

# Rules of Tech Support

From: <https://github.com/morriscox/Rules-of-Tech-Support>

## Users

### Rule 1 - Users lie.

Rule 1A - It may not be malicious or willful, but Rule 1 is always in effect.

Rule 1B - Users assume you don't know they are lying.

Rule 1C - Users continue to lie as a result.

Rule 1D - When caught in a lie, users get angry.

Rule 1E - Users lie even when they aren't users.

Rule 1F - If they are not lying, then they are wrong.

Rule 1G: Accept that you will eventually have to lie to get the user to do what you need them to do.

### Rule 2 - Explain everything as simply as possible.

Rule 2A - There is no language simple enough to make a user understand anything.

Rule 2B - Emojis are NEVER an answer.

### Rule 3 - User caused problems are caused by tech support.

Rule 3A - As it's your fault, they don't want to be billed.

Rule 3B - All issues are user issues. If there are no users, no issues get reported, no tickets get created. Ergo, it must be users who are responsible.

### Rule 4 - If it doesn't work, it is your fault.

Rule 4A - If it does, you had nothing to do with it.

### Rule 5 - If you take the time to visit the user's desk, the problem will magically have fixed itself.

Rule 5A - Or the solution is bound to be really simple.

Rule 5B - Or the user left the office moments after entering the ticket, and won't be back for days. How long is uncertain as these users never use their calendar.

Rule 5C - Or when they do, they won't have shared it with you or they entered an all-day event as taking an hour.

Rule 5D - The problem will be solved by doing something you already asked them to but they said it didn't work. - /u/Responsible-Slide-95

Rule 6 - All users consider their situation to be more important than others, even if they know you are helping someone else.

Rule 6A - All users want VIP treatment.

Rule 6B - But they don't ever want to pay for VIP treatment.

Rule 7 - It doesn't matter how much time the user claims something will take. See Rule 1.

Rule 8 - Users never read error messages, if they read anything at all.

Rule 8A - If a user reads an alert or error message, they don't know what to do even if they can only do one thing.

Rule 8B - The more advanced degree a user has, the less likely they are to read anything.

Rule 8C - They will give the wrong error message.

Rule 8D - If a user receives an error, when asked what it says, the user will reply: "I don't know, just an error. I closed it."

Rule 8E - "Isn't it YOUR JOB to know that?"

Rule 8F - Users will not read you the entire error code or message or will read everything else.

Rule 8G - If the user reads you the error message in its entirety, it will be irrelevant to the issue.

Rule 9 - Expect any and all jargon and technical terms (such as wireless) to be misunderstood.

Rule 9A - Expect everything to be misinterpreted.

Rule 9B - All jargon is the same to users.

Rule 9C - All jargon will be used incorrectly.

Rule 10 - About half of tech support is solving issues that are only partially related to what is supposed to be fixed.

Rule 11 - No system is idiot-proof enough to best all users.

Rule 11A - If you haven't found a user able to best your system, it's because they haven't found you yet.

Rule 11B - Nature will take as a challenge any attempt to create an idiot-proof system.

Rule 12 - There is nothing so stupid that no one will do.

Rule 12A - Stupid questions do exist.

Rule 12B - There is no such thing as a stupid question, just stupid people. Asking a stupid question identifies a stupid user and therefore the question itself is not stupid.

Rule 13 - Never believe a user who claims that there is nothing that needs to be saved. See Rule W10 and Rule W10A.

Rule 14 - Sometimes you need to trick users in order to get the job done.

Rule 14A - Sometimes you have to make people, not just users, terrified to get them to do what they are supposed to.

Rule 15 - Users care more about things working than in how you pulled it off.

Rule 16 - A user's appreciation for your work is inversely proportional to how difficult it was.

Rule 17 - If you have an accent, then you will be perceived to be in a foreign country.

Rule 18 - Never trust a user.

Rule 18A - Everyone is a user. Even you.

Rule 19 - The most intelligent person you know will be defeated by a mere computer.

Rule 19A - Even if it's you.

Rule 20 - The quickest way to find out who is responsible for something is to do the scream test. Remove that something and see who complains.

Rule 20A - If nobody screamed instantly, users may wait until it has been long enough that the thing has been thrown away and can't be recovered any more. Then you will learn that said thing was critical for some task that absolutely has to be done right now, just like every X years.

Rule 21 - Never underestimate the power of the end user to complicate things.

Rule 22 - If it looks different, then it's broken.

