S.T.A.R. (Situation, Task, Action, Result) Document

This document was sent to me several years ago to prepare for an upcoming job interview.

The document contains explanations of situations taken from my actual work experience. It has been periodically updated and still provides a sound basis for interview sessions.

The document following this page is a completed interview form for Network Support candidates.

The purpose and format of the document is explained in the bottom half of this page.

Prospective interviewers and hiring managers are encouraged to peruse this document.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – LEVEL II

PURPOSE: There are several key vital behaviors that make a person successful in this role. The purpose of completing the following questions is to provide real work-life context and clear examples of the knowledge, behaviors, and motivations critical in this role.

The responses will form the basis of the subsequent face-to-face interview, provide more clarity on what is required of the role, and help predict job performance.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to the following situations in as much detail as your experience has provided. It is acceptable to use the same situation in more than one response. If you do not have a relevant example or the experience, you do not have to respond to the question.

HOW TO RESPOND: Your responses should be based on your experience. They should be in past tense. Please provide your responses using the below format.

“STAR” Components

The SITUATION or TASK at hand
The ACTION taken
The RESULT of the action
List of Key Behaviors Covered

TROUBLESHOOTING: Uses a structured process to identify the root cause of a problem; compares data from many sources to draw conclusions; tests assumptions systematically to find and eliminate problems; determines why something does not work and fixes the problem

PRACTICE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Able to identify opportunities and actions to improve existing conditions and work processes; understands and readily embraces changing solutions and measurements

PROBLEM SOLVING: Able to take action in solving problems while exhibiting judgment and a realistic understanding of issues; able to use reason to make timely and quality decisions, even when dealing with emotional topics and without having all the information; review facts and weigh options

INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE: Able to achieve a satisfactory level of technical and professional skill or knowledge in position-related areas; keeping up with current developments and trends in areas of expertise

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Able to demonstrate a high level of service delivery, do what is necessary to ensure customer satisfaction, and prioritize needs; understands the importance of internal and external customer relations

LEARNING ABILITY: Able to assimilate and apply new job-related information and skills in a timely manner

MOTIVATION: Sets high standards for self and others, takes responsibility and accountability for successfully completing assignments or tasks, imposes own standards of excellence rather than having standards imposed

TEAM INTERACTION: Actively participates as a member of a team to move the team toward the completion of goals; develops relationships to help accomplish work goals; adheres to the team’s expectations and guidelines; fulfills team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team

MULTI-TASKING ABILITY: Able to juggle many different and sometimes competing tasks or work assignments; perform a wide variety of tasks; effectively managing one’s time and resources to ensure that work is completed efficiently

ABILITY TO WORK WELL UNDER PRESSURE: Able to maintain focus on work priorities; meets deadlines as necessary while keeping a positive attitude; understands personal limits and can strive towards balancing work and other obligations

ABILITY TO HANDLE CHANGE: Able to maintain effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks or the work environment; adjusting effectively to work within new work structures, processes, requirements, or cultures

WORK ETHIC: Interacting with others in a way that gives them confidence in one’s intentions and those of the organization. Creating and maintaining an environment that naturally enables all participants to contribute to their full potential in pursuit of organizational objectives
PROBLEM RESOLUTION & IMPROVEMENT

TROUBLESHOOTING:

Uses a structured process to identify the root cause of a problem; compares data from many sources to draw conclusions; tests assumptions systematically to find and eliminate problems; determines why something does not work and fixes the problem

1. Multiple causes to a problem
   (Process used to determine primary cause of the problem)

Failed internet access at work

Situation/Task:

The entire company lost internet access one morning.
I was the only Network Administrator for this medium sized company at the time.

