

Computer Issues? How to Help Your Help Desk

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After a long morning on the phone with the Help Desk, it is surprising that people on sidewalks are not hit over the head more often by computers (and phones) flying out of windows. I wanted to this morning. I really did. But that would be an expensive way to litter, a poor way to problem solve and a good way to find myself out on the same sidewalk looking for new work. Therefore, I did the next best thing... I looked for ways to become part of the solution.

First, the outcome. I explained, calmly and briefly, what I wanted to be able to do: I am trying to search a certain database.

Then, the problem. The computer comes up with zero results.

Then, why it should work. I do this search every day. Things changed when we switched over to a new server.

Then, the appeal. Is this something you can help me with? Smile on your end of the phone when you speak to your help desk professional. They won't see you do it, but they will hear you.

When things get tense (they will), honesty helps: "This is frustrating." Levity helps: "This thing has a mind of its own, I guess." Laughter helps a lot. If you can think of something that is both positive and funny to say in the moment, then you're in great shape.

What helps most, however, might be silence. Let your person work. He or she is focused on getting you back on your feet. They probably did not cause the problem. Their own livelihood depends on their ability to get you back to your livelihood. Let them concentrate. Ask if it's all right to put them on speaker phone and on mute so you can find other things to do at your desk.

And if you feel the frustration welling up and you are about to say, think or feel something really inappropriate or unhelpful, your answer might be to get off the line altogether. Ask if they would like to call you back when they're done. The person might need you on the line, they might not.

There will always be interruptions in business. When your computer problems are interrupting your ordinary day, you can either lose it or not. The choice is always yours. Your Help Desk is there to help you. Help them to do that.

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