



What to Expect from Your IT Service Provider: The Lost Art of Customer Service in the IT Industry



Introduction:

Finding the right Service Provider to manage your IT needs can be a strenuous process. Locating a Provider who handle:

- your problems with urgency
- your planning with a vested interest
- your employees with professional courtesies

may seem difficult, but it's what your company deserves and what you should expect from your IT Service Provider.

In the IT service field there are two aspects to servicing clients. The first is the 'behind-the-scenes' work which is done to maintain your systems with the proper maintenance and troubleshooting to ensure they are 'on-line' and performing at their peak.

The second, and just as important, is the interaction with the client (you and your employees). Assisting clients while remaining professional, friendly and courteous, even during the most stressful times is imperative. This is also what you should expect from your IT Service Provider.



Employee Satisfaction:

Your IT Service Provider should, at a minimum, provide all of your employees with the tools and technical support needed to perform their jobs. Aside from the technical aspect of their duties, your Service Provider's technicians should carry themselves in a professional manner, to a higher standard than what you expect from your employees.

Your employees' satisfaction should be at the forefront of your Service Provider's mind when interacting with your staff. Your employees' productivity can be greatly affected by the availability of their computer systems *and* the rapport they have with their IT support technicians.

Knowledge Sharing:

Being held an 'information hostage' by one person, whether it be a consultant or in-house staff employee, could be catastrophic in the event of an abrupt termination. You should be made aware of passwords, inventories (hardware and software licenses), network diagrams, and vendor contacts.

- Having an updated password list to your network and systems is vital and should be supplied to you by your IT Service Provider.
- Maintaining an updated copy of your current software licenses will help you plan your IT budget and keep you prepared for a software audit.
- Having a list of your IT vendor contacts (i.e. Internet Service Provider, Telecom Provider, software resellers) will come in handy in the event of an emergency.
- Network diagrams and documentation are essential in the event of a disaster to minimize down-time.

Integration:

Your IT Service Provider should take an interest in your field of business, just as your employees. To fully utilize your IT Service Provider you must integrate them- so they have a clear understanding of your workflows and procedures. They will then be able to show you how the latest technologies and software can be used to improve these processes.

The more you integrate your Service Provider, the more you will benefit from their knowledge and expertise. Fixing problems on a computer should not be the extent of your Service Provider's role.

Communication:

Correcting issues will always be the number priority of your IT Service Provider, but maintaining an on-going and open communication line with the affected end-user(s) is almost as imperative. An end-user should always be aware of the following:



- the specific work that is being performed to their system
- an estimated timeframe that their system will be unavailable (if any)
- when the work is completed, the resolution should be provided in clear terms which the end-user understands
- if possible, suggestions should be provided to eliminate the reoccurrence of the issue

All computer issues should be documented and analyzed for trends. Issues that arise often can be curtailed by preventative maintenance or end-user training.

Service Level Expectations:

A clear understanding of the service level you expect to receive should be agreed upon and your Service Provider should be held accountable to that level. Being that your Service Provider is not on-site every day, a strong understanding of response time is required in order to ensure a lasting relationship.

Review and Forecast:

An open line of communication between you and your IT Service Provider should be maintained at all times. Monthly or quarterly meetings are a must to review:

- computer issue trends
- plans for upgrades and maintenance
- to keep your company abreast of the latest software and hardware technologies

Short term and long term goals should be established and broken down into tasks with phases or timelines to keep the momentum moving forward.

Conclusion:

Providing the best possible technical support and guidance, in a timely and professional manner, is the main goal of all IT Service Providers. But an often overlooked facet to the service array is the way in which these services are delivered.

When you turnover the data and life blood of your company to an outside consultant- you should expect them to handle this responsibility with the care and respect it deserves. From service level expectations to properly planned maintenance times to an open communication channel, your IT Service Provider should be making every effort to keep you informed and updated concerning the current on-goings of your computer systems.



About Data Troop:

We specialize in a full support IT service solution for the small and medium sized business. Our industry recognized expertise and 15 years of business experience in hardware, software and networking allows us to anticipate your organization's ever changing requirements. Data Troop services many types of businesses throughout the Delaware Valley offering a fully out-sourced IT solution. We pride ourselves in not only being the most proficient technical team, but in the way we deliver our services

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