



The Art of Software Support

By Françoise Tourniaire, Richard Farrell

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Includes detailed, practical recommendations for structuring and operating a support organization. This book will be invaluable to managers whether they are building a support organization from scratch, or seeking to improve an existing operation. Covers all the major principles of designing a customer-focused support operation. Describes call management models and implementation. Presents techniques for measuring support center performance. Shows how to develop the right support structure and support programs for your organization. Considers the role of outsourcing. Discusses how to manage support people -- and manage the resolution of software bugs. Compares tools for software support. Shows how to involve the support organization in new product planning, training and testing. Includes sample user's guide, checklists for resolving calls, determining staffing levels, and cost-justifying a support center budget. Managers, executives and support engineers involved in software support.

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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

The practical, end-to-end guide to designing and operating help desks and software support centers. This book compiles detailed, practical recommendations for structuring and operating a support organization. It will be invaluable to managers whether they are building a support organization from scratch, or seeking to improve an existing operation. Learn all the major principles of designing a customer-focused support operation. There is comprehensive coverage of call management models and implementation, and techniques for measuring support center performance. Readers learn how to develop the right support structure and support programs for their organization, and when and whether to outsource. The book includes an insightful discussion of how to manage technical support staff effectively. Other topics include: how to manage the resolution of software bugs, compare tools for software support, and involve users in the development process. The book includes a sample user's guide, checklists for resolving calls, determining staffing levels, and cost-justifying a support center budget. For managers, executives and support engineers involved in software support.

From the Inside Flap

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is a book about the design and operation of software support centers and help desks. It is a book primarily for managers, but also for executives and support engineers who are involved in the world of software support. In it we take you through the important areas of concern that every support operation must address. We cover the major principles of designing a customer-focused support operation to help you put your customers first as the cornerstone of your strategy for business success. Throughout the book we offer detailed, practical prescriptions and recommendations for structuring and operating a Support organization that can be used either to help you build one from scratch or to help you improve an already existing one. As an executive, you will gain the background you need to make the solidly informed decisions on proposals brought to you by support managers. As a support engineer, you will gain a window on the larger world in which you work and see what lies in store if you choose to move into management as a career. In writing this book we had help from many people. We are grateful to them beyond what our words can tell.

Our thinking on management has been greatly influenced by Fernando Flores of Business Design Associates. From Ken Williams at Intel and, later, Ingres we learned much about the art of people management. Barry Shamis contributed his expertise in that most important of management skills, recruiting. Sue Shields shared with us the fundamentals of world-class support as practiced by Hewlett-Packard. We benefited from many conversations on customer service with Ron Kaufman.

Our colleagues and associates at ASK and at Sybase provided much of our learning. They gamely accepted our experiments and questions and always generated more.

David Aune, Chris Davis, Chris Doell, Richard McIntosh, Roy Moore, and Darcy Van Vuren reviewed the manuscript, pointing out errors and contributing their experiences and insights where ours was lacking.

Special thanks to Richard and Roy who went through the entire book and, especially, to David whose detailed suggestions contributed much to its final content. Sumi Sohari and Rafael Coto of Action Technologies, Inc. assisted us with the Basic Action Workflow Process Builder software used for the Basic Action Workflow mapping in Chapter 2.

Many thanks to Bill Rose, the ultimate and tireless advocate of software support as a profession, with whom we consulted when first starting out to redesign support at Ingres and from whom we first heard the richly

descriptive phrase for the start of every day in the support business . . . “It begins.”

We thank also Sandy Emerson of Sybase Press who encouraged us in this endeavor and helped us find our publisher.

Mark Taub, our editor at Prentice Hall, took a chance on two unproven authors. We are grateful for his trust and his straightforwardness in working with us.

Our warm thanks to Eileen Clark who patiently and thoroughly reviewed our manuscript and turned it into a book.

Oakland, California FRANCOISE TOURNIAIRE

November 1996 RICHARD FARRELL

www.supportline.com

From the Back Cover

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The first complete, real-world guide to building and running help desks and software support centers.

Quality software support is now a fundamental differentiator in satisfying both your external and internal customers. And in today's high-pressure, heterogeneous computing environments, it's more difficult to deliver quality support than ever before.

The Art of Software Support' gives you proven, best-in-class integrated tools and techniques for structuring and operating a customer-focused support organization—and for overcoming the crisis mentality that's so common in support organizations. Whether you're starting a software support or help desk organization, or seeking to improve the one you already have, you'll find invaluable guidance on:

- Choosing and implementing the call management model that's right for your organization.
- Selecting tools—including phone systems, fax systems, knowledge bases, customer tracking applications, and other software.
- Measuring support center performance.
- Packaging support programs that can make your organization a profit center.

Learn when to outsource—and when not to. And discover practical, easy-to-implement ideas for every stage of the software lifecycle, from new product planning and testing, to managing software bugs and fixes. *The Art of Software Support* also gives you time-and-money-saving tools you can use right now, including:

- A sample user's guide.
- Call resolution checklists.
- Worksheets for determining staffing levels and justifying budgets.

Perhaps most important, *The Art of Software Support* offers practical help with the tough challenge of supervising support people. You'll learn how to determine staffing levels, hire the right people—and keep them, even in difficult times.

Whether you manage software support, or you're a support engineer working “in the trenches,” *The Art of Software Support* will dramatically enhance your effectiveness.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Levi:

This The Art of Software Support book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book will be information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This kind of The Art of Software Support without we comprehend teach the one who looking at it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't end up being worry The Art of Software Support can bring whenever you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even telephone. This The Art of Software Support having fine arrangement in word and also layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Michelle Favors:

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Sena Meyer:

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Paul Herbert:

Many people said that they feel fed up when they reading a publication. They are directly felt the idea when they get a half parts of the book. You can choose the actual book The Art of Software Support to make your reading is interesting. Your own skill of reading talent is developing when you including reading. Try to choose simple book to make you enjoy to see it and mingle the feeling about book and examining especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to available a book and examine it. Beside that the guide The Art of Software Support can to be your new friend when you're really feel alone and confuse in what must you're doing of these time.

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