Action:

After inspecting and ruling out the RJ-45 connections and cabling between the switch and the router; I determined that the ISDN internet access connection had failed. I contacted the phone company and had the two 56K lines for the ISDN service tested. The lines tested good and were fully functional. I then contacted the manufacturer of the ISDN router to further isolate the problem. Several tests determined that the ISDN router was functional and had not failed. The only other thing left to check were the end user settings that were network specific. I checked the user configuration settings for the 2 phone numbers required for the dial in ISDN service. Each phone line would carry a maximum of 56 kbps of data. When both lines were combined, the total throughput would be 128 kbps. I contacted the ISDN service provider to verify that the service was still functional and active. Once this was verified, we checked the phone numbers to assure that they were still correct for the service. The 2 phone numbers were no longer functional and would no longer access the dial in service. The previous network person failed to change the ISDN phone numbers in the router when informed of upcoming area code changes by the phone company. The existing area codes for the numbers no longer worked because the 6 month grace period just ended. The ISDN router no longer accessed the dial in service with the current area codes. The area codes were changed for the 2 phone numbers to reflect the new area code requirements.

Results:

The internet service was restored after changing the area codes from 617 to 508 in the ISDN router.

Failed internet access from my home office (1st failure)

Situation/Task:

My internet access failed unexpectedly while browsing the internet.

The internet icon in the lower right of the system tray showed a network disconnect—a red “X”

Action:

I opened a command prompt and typed “ipconfig” and it displayed “media disconnect”. I checked the light on the back of the integrated network card and it was not lit. I inspected the cable connections and verified that the RJ-45 plugs were fully seated in their sockets.
I checked another one of my computers on the same network and the connection was active and able to browse the internet. I then ran a long cable from my PC to another known good RJ-45 socket connection in order to determine whether it was the cabling or the PC. The network connection was still inactive because the network card light was still out.

I rebooted the PC and accessed the BIOS to check the status of the LAN device in integrated peripherals. The integrated network interface card was missing from the configuration menu. The technical manual for the motherboard clearly showed a designation for the integrated network function on the motherboard.

I concluded that this device somehow failed on the motherboard and was no longer recognized. I installed a spare network interface card in a remaining PCI slot on the motherboard.

Results:

When the PC was rebooted, the new network interface card was recognized by the operating system and the system connected to the network automatically. The internet access was now accessible.

Failed internet access from my home office (2nd failure)

Situation/Task:

My network connectivity suddenly stopped working.

The internet browser failed to refresh web pages.

The internet icon in the lower right of the system tray showed a network disconnect—a red “X”. The light on the back of the network card was not lit.

Action:

I checked another one of my computers connected to the same network on a separate cable and it was functioning properly. I checked the Netgear Router in the wiring closet and noticed that the green activity light for the failed port connection was not lit and therefore not functioning.

The other ports with active connections were functional because they displayed flashing green lights.

I checked the back of the router and inspected the cable connection to the router. I pushed the RJ-45 plug in to assure that it was seated properly. The green light on the front remained out.

I grabbed the network cable about 3 inches from the RJ-45 plug and wiggled it back and forth while watching the front panel of the router.

The green activity light for this connection flickered on and off while wiggling the cable. I suspected that the wiring was damaged near the plug.

I removed the plug and cut the last 3 inches off the end of the cable. I located a wiring diagram that depicted the correct wiring order for an RJ-45 plug. I then added a new plug by inserting the individual wires in the proper order and then crimped the plug with a hand crimping tool. The newly plugged cable was then reinserted back into the socket.
Results:

The green activity light was now functioning. I wiggled the cable again and the activity light remained lit. The internet access was now accessible.

Failed internet access from my home office (3rd failure)

Situation/Task:

My network connectivity suddenly stopped working.

The internet browser failed to refresh web pages.

The internet icon in the lower right of the system tray showed a network disconnect—a red “X”

The light on the back of the network card was not lit.

Action:

I checked another one of my computers connected to the same network and it exhibited the same symptoms. I checked the Netgear Router in the wiring closet and noticed that there were no activity lights on. The power cable to the router was plugged into a battery backup unit. The battery backup’s power light was off. I pressed the power switch several times but the unit failed to power on.