Rule 23 - Never give a user options.

Rule 24 - When you receive a ticket and call the user immediately they definitely won't be at their desk.

Rule 24A - If you email them they will already be on vacation.

Rule 24B - The less time that they're in the office, the more urgent their issue is.

Rule 25 - Watch out for Finagle's Law which states that 'Anything that can go wrong, will — at the worst possible moment.'

Rule 26 - Always have a small list of phrases to get users to do what you are trying to get them to do.

Rule 26A - Only share these with other techs.

Rule 27 - Don't let people know you are a tech. They are likely to ask for free tech support.

Rule 27A - Never, EVER, give out personal contact information.

Rule 28 - Sometimes, you will be the one who is wrong.

Rule 29 - Expect equipment to be placed in bad locations.

Rule 30 - It's always the printer|DNS|server|browser|connection. It's never the printer|DNS|server|browser|connection.

Rule 30A - It's always the printer. Printers are evil.

Rule 30B - Printers are evil because of users.

Rule 30C - If a document fails to print, users will keep trying just to make sure it prints.

Rule 30D - The true importance of the documents they are trying to print will be inversely proportional to the fit they are throwing.

Rule 30E - Users will mash buttons and go through random menus and do random actions until errors go away or the printer is messed up. See also Rule W84.

Rule 30F - Did you check DNS? Check again.

Rule 31 - All user provided information must be verified.

Rule 32 - If you are a female tech, users will ask to speak to a man.

Rule 32A - You will be the only one who can actually help the user even though they will not believe a girl really knows anything.

Rule 32B - You actually know twice as much as the male techs but get only half the respect.

Rule 32C - Guys will pay more attention to your looks/voice than your mind.

Rule 32D - You'll get tons of calls from men (especially if you are attractive) who will even disconnect stuff to get you to go to them.

Rule 32DD - Women will cause IT problems to keep you away from men.

Rule 33 - Just because it worked yesterday does not mean that it will today.

Rule 33A - Just because it didn't work yesterday does not mean that it won't today.

Rule 33B - Things only work when you are paying attention to them.

Rule 34 - Never refer to this Rule by its name.

Rule 35 - Updates will be both solutions and banes, usually at the same time.

Rule 36 - Sometimes, you have to nuke everything.

Rule 37 - Focus on getting things working, then on getting them done right.

Rule 37A - By hook or by crook.

Rule 37B - When things are working right, leave them alone.

Rule 37C - If something starts working, even if you KNOW what you just did shouldn't have fixed it, raise your hands in the air unthreatening-like and slowly back out of the room.

Rule 37D - You only think it's working. The real cause will wait a while and then break everything in a spectacular fashion a few months down the line. Luckily, by then it's usually no longer your problem.

Rule 37E - It will still be your problem.

Rule 38 - There's always a relevant xkcd.

Rule 38A - If you can't find a relevant xkcd, it's because you haven't looked hard enough.

Rule 38B - If there is no relevant xkcd, there is always a relevant Dilbert strip.

Rule 38C - If there is no relevant xkcd or Dilbert strip, there's a relevant entry in The Seventy Maxims of Maximally Effective Mercenaries [Link L1](#)

Rule 38D - If you can't find a relevant xkcd, Dilbert, or Maxim, your problem does not exist.

Rule 39 - You and your work will never be appreciated since if you did your job right, none of these problems would have happened.

Rule 40 - All IT urban legends are true.

Rule 41 - If it takes TFTS to turn you paranoid, you likely haven't been in tech support for very long.

Rule 41A - You aren't paranoid. They really are out to get you.

Rule 42 - You already know the answer.

Rule 43 - Every tech is also a user.

Rule 44 - Never make changes before going on vacation.

Rule 45 - The more you specialize, the less you will remember about basic desktop functions.

Rule 46 - No technical person reads all of the rules. They will act like they know them until the place catches fire, then complain about incomplete documentation.

Rule 46A - Especially if it was the documentation that went up in flames first.

Rule 47 - Don't help anyone who is not paying you in some way as they won't take your advice seriously.

Rule 48 - Vendors will tell you that you need to upgrade to the newest version in order to fix things. If you are on the latest version, they will tell you to wait till the next version.

Rule 48A - If the problem remains reproducible on the latest version, they may tell you to downgrade. Even if you just upgraded per Rule 48.

Rule 48B - It's not a bug, it's an undocumented feature.

Rule 49 - Never assume anyone else is smarter than you.

