to have half-day online follow-up sessions to reinforce and add further learning (best done a month after the workshop).

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### Expert trainer



Our lead consultant, Graham Roberts-Phelps, specialises in providing high-quality consultancy, coaching and training in customer service and personal productivity. Not only does he have a vast range of experience and expertise in all aspects of customer service – from skills, through to standards and systems – but he also has extensive experience of working in the IT industry. This background makes him the ideal person to design and deliver training on how to give brilliant IT and technical customer service.

Over the last twenty years he has conducted customer service training and consulting for hundreds of organisations from all business sectors across the world, such as SaudiAramco, OpenText, Ambius, BT, AIG, Nationwide, Abbey, Apple computers, British Film Institute, Open University, Thomson Financial, Cosmos Travel, Intel, Virgin Money, Vodafone, AT&T, Orange, Pfizer, GSK, Boots, Unilever, American Express, Thomas Cook, Sony, Connells Estate Agents, Motorola, Cisco, MFI, Barclays Bank, LIFFE, Abbey National, Prison Service, Nortel, Home Office, Law Society, BBC, Daimler-Chrysler, Citroen, ASOS, Weetabix, Pegasus Software, Mole Valley Farmers, Nikon, Shell and many, many others.

In addition, Graham has written over twenty books published in several different countries, including *Customer Service Games for Training*, *Sales Training Games*, *Telephone Tactics*, *Companies don't succeed – people do!*, *90 Brain Teasers for Trainers*, and *Working Smarter*.

Known internationally as both a trainer and a popular motivational speaker, he believes that effective learning has to be interactive and challenging. All his learning events are built around practical exercises, role play and case studies. His training style focuses not on just explaining new ideas or developing new skills, but also on motivating people to use them and to develop themselves as individuals. This approach gets results, as the following comments from workshop participants show:

- 'Brilliant course, really interesting and very focused to my job role and day to day work.'
- 'Took away some very good ideas that I can use every day... good examples too.'
- 'Very confident in the subject, and amusing too. Made the course very interesting. A very clear sales model to use going forward.'
- 'Full of useful hints and tips which I will apply to my job.'
- 'Extremely well presented and structured'
- 'A very intensive course and a lot of concrete tools provided.'
- 'Useful data, tools and insights; engaging and interesting as always.'
- 'Very good... contained everything we do on a regular basis and problems we have come across... the exercises made it very interesting too.'

### Workshop outline

#### 1 Introduction and key principles

- What is excellent service and why does it matter?
- Knowing what your customers really want and expect from your organisation (or team) and you personally – the three S's of success
- Applying these principles to different types and categories of customer

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## 2 Making every customer feel SPECIAL

- The difference that makes a difference – examples of good and bad service situations
- The seven qualities that make customers feel SPECIAL
  - Speed and time
  - Personal / personalise
  - Expectations – manage and exceed
  - Competence / courtesy
  - Information
  - Attitude
  - Long-term relationship and follow-through
- Applying the SPECIAL qualities to your job
- Qualities of IT and technical customer service superstars
- Practical exercises

## 3 Connecting skills: Telephone and face-to-face

- How to quickly 'tune in' to different types of customer
- Understanding body language and non-verbal communication
- First impressions: gaining rapport, empathy, and connecting with customers
- Using the right form of communication – telephone and face-to-face v email and messaging
- Best practice summary

## 4 Consulting, problem definition and questioning skills

- Different types of question and how to ask more effective questions
- Active listening and drawing-out skills
- Creating clarity and confidence through summarising and restating
- Using a prompt sheet of questions to get issues solved fast

## 5 Communication skills and techniques – planning and practice

- Application 1: Telephone skills
- Application 2: Email writing skills
- Application 3: Face-to-face skills

## 6 Convincing and closing

- Managing expectations effectively
- Opening, progressing, and closing tickets
- Checking for customer satisfaction
- Follow up, follow through, get feedback

## 7 Managing difficult situations

- Using the GREAT FUN model – a proven method of dealing with these situations
- Ways to calm frustrated or upset customers
- How to react when you've let a customer down because you've missed an expectation
- What to do when you don't have an answer the customer wants to hear

## 8 Pulling it all together

- Summary of key learning points
- Action plans

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