I plugged the power cable from the router directly into an AC outlet and the router started working again.

Results:

Internet access was then restored. The failed battery backup unit was soon replaced with a new one.

2. When first proposed solution does not correct a problem
   (Steps taken to achieve a resolution)

Dial-Up internet access failure

Situation/Task:

A user was unable to access the company network via a dial-up connection from his house. He wanted to test this function on another phone line and get this fixed if it was a computer problem.

Action:

First I had to locate an RJ-11 land line socket with an active service line in the building in order to test the modem. I reinstalled the modem drivers to rule out the modem. I ran self-diagnostics on the modem and all tests passed. The modem seemed to be working but the notebook computer could not get an IP address.

I pinged the loopback address, “127.0.0.1” and the ping test failed. This indicated a corrupt or non-functioning TCP/IP stack. It was possible to rebuild the TCP/IP stack in Windows 2000 by deleting the TCP/IP protocol itself in LAN connection properties and reinstalling it; which I did.

Results:

I was able to ping the loopback adapter successfully. After connecting the notebook to the network, I ran ipconfig /renew to obtain an IP address. The computer obtained an IP address and was then able to connect to the company network.
**DVD ROM drive configuration failure**

**Situation/Task:**
To load Windows 7 on an older PC.

**Action:**
I created a bootable DVD disc containing Windows 7 software from an ISO file downloaded from the internet. I had to install a DVD ROM drive in this PC in order to install the software. I configured the boot order in the BIOS after which the DVD drive was recognized during the boot up process. The PC got stuck at the “boot from CD” prompt and would not boot from the disk. I put a known good CD in the drive that I knew booted up properly from a CD ROM drive. It also failed to boot. The DVD ROM drive would not work in this configuration. I decided to attach an external adapter kit to the DVD drive which allowed it to plug into a USB port via a USB cable. I set the boot order in the PC BIOS to boot from the USB port first.

**Results:**
The drive was recognized as a USB device and then booted from the DVD disc and loaded the Windows software.

3. **Solving a Complex Problem**

**DSL connection failure**

**Situation/Task:**
A friend ordered DSL service through Bell South and needed help getting it installed.

**Action:**
I had to reinstall and configure the network card in his PC and then connect the DSL router. The DSL router was then cabled to a known good RJ-11 phone socket. The DSL router was functioning properly in conjunction with the network card that I just installed. An IP address was obtained from the LAN side of the DSL router. The DSL router could not access the internet because it could not get a WAN IP address. After running diagnostics and working with Bell South tech support, it was determined that the router was unable to connect to the main gateway to obtain a WAN IP address.

Bell South tech support mailed out a replacement router that also failed to connect. I took this DSL router home and tested it with my PC and phone line service. My DSL router was the same model. I was able to get an internet connection without incident. I deduced that there must be problems with the wiring coming into my friends house because the PC and DSL router both worked. I had tech support dispatch a Bell South repair technician to the residence to test the wiring. The technician determined that there was a wiring configuration problem at the demarc point and repaired it. I never suspected the phone wiring because a regular land line phone worked fine on this connection.

**Results:**
When the Bell South technician reconfigured the phone wiring, the DSL router was able to connect to the main gateway and obtain an IP address. The PC now had internet connectivity.

**PRACTICE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:**
Able to identify opportunities and actions to improve existing conditions and work processes; understands and readily embraces changing solutions and measurements.
1. Describe a time where you were involved in improving a workplace process
   (How did you become aware of it and what role did you play in making the improvement?)

**Insufficient licenses for installed software**

**Situation/Task:**

During my daily routine at Palomar Medical, I was reorganizing the documentation and software license certificates. I decided to compare the number of installed copies of software against the number of licenses. I had suspected and was also told by some end users that the previous Network Administrator would purchase one licensed copy of software and load it on several PC’s ignoring license requirements. The company could be fined for violation of anti-piracy laws in the event of an official audit.

