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Product Specialist / Support Technician

Key Qualifications

Strong communication and troubleshooting skills:

Just like solving a mystery, it takes a certain talent to find all the clues, locate the problem and determine the steps to take to correct it. I can approach a problem from several different directions to find the solution. Combining this troubleshooting talent with my communications skills, I'm able to determine what needs to be done and clearly convey that solution to the person who needs it.

Many years' experience with computer software and hardware:

I've had over 20 years' experience supporting and using all sorts of computer equipment, from the early Apple II systems to today's multi-processor gigabit servers. I have a solid background with the operating systems and application software in use today.

Good sense of empathy:

Not every computer user is a "geek." I didn't start out as one, either. What I know, I learned from using things and asking questions, so I understand what it feels like to be the person on the far end of the phone having problems. Not all "computer people" understand that the rest of the world doesn't always have a clear understanding of how all these things work -- I do.

Strong Internet experience:

Even before the advent of today's Internet, I was providing technical support to computer users online. The various ways of communicating technical information, and answering questions, had their start in the online worlds of services like CompuServe. It's a talent I've worked hard to develop and maintain. It's served me well over the years in both obtaining and providing technical support.

Employment History

Wal-Mart, Murrieta, CA 2008 to present

Overnight Stocking Associate

Part-time four nights a week, restocking the automotive department. (Interim job to keep some money coming in until I can find a good IT job that takes real advantage of my skills.)

Wycliffe Associates, Orange, CA 2001 to 2008

Computer Support Manager

The "go-to" guy for all aspects of computer support -- software, hardware, network, including:

- Configuring and supporting computer systems for use domestically and in mission assignments overseas.
- Providing remote support via telephone, email and through remote-control (TightVNC, Remote Desktop and pcAnywhere) systems.
- Network support -- email accounts, network accounts, server maintenance, cabling, and wireless connectivity.
- Providing after-hours technical support for overseas offices via the use of the Internet and cellular SMS messaging technology -- when an urgent issue comes up half a world away, I set things up so a simple message via email to my cell phone brought help.

dBASE, Inc., Vestal, NY 1999 to 2000

Knowledgebase Manager

Created a centralized repository of technical information for reference by customers and support technicians:

- Brought the dBASE product data over from Borland to make it available for public access.
- Used FrontPage and Dreamweaver to create a web interface for the public to access that information.

Motorcycle Safety Foundation, Irvine, CA

1997 to 1999

Help Desk Manager

First point of contact for all matters of technical support within three non-profit organizations:

- My background with dBASE made it possible to recover data during a time when the custom FoxPro application used by the call center frequently crashed and required extensive data recovery. Until the application was rebuilt using MS Access and SQL Server, I was able to keep the call center running with minimal downtime.
- Handled deployment of Windows 95 to over 50 Windows 3.1 workstations over the course of one weekend.

Toshiba America Information Systems, Irvine, CA

1996 to 1997

Online Support Specialist

Provide technical support to Toshiba computer users and dealers via CompuServe and in-house channels.

- At the time I started, Toshiba had one small forum on CompuServe for their notebook customers. I expanded that to provide a much larger support area for the notebook users, plus opened a second forum for their new line of desktop systems, plus brought increased involvement on the part of Team Toshiba (outside online volunteers) in providing peer-to-peer support online.

Computer Associates, Islandia, NY

1992 to 1996

Online Support Specialist

Provide full-service online support to CA customers for a wide range of software products.

- When CA acquired Nantucket Corp., CA had virtually no in-house expertise in providing online support. There was one CompuServe forum which was used for communication with beta testers and little else. Within one year, we had seven forums in operation to cover support for nearly all of CA's microcomputer software line, plus a greatly-expanded beta test forum.
- I was also the only beta tester within CA for Windows 95, and the very early versions of the Microsoft Network (MSN).
- During the annual CA-World technical conferences, I created the software labs which conference attendees used to experiment with pre-release versions of our products, and to tinker with techniques learned during the various seminars at the conference. This meant configuring all of the workstations prior to shipment to the conference site; installing and networking them on-site; and maintaining the network during the course of the conference.
- At one point we hosted a series of online "chats" between CA customers worldwide and our CEO, Charles Wang. I believe this was one of the very first such online conferences.

