

A GUIDE TO PROVIDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT

PART 2



SUPPORT BENCH

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INTRODUCTION



Part one of our [Guide to providing technical skills](#) touched upon some of the skills needed to thrive in a technical support role but there is a special set of skills that is particularly valuable when it comes to providing customer support: **soft skills**. In part two of our guide, we'll discuss what soft skills are and how your team can use them to succeed at technical support.



CHAPTER

01

WHAT ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE SOFT SKILLS?



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01

First, let's go through the difference between "hard" and "soft" skills. Examples of hard skills include technical capabilities, coding know-how, and equipment knowledge. They are skills that are more tangible.

Soft skills, on the other hand, are a little harder to be taught but can definitely be nurtured. They are skills such as empathy, communication, patience, humor, etc.

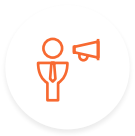
You might be wondering how these soft skills relate to providing technical support. Let's take a look at some soft skills in the context of technical support. There are many soft skills but we're going to take a look at three very common ones that support agents need to use on daily basis: patience, communication, and small talk.



PATIENCE

While you need patience in any type of customer support role, it's especially important for technical support roles. Your support agents will encounter customers with varying levels of technical knowledge.

They could be talking to a tech-savvy millennial who knows their way around the system or they could be talking to a baby boomer that did not grow up with the internet and therefore will need more guidance and coaching.



COMMUNICATION

01

We cannot stress how important communication is as a soft skill. It's not only about clearly breaking down technical concepts into digestible information for customers to understand, it's also about actively listening to the customer.

Active listening involves your customer support agents putting on their detective hats. They have to not only listen to what the customer is saying but also read between the lines, understand what they might not be saying, and take into account the customer's emotions.

For example, if a customer calls in a rage about their cable service, they're really only concerned with the end result: they can't watch tv. It's up to your support agent to ask the right leading questions to get to the root of the problem quickly and diffuse the situation.

Good communication skills also involve the support agent to use intuition and be proactive. Continuing the example of our cable service, once the support agent has resolved the technical problem, they might assess the customer's situation and offer suggestions or recommendations.

This skill helps your support agent anticipate the customer's needs and educate them about additional products or services they might not be aware of - it's also a great opportunity for upselling.



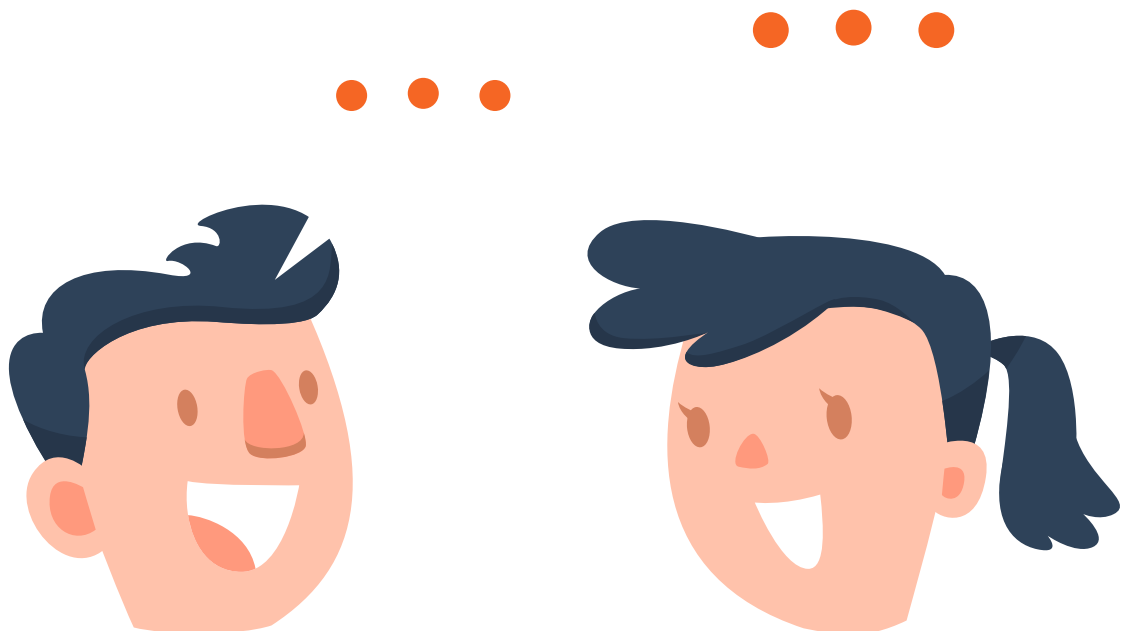
SMALL CHAT

01

Don't underestimate the power of genuine small chat. Many people cringe at having to make small chat but done well, it's these humanizing and personal details that help your brand stand out from the crowd.