Rule 49A - Never assume you are smarter than anyone else.

Rule 49B - A user's intelligence will always be precisely what is needed for maximum damage.

Rule 50 - Scheduled updates won't.

Rule 50A - Anything scheduled will break things, especially if you are not available.

Rule 51 - Drivers will drive you bonkers, if you can even find them. Even if you can find them they may not be compatible.

Rule 51A - Drivers are the real threat, not hardware.

Rule 51B - Drivers using hardware [heavy machinery] are also a real threat.

Backhoes/diggers have a magnetic attraction to fiber optics and the drivers have an innate ability to find optical fiber. [Link L2](#).

Rule 52 - No is the answer for every request as long as it's plausible.

Rule 53 - Treat your job like a role playing game [Link L3](#).

Rule 54 - Don't run stuff that you are not supposed to unless Rule 37 and Rule 37A apply.

Rule 55 - The Seventy Maxims of Maximally Effective Mercenaries are always applicable. [Link L1](#)

Rule 55A - Sometimes the applicability of the Maxims is not immediately obvious.

Rule 56 - Get to know the Dunning-Kruger effect [Link L4](#).

Rule 57 - You might want to consider starting the day with coffee or tea and ending with whiskey or scotch or bourbon or beer...

Rule 58 - Vendors might not follow standards.

Rule 59 - You might find people who support you. Reciprocate.

Rule 60 - When a user activates the Swedish Fish rule, they get preferential treatment.

Rule 61 - Like the military says, never volunteer.

Rule 62 - Some bugs are Heisenbugs; they can only occur if they are not being observed. Users do not count as observers.

Rule 63 - Something will be needed right after you get rid of it.

Rule 63A - Once you replace it, you will no longer need it.

Rule 63B - You will buy something and then find out that what you currently have already has what you needed.

Rule 64 - User managed projects will always fail.

Rule 64A - And they will blame you.

Rule 65 - You will complain about something and then realize that you are the one that is guilty.

Rule 66 - You will find yourself putting out fire after fire without any chance to document anything.

Rule 66A - Then get blamed for not documenting everything.

Rule 67 - Try using metaphors and analogies in addition to or instead of technical terms.

Rule 68 - The higher rank an employee is, the more problems you will have with them.

Rule 69 - Refer to Rule 34.

Rule 70 - Anything that will show up as a link should be a link.

Rule 71 - Never take actions that assume a system is a certain way.

Rule 71A - Especially if not assuming makes little or no difference to the troubleshooting process.

Rule 71B - And never if the incorrect assumption will be recognizable to the user.

Rule 72 - Always give users the least amount of access/permissions that you can realistically get away with.

Rule 73 - It's always Dave or Steve or Kevin. Unless it's a Karen.

Rule 74 - Try to phrase things in a way that helps users save face.

Rule 75 - Maintenance, and sometimes coworkers or users, will unplug things and plug them back in wrong or not at all.

Rule 75A - If anything goes wrong they won't tell anyone. You will get to handle the "website down!" or "the internet stopped working!" tickets.

Rule 76 - Only have the minimal required equipment needed for users.

Rule 77 - Your company will be in a very old very shoddy building.



Rule 78 - If someone is acting odd, it might be a social engineering attack. Verify everything.

Rule 78A - VIPs within the company that actually do have the power to have you fired at whim will be the most angered by attempts to verify and will be the hardest to verify.

Rule 78B - Social engineering attackers know Rule 78A.

Rule 79 - Users think they can connect to anywhere from anywhere.

Rule 80 - If this port is taken, port 443 will be as well.

Rule 81 - Most of your job is figuring out what users are talking about.

Rule 81N6 - The GoogleBing awaits.

Rule 82 - Temporary solutions aren't.

Rule 83 - Every company has a Production environment and a Testing environment. If you're lucky, they are separate environments.

Rule 84 - Users already have a certificate of proficiency in computing.

Rule 85 - Always let someone know that you are there to fix a problem.

Rule 86 - You might encounter a user who is nice, doesn't need everything explained, takes you seriously, reads you complete error messages, and does what you tell them to do with no drama. neigh Seriously, they do exist.

Rule 87 - Users who always demand the latest hardware never work in a position that requires the latest hardware.

Rule 88 - Sometimes you need a user to fix your problem.

Rule 88A - Only a user will find the real problem.

Rule 89 - You will be expected to be your own tech support.