**Action:**

I created an Excel spreadsheet and over a period of time inventoried all users’ PC’s noting installed software. I then compared the number of installed copies of software with the actual numbers of licenses purchased. I found a large number of PC’s where the number of installed copies exceeded the purchased licenses. This mostly occurred with Microsoft Office and AutoCAD design software from Autodesk.

I explained the problem to a recently hired IT manager. It was decided that I would need to uninstall software that was no longer used or needed. This reduced the number of required licenses moving forward. I convinced the company to purchase licenses and or license packs to cover installed software previously unaccounted for and still used. I located companies that were authorized to sell Microsoft software license packs and was able to obtain significant quantity discounts. The newly purchased license packs were stored in a bank safety deposit box along with the system backup tapes.

**Results:**

All installed copies of software were now legal and the company was now compliant.

**Implementation of a back-up and disaster recovery procedure for my home office**

**Situation/Task:**

I decided to implement a workable and verifiable disaster recovery plan for my own office computers. My main PC is heavily used and needs to be available 7 days a week. When I experienced unrecoverable system failures in the past, I would have to reformat the hard drive and reload everything from scratch. This process would take several hours over a few days. All the Microsoft updates would have to be obtained which took more time due to slower internet connections.

I had been in the habit of backing up important user files manually to an external source. I tried to use the “Restore Points” provision in Windows 7 for disaster recovery. This would restore the computer to an earlier point in time before an error occurred. This proved to be very undependable and rarely ever worked properly when tested.

I researched and implemented a disaster recovery plan that would quickly restore my PC to its original working condition in the event of a crashed hard drive or other damage or corruption.

**Action:**

I purchased a 2 TB external USB drive to use for backup file storage.

I reconfigured the 2 TB internal hard drive on my PC into several partitions. The C: drive would only have operating system and program files. Another drive partition would only contain user created documents. Another would contain only device drivers and other content that changed infrequently.
I installed Norton’s Ghost version 15 to backup the hard drive partitions. The Norton Ghost program was chosen to back up whole drive partitions because these are easily restored and can be mounted separately for easy file retrieval.

Ghost 15 was configured to back up the Windows 7 boot and system partitions separately. The program does a full backup using compression and subsequent incremental backups in order to finish the backups sooner.

A trial backup and restoration was performed on a spare hard drive to test the backup and restore process. This whole process took a little less than 45 minutes. The desktop looked exactly the same and several different programs were launched and tested to assure that they performed the same as the original drive.

Results:

My backup routine now conforms to a regular schedule and is periodically verified. I also perform occasional trial restores on a spare drive to assure that a rapid recovery remains viable. I have successfully performed hard drive restores and transfers several times without any problems.

2. Generating ideas for solutions and considering the impact
   (Identified a problem at work and proposed a solution)

Corrupted EXCEL files

Situation/Task:

Shared Excel spreadsheet files used in a finance department were getting corrupted from one user to another. The unpredictable nature and state of these files was seriously hampering the company’s business activity.

Action:

The file server antivirus software caught any viruses coming into the server itself. The antivirus log reports showed a very high incidence of viruses found and removed before the files were actually stored on the server. The files had already been damaged by viruses before the files were stored on the main file server. I proceeded to investigate the actual work environment where the most users were affected by this problem. I checked some individual workstations and discovered that the antivirus programs were not at the current revision and therefore would not accept the latest virus definition updates. This left the PC’s in the Finance department vulnerable to current threats that updated definitions would have stopped. After the files were retrieved from the file server they would become contaminated again and suffer more corruption and damage. This effect was cumulative and continued to deteriorate. Even though the main file server caught and removed viruses from the files before they were stored on the server; later retrieval of these files would further expose them again.

