

How to Relate to Computers and Influence I.T. People

from the (I.T.) Customer Teaming Seminar Series



How to get the best “Deal for your I.T. Dollar”

How to Relate to Computers and Influence IT People

These slides can help you:

1. **Avoid getting the IT solution you don't want**
2. **Get the practical outcome you need for your business**
3. **Avoid IT excuses like “this is an unforeseen circumstance beyond our control” OR “other dependencies created this problem” OR “there was insufficient time for testing” OR “that is a user issue”**
4. **Benefit from IT nous rather than being cheese for the IT mouse**
5. **Liberate yourself from the shackles of shoddy solutions.**

This presentation is designed using some wry, real life remarks. The intent is not to diminish IT professionals NOR their clients. However, the points made are poignant for both.



How to Relate to Computers and Influence IT People

So, how can you get better outcomes when working with IT?

How can you get a better
“Deal for your I.T. Dollar?”

The first step is to remember some key points about IT and IT clients working together. The next is to follow a very simple process as customers of IT.

The following slide contains the points that both IT and IT clients ought remember.



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Key Points to Remember

Points for IT Service Providers to Remember when interacting with clients

1. Clients are not the “paranoid, recalcitrant, blaming, enemy” even if they act that way.
2. You do not need to “beat the clients into submission” until they “wake-up and realize what is practical and reasonable.”
3. Clients may well have no “#&^+*#” –ing idea but that does not mean they are stupid nor unreasonable.
4. A change of mind is not necessarily a bad thing.
5. Solving problems is better than sharing blame.
6. Principle 1 of “Customer Teaming” states that IT providers and clients are in the same team and, when you are in the same team, **EVERYONE HAS A MORAL OBLIGATION TO FIND A SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS AND WORK TOGETHER.**



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Key Points to Remember

Points for Clients of IT Service Providers to remember when interacting with IT

1. IT professionals are human beings so respect, tolerance, compassion and professionalism go a long way when there is a problem.
2. Most IT people really want to do a good job.
3. A computer is a box with wires in it, not a magical wand.
4. A program is a set of instructions, not a magic formula.
5. IT cannot solve customer/business problems that you yourself do not understand or cannot articulate in words of less than three syllables.
6. If you cannot explain your need clearly and precisely, and if IT remains faithful to your lack of precision, you are likely to be disappointed.
7. Computer programs have a “Complexity Co-efficient”© that means that complexity increases with functionality and relationship between functionality and data.
8. The Complexity Co-efficient can create outcomes that no-one can predict so failure is not always a lack of talent nor a lack of good intent nor a lack of goodwill.
9. Principle 1 of “Customer Teaming” states that clients and IT providers are in the same team and, when you are in the same team, **EVERYONE HAS A MORAL OBLIGATION TO FIND A SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS AND WORK TOGETHER.**



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Having established some key ideas about working together, the next step is a bold one for clients of IT and IT people.

If IT and IT clients accept these next points, life on the IT super-highway will become better for everyone.

Be careful, you may not like what you are about to read.



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For the IT people reading this, the fact is, you (partially or totally) create the customer you get. That means, your interactions with customers will either produce the customer from hell or heaven. The failure in relationship between customers and IT often relates to IT:

- People Becoming slaves to customer whims
- Allowing themselves to become whipping posts
- Having an unwillingness to confront Customers
- Using a fight or flight response when dealing with “difficult” customers
 - Using immature process models
- Having poor quality control in IT in terms of both quality assurance processes and compliance with process control models
- Lack of business acumen or a desire to understand the business and the business’s customers.

The first step then is for IT to assume that any outcome is totally their responsibility and then become part of the solution!



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There is another set of truths, and this set is for IT Clients themselves. The truth is that many IT clients are part of the IT problem they are experiencing. Yes! Customers can create IT problems through:

- **Unclear, incomplete or non-existent business and organisational development strategies**
- **Not communicating business and organisational development strategies to IT**
- **Poorly explained, or unclear expression of, needs (business, organisational, internal and external)**
 - **Unwillingness, or inability, to prioritise needs**
- **Inability to define, or explain, the ROI equation they are seeking from IT**
 - **Poor “process” maturity and/or quality assurance**

The first step then is for IT Customers to also assume that any outcome is totally their responsibility and then become part of the solution!



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The next few slides provide an overview only of an approach, with key steps, that both IT and IT Customers can

JOINTLY

follow to ensure the best outcomes for the IT Customer and hence the greatest satisfaction for IT.



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The flowchart on the right-hand side indicates the key information, data, documentation and knowledge sets which IT Clients ought to provide to IT and which IT service providers ought see from their clients.

IT Clients and IT should mutually discuss information that flows from the approach on the right and ensure “mutual meaning©” and agreements prior to any action.



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In conclusion

..... there is a body of information which will help IT provide solutions that better meet business needs (see page 10). The client owns this information and ought be accountable for providing it to IT

.....IT service providers ought seek business strategy, planning and operational process information (see page 10) from their customers so that they can match the IT solution to the customer.....

..... there is a set of attributes (see page 11) that can help businesses operate more efficiently.....

..... there is also set of attributes (see page 11) that can help IT produce solutions which are more cost-effective, time-efficient and customer/client responsive.



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The flowchart on the right-hand side of this slide indicates the four operational attributes which ought govern the operations of both IT Clients and IT itself.

In IT, these attributes are demonstrated by brand name tools like ITIL & CMM (ask your IT contact about these).

In business, these types of attributes are called Quality Assurance and Business Planning

Process

Establishing clearly defined, flowchart-described and checklist monitored, processes.

Maturity

People - how interactions are run
Process - ensuring that processes have a well-proven ability to produce desired outcomes.

Quality

A commitment to abide by, review, and audit, process compliance AND change requirements

Library

Maintaining a catalogue, with file and location records, of data, documents, flowcharts, guidelines & checklists of all the above

Kinematic has a Business Quality Library, Alignment Plus Business Model and Performance Maturity Quality Library that work for business and IT.

It is recommended that you work with your own in-house system as a first step.

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In summary, success in IT service provision will be achieved by

IT Customers/Clients providing IT with essential information (see page 10);

IT service providers seeking the information they need (see page 10);

IT Customers/Clients adopting sound business planning and organisational processes which include quality assurance “type” approaches (see page 11);

IT service providers adopting sound IT processes (e.g. CMM & ITIL - see page 11);

IT service providers and IT Customers/Clients sharing their understandings;

A willingness for IT service providers and IT Customers/Clients to engage in robust discussion of mutual accountability;

A willingness to establish mutual understanding and “mutuality”; and

An ability to believe in, and act with, good will.



How to Relate to Computers and Influence IT People

This concludes the “How to Relate to Computers and Influence IT People” presentation.

I trust this material can help IT service providers and their Customers/Clients achieve greater success.

With respect to good will and mutual understanding, the (IT) **Customer-Teaming** workshop could be highly beneficial.

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These slides are no substitute for professional advice based on consultation and assessment.