Rule 90 - You will have to support software older than you are.

Rule 91 - The OSI model has layer 8 (user) and layer 9 (management).

Rule 92 - It's always a bad sign if someone is happy to see you.

Rule 93 - "Only one thing" never is.

Rule 94 - Hypothetical questions aren't.

Rule 95 - Every mail from the helpdesk or system administration will be too much to handle if it is longer than two lines.

Rule 96 - Business will demand more experience for their job postings than exists.

Rule 97 - Always keep copies of drivers you download.

Rule 98 - Don't ask users if something is on the screen. Have them read the screen.

Rule 99 - A fix will only work until you fall asleep.

Rule 100 - A theme, especially a system theme, will make it difficult to read anything.

Rule 101 - Urgent isn't.

Rule 404 - You will never find it. See <https://www.explainkcd.com/404>

Rule 404A - If a page is not found, then the entire site|Internet is down.

Rule 404B - Online manuals will disappear without warning. Download a copy for yourself.

Rule 600613 - Used to go to websites instead of going directly.

Rule Ferengi - Users want their problem fixed quickly. Bribes will ensure they will be.

# Users will

Rule W1 - Users will never follow instructions.

Rule W1A - If they do try to follow instructions, they will blame you if they screw up.

Rule W2 - No matter how much skill and knowledge and experience you have, users will claim they know more than you.

Rule W2A - No matter how much skill and knowledge and experience you have, users will claim others know more than you.

Rule W3 - Users will always try to talk with your manager.

Rule W4 - Users will delete or remove things they shouldn't, since they figure they don't need what they are removing or because it might "fix things".

Rule W5 - Users will believe one single thing is responsible for the current situation.

Rule W5A - Often they think you are that one single thing.

Rule W5A.1 - More often they are that one single thing.

Rule W5B - Telling them otherwise will only anger them.

Rule W5C - Unless asked, they have no reason for doing something. If asked, it is computerizing or wizardry.

Rule W6 - Users will try to make and use their own solutions and not accept blame when they don't work.

Rule W6A - If the solution happens to work, the user will think they are now qualified for future issues.

Rule W7 - Users will plug cords into places they shouldn't.

Rule W8 - Users will forget their password (and often their username), even if it's their own name and written down next to them.

Rule W9 - If a document fails to print, users will keep trying just to make sure it prints. See Rule 30C.

Rule W9A - The true importance of the documents they are trying to print will be inversely proportional to the fit they are throwing. See Rule 30C.

Rule W10 - Users will store important documents where they shouldn't. The Recycle Bin, the Trash folder, the Deleted Items folders...

Rule W10A - You will be blamed when things get deleted.

Rule W11 - Users will always call things by the wrong word(s).

Rule W11A - Users will often have one phrase for everything, like "The Internet is down".

Rule W11B - People will think any piece of hardware is actually the computer, even a power strip.

Rule W12 - Users will refuse to take any training since they consider it to be a waste of time.

Rule W13 - Users will claim that they are not stupid even after ample evidence.

Rule W13A - A user's self-perceived intelligence is directly proportional to the level of condescension to which they treat you.

Rule W13B - The lack of knowledge a user has on a subject is proportional to the amount they claim to know about a subject.

Rule W14 - Users will be certain that the laws of physics and the (current) limits of technology do not apply.

Rule W14A - Users will believe that anything in a movie that involves technology is real.

Rule W15 - Users will never think to use a search engine for answers to their questions.

Rule W15A - When users do search, they will try to use GoogleBing.

Rule W16 - Users will use cheap equipment like surge protectors to protect their expensive equipment.

Rule W16A - Users will use cheap chargers for expensive items like smartphones.

Rule W17 - Users will refuse to accept that anything involving computers isn't too difficult for them.

Rule W17A - Or give up at the slightest obstacle.

Rule W17B - Users will refuse to accept that anything involving computers is too difficult for you.

Rule W18 - Users will wait for days or weeks or months before seeking help.

Rule W18A - Users will demand help at any hint of trouble.

Rule W18B - The longer it takes to report it, the more urgent the user will claim that it is.

Rule W18C - The time it takes to fix the issue is inversely proportional to the amount of time it took to report it.

Rule W18D - The problem has retroactively been your responsibility for the months or years the user never told you about it, not just for the 10 minutes since they did.

Rule W19 - Users will believe something that can only affect one device can affect others by their mere presence.

Rule W20 - Users will expect all devices to know that it is them.