And when we say small talk, we're not talking about chatting about the weather. For example, if the customer mentioned they're training for a marathon at the beginning of the call, and at the end of the call, the support agent wishes them good luck on their run, it adds that extra level of personal touch and helps make your brand more memorable.

Soft skills help you manage the relationship with the customer. A variety of these skills will help your support agents exceed expectations in their day-to-day interactions with customers.



CHAPTER

02

TECHNICAL SUPPORT CALL BEST PRACTICES



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Speaking with a customer over the phone is almost an art form. A customer may get frustrated if they feel you that you don't understand their problem, don't know how to fix it, or don't care about their situation. 70% of [buying experiences are based on how the customer feels they are being treated.](#)

This is when your soft skills can come into play to ensure that the customer feels heard and reduce their frustration. Here are some other best practices to keep in mind when talking to a customer over the phone:



Lead the call. As we mentioned earlier, the customer is not necessarily going to know what the problem is - they're just concerned with the outcome of their issue. It's up to your support agent to ask the right leading questions to get to the issue quickly and efficiently.



Avoid guessing what the technical problem is. Gather all the necessary information to make the most informed assessment.



Be transparent. Let the customer know how long or complex the resolution is so they have realistic expectations.

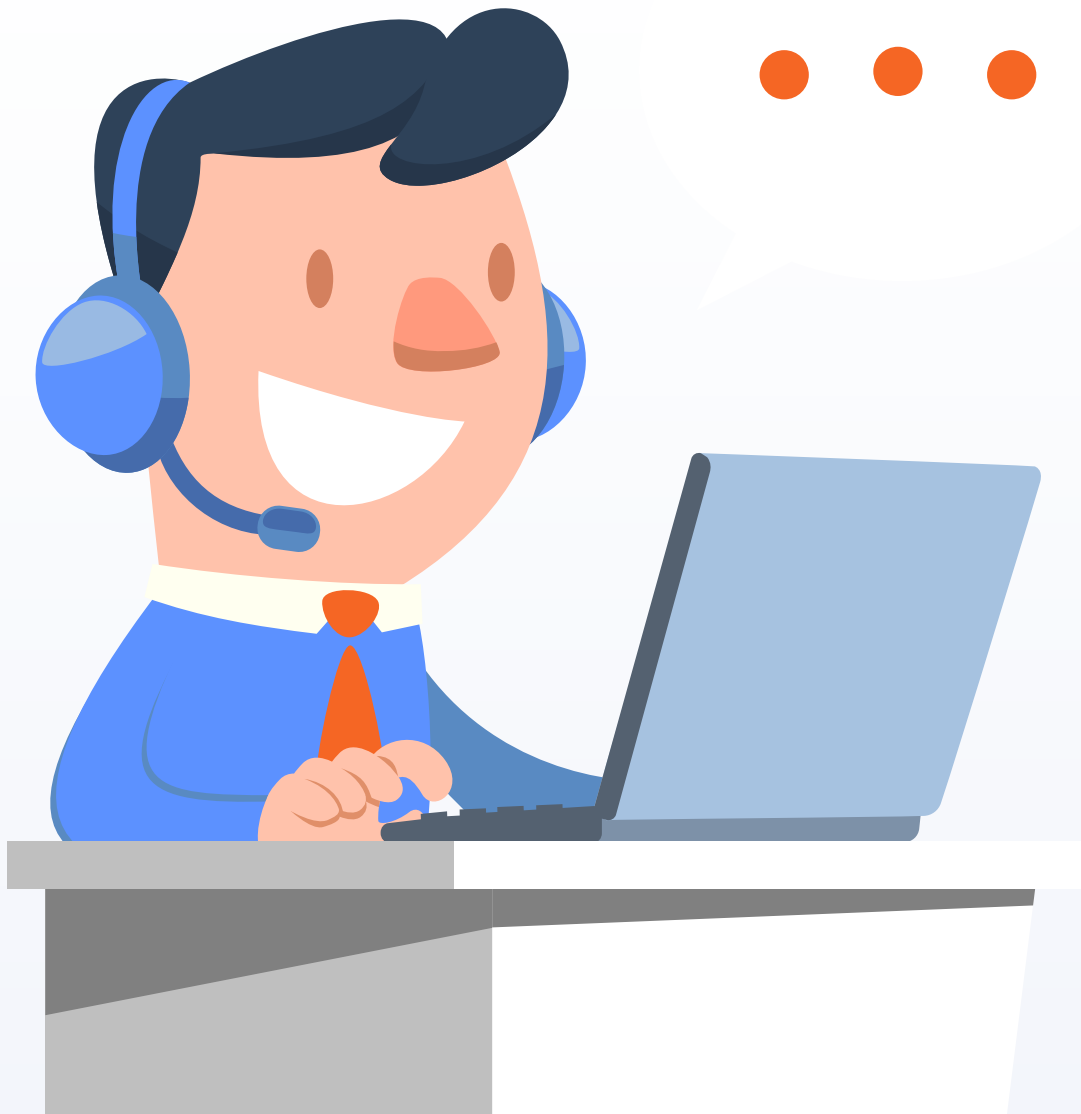


Avoid troubleshooting with the customer on the line. Troubleshoot issues while the customer is either on hold or get their contact details so you can follow up with them when you're done troubleshooting.

CHAPTER

03

THE FOLLOW-UP



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Congratulations - you've solved the issue and the customer is happy! Case closed right?

Not quite yet. Once you've completed a stellar customer service phone call, send the customer a follow-up email outlining everything you completed and to ask if there are other ways you can assist them.

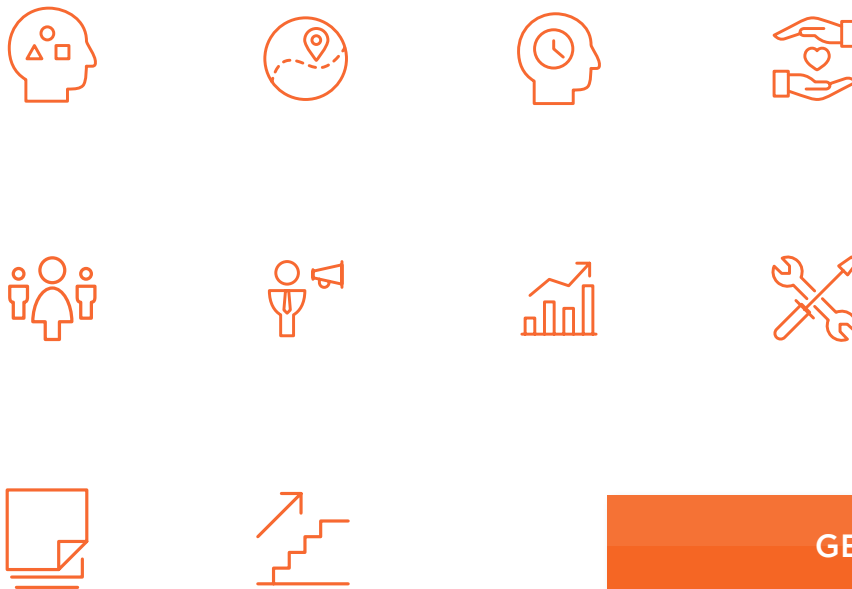
Here are some tips for sending follow-up emails:

- ✓ Start with a professional greeting.
- ✓ If you're going to include how to resolve the issue, explain the instructions on how to solve the problem step-by-step. These instructions need to be as accurate and clear and possible and should not leave the customer uncertain in any way.
- ✓ Edit, edit, edit. Do not have typos, spelling mistakes, or grammatical errors.
- ✓ Show gratitude for a client's business.
- ✓ Always end the email with a personal but professional sign off.

These are the points we covered in this resource:



Did you read Part 1 of our guide to technical support?



GET PART 1



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