Nantucket Corporation, Culver City, CA

1991 to 1992

Online Support Specialist

Provide full online technical support to Clipper developers via CompuServe.

- When I started, there was only one part-time online support technician, which resulted in a bottleneck - slow resolution of problems reported via CompuServe. I took over full-time online support, plus recruited volunteers from among the Clipper development community to provide user-to-user support online. The volunteer program grew so popular that there was a backlog of volunteers wanting to join up!
- Nantucket was acquired by Computer Associates in 1992.

Ashton-Tate, Torrance, CA

1984 to 1991

Software Support Specialist

Provided online and telephone support for A-T software products.

- Originally, I handled telephone support for dBASE and Framework, but the online world was just starting to grow. My team created one of the first online support forums on CompuServe, which proved to be enormously popular with our customers.
- We later expanded our online presence to include other online services such as GENie, and a dial-up bulletin board system. The bulletin board grew in popularity to the point where we expanded it to 128 incoming lines, plus toll-free access via CompuServe's data network.
- We eventually had three forums operating on CompuServe -- two for the public and one for beta testers -- plus an extensive participation from support technicians and product designers in both

Torrance and the development center in the San Jose area.

Computer City, Santa Ana, CA

1983 to 1984

Field Support Technician

I provided technical support to customers in various store locations within the Computer City chain (Los Angeles and Orange counties), including on-site installation and individualized training.

- During this time, there were a great many brands and types of personal computers, including Apple (pre-Macintosh), IBM, Digital, Grid and Compaq -- and multiple operating systems as well. I was able to provide support to customers -- and sales staff -- on all of these platforms.

Micro-D, Fountain Valley, CA

1982 to 1983

Inside Sales, Product Evaluation

Originally, this was a telephone sales clerk position: answer the phones and take the orders. As Micro-D grew, the role changed:

- Since I am a tinkerer, I was allowed to spend time learning about various new hardware and software products, and to provide orientation training to my co-workers so they could better present and sell them to our customers.
- Originally, the sales department had little or no product information to use as a reference, or to send to prospective buyers. I built up and maintained an extensive library of product manuals, brochures and fact sheets for use by the sales team.
- Later, I was moved full-time into product evaluation: examining new products and considering them for inclusion in the Micro-D product line.

Team Electronics, Fairbanks, AK

1981 to 1982

Computer Sales Manager

In-store sales and merchandising of consumer electronics and personal computers.

- At the time I started, the computer department consisted of one Apple II computer, a TV set, and a half-dozen games. As the computer market grew, I was able to expand this portion of the store to the point where it accounted for 30% of the store's floor space, and over 40% of the store's sales.
- Fairbanks had little in the way of service facilities for computers at this time. I was one of the very first technicians in central Alaska to be factory-qualified to provide Apple Level 1 service.

Military Service

US Air Force, Elmendorf AFB, AK

1975 to 1980

Avionics Communications Systems

I troubleshoot, repaired and performed preventive maintenance on radio communications and navigation systems on USAF aircraft. At one point, due to manpower changes, I was the only radio communications technician assigned to support 13 transports and six rescue helicopters. When the radio workload was light, I pitched in with changing engines, servicing hydraulics, de-icing and refueling -- whatever it took to keep the aircraft flying.

Summary of Qualifications

Technical Support

I have a proven track record of clearly and accurately solving problems for customers. I can do so over the phone, via email, in real-time online, or on-site. If I don't know the answer, I know how to find it.

Bottom line, that's what a support technician is all about.

Certifications

Microsoft Certified Professional - Windows XP