Rule W20A - Users will believe anything that can connect to anything can completely control that thing.

Rule W20B - Users will believe one entity (a server or the cloud) controls all things digital, as well as time and space.

Rule W21 - Users will believe their desire for something to happen is sufficient for it to happen.

Rule W21A — Users believe there is a super secret DWIM (Do what I Mean) mode that all support people have access to but rudely refuse to use to resolve the user's issue.

Rule W22 - If you fix something quickly, the user will not want to pay.

Rule W23 - Users will order stuff they have no clue about.

Rule W23A - They will plug it into your network.

Rule W23B - And demand you support it.

Rule W23C - While the DHCP server, and the rest of the network, crashes.

Rule W23D - This will be your fault.

Rule W24 - Users will expect you to teach them stuff they should have learned in school.

Rule W24A - That users should have learned in primary school.

Rule W24B - Users will think that a single course is sufficient.

Rule W25 - Users will try to do things like type in uppercase numbers.

Rule W26 - Users will be unable to find the correct button or menu. Or correct anything.

Rule W26A- They might not even be on the correct screen, page, website, or operating system.

Rule W27 - Users will click on things that say "Click Here!" or "Download Now" just because they think they are supposed to.

Rule W27A- Unless that "Click Here!" or "Download Now" button is the one they are actually supposed to click on.

Rule W28 - Users will try to use their computer while you are working on it, especially if you are not present.

Rule W28A - Users will get mad that you have to kick them off the computer to fix the problem.

Rule W28B - No matter how important it was that you had to do so.

Rule W28C - Any attempt to justify your actions will just get you in more trouble.

Rule W29 - Users will claim something can't be done, even if you are doing it.

Rule W29A - Users will claim that something impossible worked before.

Rule W29B - Despite all evidence to the contrary, users will insist that things having worked yesterday means they must also be working today.

Rule W29C - In fact, it always worked that way before, even if doing so would have been physically impossible.

Rule W30 - Users will go out of their way not to read or learn something.

Rule W31 - Users expect to be rewarded for their mistakes.

Rule W32 - Users will hand expensive items to kids, even if it's work property.

Rule W32A - And leave the kid(s) alone with said expensive items.

Rule W32B - And not fix anything that might happen. See Rule W18.

Rule W33 - Users will claim to have credentials that they don't.

Rule W34 - Users will use jargon in an attempt to make it seem that they know what they are talking about.

Rule W34A - Users will make up their own jargon and expect you to understand it as though it was standard jargon everyone knows.

Rule W35 - Users will insist on not using products that are better than what they are currently using.

Rule W36 - Users will call you from anywhere, even in a speeding car about to go into a canyon.

Rule W36A - Users will call from anywhere except in front of the equipment with the issue.

Rule W37 - Users will see no link between something they did and something breaking.

Rule W38 - Once you've touched something, whether you fixed it or not, users will blame you for all further issues.

Rule W38A - And expect you to provide free support for all further issues.

Rule W38B — Acknowledging the existence of a piece of equipment is equivalent to touching it and accepting responsibility for its 100% uptime, including coffee makers and Tamagotchis.

Rule W39 - Users will confuse a company with the products that they make.

Rule W39A - Users will confuse a company with products that it doesn't make.

Rule W40 - Users will expect you to know everything about their computer at home even if you only deal with large corporate systems.

Rule W41 - Users will give permission for something and then get mad when you make use of it.

Rule W42 - Users will have liquids near their equipment.

Rule W43 - Users will repeatedly need help with the same task.

Rule W44 - Users will store stuff in places other than you ask them to, if they can.

Rule W45 - Users will either ask for help at every step what they should do.

Rule W45A - Or do things they shouldn't do without asking.

Rule W46 - Users wanting support for a phone will use that same phone to call you.

Rule W47 - Corporate users will expect you, instead of their boss or training department, to train them on how to do their job.

Rule W48 - Users will want you to do their job for them.

Rule W48A - And insist that it is, in fact, YOUR job, not theirs.

Rule W49 - Users will complain about your security measures but will claim that you should have done a better job when things go wrong.

Rule W50 - Users will give the wrong name of a product, even with the name right in front of them.

Rule W51 - Users will confuse you with other/previous techs.

Rule W52 - Users will refuse to do anything that improves things for them yet go out of their way to make things difficult.

Rule W53 - Users will be confused about how case-sensitive works.