Results:

I wrote and implemented an antivirus upgrade procedure for the help desk technicians. This involved updating all the current Norton antivirus software versions and definitions to the current level for all the PC’s in the Finance department. There were no more problems with viruses once the antivirus programs and virus definitions were updated.
3. Find a more efficient way to accomplish a work task

Implementing an intranet web page for the Help Desk

Situation/Task:
I implemented an intranet web page that would allow easier access to network shared drives used by the help desk staff. The web page provided quicker access to software installation directories. The web page had several clickable links that corresponded to mapped drives. These drives contained the software installation files and drivers that the help desk staff needed for end users.

Action:
I installed IIS-4 on an existing server located in the lab. I then configured an intranet web site to store the files for the web page. I used Microsoft Front Page to create a web page that contained the links used for software installation. I then used the MMC-- IIS console to configure security rights that restricted access to these directories to the help desk technicians only.

Results:
Help desk technicians could easily access installation files for software installs via a web browser. This proved easier than having to remember drive paths and drive mappings to source file directories. They could just type in a specific intranet web address on any computer from within the company’s network and get a single web page with the drive letter links.

Implemented WINDOWS recorder macro to populate directory lists

Situation/Task:
To alter the directory properties for a long list of users in a Novell NWADMIN utility

Action:
I developed a WINDOWS recorder macro that acted like a video batch file to alter the properties in the list. (There were no Novell command line utilities at that time that could accomplish this)

This program had start and stop buttons that recorded live screen activity that could be replayed later.

The graphics application had to be located in the same position on the screen each time the video batch file was launched. The mouse would always move to the same exact location on the monitor screen and the simulated mouse clicks would always occur in the same place each time.

Results:
Once the program was launched; the mouse could be seen moving across the screen automatically to activate the appropriate boxes and update the user properties. This was faster and more efficient than having to do this manually.

Copy all Firefox browser bookmarks and passwords to other PC’s

Situation/Task:
One of the challenges of building a new PC is transferring the bookmarks and passwords to a newly installed web browser. Using the import and export functions on the Firefox browser proved cumbersome because it would often produce duplicate bookmarks and would not transfer stored passwords.
Action:

I researched this issue online and found a Mozilla support article that identified the location where a specific profile folder contained key files. It explained the location of an alphanumeric folder with a “.default” extension. The contents of this folder contained all the current web browser information including the bookmarks and passwords.

I accessed this folder on my PC and then copied the contents to the same profile folder on another PC. The contents of the folder on the destination PC were completely replaced with the contents of the original source folder containing the bookmarks and passwords. The name of the new alphanumeric folder on the destination computer had a completely different name. The name could not be changed. Only the contents of the folder were changed.

Results:

When Firefox was started on the new destination computer, the bookmarks and passwords reflected those of the original source computer.

(Firefox now has a “sync” function that will allow current browser settings to be replicated to a newly installed browser. Whatever is changed in one browser will be synchronized with other browsers that are connected to the internet.)

PROBLEM SOLVING:

Able to take action in solving problems while exhibiting judgment and a realistic understanding of issues. Able to use reason to make timely and quality decisions, even when dealing with emotional topics and without having all the information; review facts and weigh options.

1. Analyzing available facts and weighing options to reach and achieve a practical decision
   (Provide an example of how you reached a practical business decision using an organized review of the facts and weighing of options)

Tape back-up system restoration project

Situation/Task:

A remote regional office was unable to perform tape backups because the tape back-up changer had failed and required repair.

Action:

I researched and located a local IT service provider near the remote office. I then scheduled to have the service provider test the back up changer to determine the required repairs. When it was determined that the changer itself was functioning properly, I had them move it to another functioning server. I also shipped a stand-alone PC with new back-up software on it to the remote location for the management of the back-ups. I installed “PC-Anywhere” on the PC before it was shipped to the remote location. The PC would be dedicated for backup use only. Once this PC was connected to the remote office network, it would allow for the remote management of the backups through the ArcServe console.

