


Successful Troubleshooting

Article

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During the last weeks, I was working on various issues and problems related to SW development. I found that quite often problem analysis was mostly chasing issues just on the surface but not really attacking the deeper reasons of the problem and follow the consequences. It's like the doc that stops your leg bleeding but doesn't see that it is broken.

In a former responsibility as Software Support Manager at Digital Equipment Corp. and later CIO for Austria and Eastern Europe I trained successfully my product and operational specialists in analytic troubleshooting. As a direct consequence, we were able to win our European Customer Satisfaction Survey over several years in sequence.

At that time (late 80ies, 90ies) there was no Internet or Webinars so we did several seminars that every new engineer in the team had to run through. The effort paid off.

The methodology named Analytic Troubleshooting (ATS) was developed by a US company ([Kepner-Tregoe today based in Princeton, NJ](#))

I have no claims in this company. I'm just a very satisfied customer. And I'm still happy to follow the approach of problem analysis and troubleshooting, that I use myself and that I was able to teach to my team.

I gave the book away and don't teach anymore as webinars may do it much better than me.

Finally a short story of a successful support call:

Customer: My computer has stopped !!

Engineer: what did you do ?

Customer: NOTHING

Engineer: are your disks mounted ?

Customer: YES

Engineer: can you type on the console printer ?

Customer: YES

Engineer: what do you see ?

Customer: NOTHING

Engineer: what lights do you see on the console pannel ?

Customer: NONE

???????Engineer: is the computer switched on ?

Customer: DON'T KNOW

???????Engineer: Try to switch it off and on. What happens?

-- some minutes silence --

Customer: NOTHING

???????Engineer: ** Is the computer plugged in ???

-- some minutes silence --

Customer: NOW IT WORKS

???????Engineer: what happened ?

Customer: I NEEDED A POWER PLUG FOR THE VACUUM CLEANER

Engineer: I will close the call, you get a suvey.

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