Rule W54 - Users will assume that websites have www as a subdomain unless they are supposed to actually use [a/ww](#).

Rule W55 - Users will not know the phonetic alphabet, and will suggest the worst possible words. They will also refuse to use the ones you've previously used in the current conversation.

Rule W56 - Users will believe every hoax.

Rule W57 - Users will turn things off and NOT back on again.

Rule W58 - Users will be certain that IT has infinite faster/shinier/better gear that they are keeping for themselves.

Rule W58A - The more they want that gear the less they need it.



Rule W59 - Users will believe that it's safe to connect anything to the Internet.

Rule W60 - Users will complain that their equipment is too old, even if freshly acquired.

Rule W61 - Users will be a lot more cautious if they have to pay upfront. Make sure they pay upfront for as much as you can.

Rule W62 - Users will never read the manual.

Rule W62A - Only those who know what RTFM means will do it.

Rule W62B - It doesn't matter how accessible you make the documentation, they won't consult it.

Rule W63 - Users will misuse equipment and in very creative ways.

Rule W64 - Users will expect everything to work without power.

Rule W64A - Users will not realize that they need power.

Rule W64B - Users will think that the Internet/network powers their devices.

Rule W65 - People will ask you for help with anything that uses electricity.

Rule W65A - Or anything that doesn't.

Rule W66 - Users will complain about the cost of free software.

Rule W67 - Users will have a certificate of proficiency in computering.

Rule W68 - Users will do things other than what they have been asked to do.

Rule W69 - Users will think that if it works on their computer then it will work on yours.

Rule W70 - Users will think that you can make hardware changes over the phone/Internet.

Rule W70A - Users will believe that techno-kinesis exists.

Rule W71 - Users will complain if they are inconvenienced, even if you go out of your way to help them.

Rule W72 - Users will use search engines to find other search engines.

Rule W73 - Users will create and rename a new document thinking that will retrieve the contents of the old document that they had deleted.

Rule W74 - If there is more than one button, users will instantly click on the first button without reading. If there is only one button, they will stop and ask what to do.

Rule W75 - Users will think that logging out is the same as rebooting.

Rule W76 - Users will insist on being ignorant, or claim that they are.

Rule W76A - Since they don't want to be held responsible for their actions.

Rule W77 - Users will flirt with you to get you to do things for them.

Rule W78 - Users will insist on you going outside the scope of your job and threaten to have you fired if you don't.

Rule W79 - Users will unplug things or plug them in in the incorrect place.

Rule W79A - Users will unplug the UPS so they can plug in their coffee maker or space heater.

Rule W79B - Users will plug everything into a surge protector and ignore the UPS.

Rule W79C - Users will plug heavy duty equipment into the UPS.

Rule W80 - Users will turn off alarms or anything that makes alarm sounds.

Rule W81 - Users will think that your software/setup is responsible for any issues they face.

Rule W82 - Users will think that if one thing works then everything else will.

Rule W83 - Users will ask you questions about things that you didn't even know existed.

Rule W84 - Users will mash buttons until errors go away.

Rule W85 - Users will not give you the entire error code or message.

Rule W85A - And/Or ramble on about other things.

W86: Users will refuse to troubleshoot, because it takes too much time.

Rule W86A - Users will then complain about being unable to work for an even longer time.

Rule W87 - Users will simply click "Yes" or "OK" to anything that pops up on their screen without bothering to read it or understand what they are clicking.

Rule W87A - Or will close anything that pops up on their screen without bothering to read it or understand it.

Rule W87B - Users will do this even when you are helping them in-person or remotely and needed to have read or seen what they just clicked.

Rule W88 - Users will not even let you get to your desk or have lunch.

Rule W88A - They will think you are late no matter how early you show up.

Rule W89 - Users will turn off their computer while you are working on it.

Rule W89A - Even if you tell them not to.

Rule W90 - Users will do everything to avoid submitting a support ticket.

Rule W90A - They will spend more time writing a long detailed email to your boss than filling out a support ticket.

Rule W90B - You will be summoned by your boss, who didn't read more than two lines, to explain that email.

Rule W90C - This will be the first time that you will have been told about any problems.

Rule W90D - If they do submit a ticket, it will be as vague as possible and will be missing critical information.

Rule W90E - Attempts to obtain the information will be ignored, turning a five minute fix into something that can take long periods of time.

Rule W90F - After noting multiple attempts at contact and closing the ticket, following procedure, the user will reopen the ticket or make a new ticket and complain that you didn't contact them or fix their problem.