Results:

The tape back-up changer and tape back-ups were functioning again. The remote back-up system could now be managed and monitored from the main office.
2. Using a common sense approach to make decisions when dealing with a complex problem

**Intermittent modem connection problems**

*Situation/Task:*

There were several PC’s in a test lab with external dial-up modems attached to outside lines. Most of the modems functioned intermittently or not at all.

*Action:*

I noticed other technicians wrestling with this problem without success and offered my help. I checked the cabling between the modems and the PC’s to assure that the correct cables were used and that the connections were tight. I then ran tests to assure that there were no resource conflicts or configuration errors. I ran modem diagnostics which proved inconclusive. I decided to check the AC adapters for the modems to assure that the voltage listed on the adapter matched the voltage listed on the modem. The first one had the wrong voltage label for the modem it was attached to. The rest of the modems also had the wrong adapters. Another technician had arbitrarily attached AC adapters to the modems without assuring that the modem and adapter voltages matched. The modems were no doubt stored separately from the adapters. The adapters were stored all together in a box without reference to which modem they belonged to. I removed all the AC adapters from the modems. I located the box of AC adapters in a storage closet and matched the adapters to the modems based on the correct voltage requirement. There were actually 2 ratings that had to match—voltage and current or amperage on the AC adapters. These had to match the labeled ratings on the modems.

*Results:*

The modems worked properly again after the correct AC adapters were attached.

3. Remaining objective when faced with thorny issues and problems
   (Tell about a time when you were proud of your ability to be objective even though you were emotional about a problem or situation)

**Widespread email access failure**

*Situation/Task:*

When users arrived at the start of a new day they could not access their email.

*Action:*

I was the only administrator in at the time. Since this problem just started this morning something must have changed since yesterday. I checked the status of the mail server and although it was functioning normally, service logs showed that it had been rebooted overnight. A volume that contained all the users’ email failed to initialize and mount. This rendered the mail system unusable. I mounted the volume and added a statement to the servers boot configuration file to mount the mail volume during startup. Future rebooting of this server would now mount this volume automatically.

*Results:*

The email service was now restored and users could now gain access to their email.
Crashed email system

Situation/Task:

My first day at Palomar Medical as the only Network Administrator started with a crashed email system. The email system was Lotus CCMAIL version 8 which I had no previous experience with.

Action:

I locked the door to the server room in order to give this problem my undivided attention without interruption. I spent several hours on the phone with Lotus tech support in an effort to fix the mail system. The speaker phone did not work so I had to keep the receiver to my ear during this whole period. First, I had to locate a saved copy of the main database file from backup because the current one was corrupted beyond repair. After locating it, I restored it to the proper directory. I had to repair, rebuild and re-index the restored database file. Lotus helped me obtain necessary software utilities from their web site so that I could continue to maintain the mail system properly. They also instructed me how to establish a weekly maintenance routine to keep the mail system running smoothly.

Results:

I was finally able to provide email service to the company again after several hours on the phone with Lotus. The CCMAIL service continued to function properly from that point forward because it received regular maintenance.

KNOWLEDGE & CUSTOMER FOCUS

INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE:

Able to achieve a satisfactory level of technical and professional skill or knowledge in position-related areas; keeping up with current developments and trends in areas of expertise.

1. Maintaining skills and remaining current with developments and trends in current profession

Returned to school to achieve an Associate's Degree in Applied Science and an industry professional certification

Situation/Task:

To update my computer skills to remain competitive in the current and volatile economic climate. Employers now require college degrees in addition to professional computer certifications.

Action:

I applied to Gwinnett Technical College and was enrolled in an Associate Degree program with a major in computer networking. The major consisted of a 40 week Cisco Networking Academy program. Successful completion of the Cisco major would serve as a basis for achieving the Cisco CCNA certification.

