

# ANSWER QUEST TIP SHEET

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BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## The Exciting Adventures of Capt. Cable Modem and Dee S. Ell

Recently, many of us have been the victim of Excite filing for bankruptcy and local cable modem companies informing us not to worry, they will take care of everything.

Well for the most part, that has been true. Our service was switched pretty easily but there's still the issue of our email being switched. Up in Williamsport, PA, a friend hasn't been so lucky. His cable modem has been almost non-usable since the beginning of the year due to his cable modem company's entanglement with Excite.

And I've heard of some people on the west coast just not having any service at all until late January.

Some have jumped ship and switched to DSL service (if it's available in your area). Problem with DSL has been that some local resellers have gone belly up leaving customers without any service either (this wasn't as widely announced as the Excite news).

Our local telephone company's DSL service for the most part has been pretty good. But as always, there are those times when it's like pulling teeth to get the service to work correctly.

It gets very frustrating when problems arise and the technical support people are only told half of what they need to know or not at all. And after many many phone calls with different people, you finally get an answer that actually sounds feasible and/or works.

So what do you do? Well, let's go through some basic things to know about dealing with technical support.

There are normally several layers of people on a typical help desk.

After going through all the telephone prompts and pressing 1, 2, 5, 3, 1, etc you reach ... drum roll please ... level 1.

Yes, you are now talking to first level technical support. They are there to help figure out if you are having a simple problem or if it will need more attention. Most of the time, they can assist you and your problem is solved in a very short period of time.

What do you do if your problem's not solved? Well, you need to make sure you are writing everything down: person's name, when you called, what they said, what they had you do to try to fix the problem. Keep this all in a book that you keep next to your computer and call it "My PC Problem Log." Make sure you ALWAYS get an issue or problem tracking number (what ever it is called).

You've now been very patient and the problem is still not fixed. What do you do when you feel that you can't get past level 1?

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Ask to have your call escalated to the next level. This doesn't guarantee that you will pass level 1 but it might get someone else on the line that can help you. Another phrase to use is "I'm sorry, that's not acceptable, what is your supervisor's name?" Pause. "May I speak with your supervisor?"

Having worked in the computer field for as long as I have, I do feel that you need to know it's not always the technician's fault that your problem isn't solved. There are times when information is not passed down the line to them (and trust me, there can be a tangled web of people it has to go through to get down to level 1).

Nod your head in agreement if you've been in this situation?

Now look around and see who is staring at you nodding your head to yourself.

Sometimes you need to just step back and take a breath. Sometimes you need to just say very politely "Thank you I'll try again on my own." Hang up and call right back. Odds are you will get someone else and hopefully they will know more about the situation.

Do you know that our biggest DSL provider in the area is having email problems sending out attachments and that they are not notifying their customers? They are just waiting for you to call in! And what about the problem with login passwords not being reset correctly and a brand new customer not even being able to log in to use his DSL (this was finally fixed after a week).

One important thing to remember is: **write down everything!** Keep track of what everyone asks you to do. Make sure you get their names and tracking number for your problem. And the most important thing someone taught me years ago is that little phrase "May I speak with your supervisor." (*Thanks Dru*)

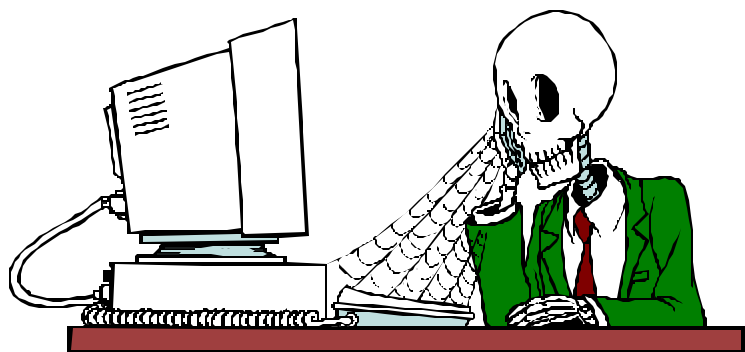
Good luck!

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