Rule W90G - User will log a ticket minutes before going on vacation, claim it is for one week long, actually be on vacation for at least two weeks, and then ask why this wasn't fixed while they were gone.

Rule W91 - Users will casually tell IT about a problem when the tech is working on something else.

Rule W91A - This has been happening for a long time.

Rule W91B - Multiple people have been having this problem yet no one has bothered to tell anyone. See Rule W90C.

Rule W92 - Users will use you as a scapegoat.

Rule W93 - Users will use screenshots to submit error codes but leave out critical information.

Rule W94 - Users will be unable to take screenshots in time if allowed to.

Rule W95 - Users will submit tickets on Friday at 4:50PM and go home.

Rule W95A - Users will duplicate the ticket on Monday at 9:10AM.

Rule W95B - Users will think 76 hours have passed between these requests.

Rule W95C - Techs will know that only 20 minutes has gone by between these requests.

Rule W96 - Users will expect you to be reachable 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Rule W96A - Users will expect you to treat their forgotten password on a Saturday night as priority one.

Rule W96B - Users will always call you directly, even when you are not on call.

# Dealing (Primarily) With Other Techs

## Rule T1 - CYA

Rule T1A - Always have someone else to blame it on.

## Rule T2 - Never lie to another tech.

Rule T2A - Unless that tech is the person you're about to blame. See Rule T1A.

Rule T2B - Sometimes you will need to lie in order to deal with things like warranty repairs or getting ISPs to do the right thing.

## Rule T3 - Never assume anything.

Rule T3A - Does the issue even exist?

Rule T3B - Is it even plugged in?

Rule T3C - Is it turned on?

## Rule T4 - Don't expect your boss or coworkers or users to understand just what it is that you do.

Rule T4A - Even if they are a tech.

## Rule T5 - Sometimes, you will be the one who is wrong.

## Rule T6 - Don't try to do work over the Internet while in a moving airplane.

## Rule T7 - Never call support with your cellphone if you can help it. Otherwise, you won't be able to drop the problem in someone else's lap.

## Rule T8 - You will really screw up eventually and it is going to be a doozy.

## Rule T9 - Backup following the Rule of Three. A backup, a copy of the backup, and a copy of the copy. Test them.

Rule T9A - Consider using other backup strategies. See Link

TL1(<https://www.unitrends.com/blog/3-2-1-backup-sucks>).

Rule T9B - There is no backup. If there is a backup, it is either corrupt or years out of date.

Rule T9C - If you can't restore from it, you don't have a backup.

Rule T9D - If you haven't tested your backup recently, you don't have a backup.

Rule T9E - A year ago is not "recently".

Rule T10 - Assume that there are also inside threats, even inside IT. It's not paranoia if they really are after you (or your stuff).

Rule T10A - Don't trust your coworkers. They might be using Rule T2A.

Rule T10B - Don't even trust yourself. One error and you might cause serious damage or become a security leak.

Rule T10C - The new member on your team will send critical sensitive information to anyone who asks without trying to do any verification.

Rule T11 - When you need tech support, the tech support person is likely to be clueless.

Rule T11A - Whenever you have a problem, you will be unable to find a solution until just before the tech you called for help arrives.

Rule T11B - If the tech you called in isn't clueless, then you were and your problem has an obvious solution that you completely missed that they will point out seconds after they arrive.

Rule T11C - If none of these apply, the solution will be something random that will make no sense whatsoever to you or the technician.

Rule T12 - Every tech has their own set of Rules, even if they don't know it.

Rule T13 - Every tech is also a user.

Rule T13A - Techs will treat you like you are a user.

Rule T14 - Make sure your coworkers don't make changes before going on vacation.

Rule T15 - No technical person reads all of the rules. They will act like they know them until the place catches fire, then complain about incomplete documentation.

Rule T15A - Especially if it was the documentation that went up in flames first.

Rule T16 - Womprats aren't much larger than two meters.

Rule T17 - Third-Party IT will make configuration overhauls without notifying your company's IT department, and then blame your company for problems caused by their configuration mishap.

Rule T18 - You are incompetent. You just don't know it. At least, that's what your replacement will think.

Rule T18A - You will have to deal with techs who are incompetent.

Rule T18B - Sometimes, you really are incompetent.

Rule T19 - You might find people who support you. Reciprocate.

Rule T20 - Always verify who you are corresponding with. This includes not using Reply All.

Rule T21 - Use your inner laziness to do the most elegant solution possible.

Rule T21A - Know the difference between "truly lazy" and "plain laziness".

Rule T22 - If nothing seems to work, reboot.

Rule T23 - Cables can and will be used as ropes.

Rule T24 - Other techs will never read the manual.

Rule T24A - Neither will you.

Rule T25 - Your fellow techs will expect you to be their tech support.

Rule T568A - white green, green, white orange, blue, white blue, orange, white brown, brown

Rule T568B - white orange, orange, white green, blue, white blue, green, white brown, brown

Rule T1000 - Buy stock in Boston Dynamics but sell all of it before 2029.

# Dealing with Management

Rule M1 - Management might find these rules. Plead ignorance.

Rule M2 - Never believe anything management tells you.

Rule M2A - Especially if a merger or bad news is involved.

Rule M3 - Management will order stuff they have no clue about.

Rule M3A - Management will expect the thing they bought to work perfectly out of the box.

Rule M3B - You will be blamed when it doesn't work.

Rule M3C - Especially when this is the first you are learning of this item even existing.

Rule M4 - Management will be puzzled as to why you have no clue about the thing they have no clue about...

Rule M5 - Management will expect you to be up to speed on their under the table projects, with decisions based only on what the salesman says, without consulting IT.

Rule M6 - Your boss will not have a tech background or a degree in your field.

Rule M7 - Management will present impossible tasks to be done.

Rule M7A - Management will then become outraged that said tasks were not completed.

Rule M8 - Management will blame you when things do not work.

Rule M8A - Even if the equipment is not IT related.

Rule M8B - Even if the equipment is IT related but is property of a third-party and thus their responsibility.

Rule M9 - Management will blame you if anything that was completed does not meet their expectations (they won't), no matter how difficult they were.

Rule M10 - If a project makes sense, something is wrong.

Rule M11 - If it's free or very cheap, management will think that it cannot be as good as the commercial stuff.



Rule M12 - Not all management is bad. Seriously.

Rule M13 - Do not, in any circumstances, send private anything via email. Especially if you're the CEO.

Rule M14 - You will never get interviewed by anyone who will actually understand your answers.

Rule M15 - Management will give you a budget of zero dollars and expect you to work miracles.

Rule M15A - "Boss paralysis" happens when they ask you a question that needs a numeric answer, and they become catatonic until you say a number. Failing to recognize the nature of this condition may result in you having a budget of \$911.

Rule M16 - Management never wants to pay to upgrade anything.

Rule M16A - Unless it's for management.

Rule M17 - Managers might fire you for going outside the scope of your job.

Rule M17A - Managers will tell you to go outside the scope of your job, even if you don't report to them.

Rule M17B - Users will insist on you going outside the scope of your job and threaten to have you fired if you don't.

Rule M18 - Better tools and solutions exist. You just either don't know about them or you can't afford them. Even if you can, management won't let you get them.

Rule M19 - Management only cares about productivity that is reported.

Rule M19A - Find out what figure they think is the most important and focus your efforts on that.

Rule M20 - Management will have you do their job for them.

Rule M21 - Management will take away your tools and expect you to use the same equipment as every one else and yet expect you to do your job anyway.

Rule M22 - Being a tech in management doesn't make you exempt from the Rules, even Rule M1 (when it comes to dealing with upper management).

Rule M23 - Management will tell you to do someone else's job but only give credit to them.

Rule M24 - Management (and coworkers) will treat the help better than they treat you.

Rule M25 - The OSI model has layer 8 (user) and layer 9 (management).

Rule M26 - Managers often have a checklist, which no one else will care about.

Rule M27 - Managers will ask you to do something that is stupid/expensive/won't work.

Rule M27A - When they do, always ask for it in writing to CYA.

Rule M27B - If they give it in writing, send a copy to your personal e-mail address.

Rule M28 - Buzzwords rule all decisions.

Rule MAN - Who your manager is likely to be.

## Phrases by Tech Support

Phrase P1 - "Have you tried turning it off and on again?"

Phrase P2 - "Is it plugged in?"

Phrase P3 - "Unplug it and plug it back in again."

Phrase P4 - "While you're here..."

Phrase P5 - "We did something on our end and you need to restart for it to take effect."

Phrase P6 - "Humor me."

Phrase P7 - "Try it again."

Phrase P8 - "Please do the needful."

Phrase P9 - "You can just use Google."