Results:

I achieved an Associate of Applied Science degree in Cisco Networking in June of 2011. (I finished with a GPA of 3.92 and made the Dean’s list twice)

I then worked toward and achieved the Cisco CCNA certification at the end of September of 2011.
Maintain Microsoft certifications

Situation/Task:

To maintain my professional certifications, most recently, Microsoft.

Action:

Prior to obtaining my Associates Degree, I took self-study courses to maintain my professional certifications. The individual courses provided CD's with limited use versions of the same operating system software used by commercial companies. I was able to install, configure and practice with the software in my own test lab.

Results:

Maintained my certifications through practice with actual operating system software and Transcender test preparation software. Supervised exams were taken and successfully passed at vendor authorized test-centers.

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Able to demonstrate a high level of service delivery, do what is necessary to ensure customer satisfaction, and prioritize needs; understands the importance of internal and external customer relations.

1. Communicating with a customer or client about difficult circumstances

Files deleted from a network drive

Situation/Task:

One of the users transferred the entire contents of one of her external network drive shares to her local C: drive. She intended to move these files to another network drive share with more storage. During a Windows upgrade migration project, users were instructed to back up all their personal files stored on their C: drive to their network drive share.

During her scheduled upgrade, I worked with her to assure that she had copied all her personal files to an external drive. It was explained that the upgrade process would reformat her C: drive and that any remaining personal files would be permanently deleted.

The migration upgrade process completed successfully. During the file restoration process from her network drive, she realized that she had forgotten to move the files temporarily copied to her C: drive to the new network share. Several years of business related files were permanently deleted when her C: drive was reformatted during the migration upgrade process.

Action:

The user was distraught, but realized that the error was on her part. I later realized that there may be a way to get most of her files back. I spoke with the Desktop group supervisor and asked him if there was a group that managed backup tapes for the overall network. He gave me the contact information for a group that handles back-ups. I provided the contact information to the end user and explained that she could put in a request to have the files retrieved and restored back to her network share.
Results:

The user was greatful to get this information with the hope that she would be able to get most of her files back. My contract ended before she received the results of her data restore request. I’m confident that she would have gotten most of what she lost back. I have retrieved back-up tapes and recovered data for users from past projects and can appreciate how important this is.

PC stuck at DOS screen during boot up

Situation/Task:

A manager was frantic because one of her workers got a DOS screen with error messages on her PC at boot-up. The PC was stuck at this screen and would not transition into Windows. She thought the hard drive crashed and that several months of important files were lost.

Action:

I assured her that the drive probably had not crashed. Even if we couldn’t get the drive to boot back into the operating system, we could get her files off the drive and transfer them to a rebuilt system.

Results:

I noticed from the message on the screen that an operating system file was missing from the root directory. It must have been inadvertently deleted. I copied the same file from another PC to her PC and it now completed the boot process. Windows XP was now accessible and the user could return to work.

2. Turning a service failure around

Corrupted EXCEL files

Situation/Task:

Shared Excel spreadsheet files used in a finance department were getting corrupted from one user to another. The unpredictable nature and state of these files was seriously hampering the company’s business activity.

Action:

The file server antivirus caught any viruses coming into the server itself. The antivirus log reports showed a very high incidence of viruses found and removed before the files were actually stored on the server. The files had already been damaged by viruses before the files were stored on the main file server. I proceeded to investigate the actual work environment where the most users were affected by this problem. I checked some individual workstations and discovered that the existing antivirus software was outdated and ineffective against current threats. After the files were retrieved from the file server they would become contaminated again and suffer more corruption and damage. This effect was cumulative and continued to deteriorate. The main file server caught and removed viruses from the files before they were stored back on the server. Later retrieval of these files back in the same environment just further exposed and damaged them even more.

Results:

I wrote and implemented an antivirus upgrade procedure for the help-desk technicians. This involved updating all the current Norton antivirus software versions and definitions to the current level for the PC’s with outdated antivirus software. Many of the PC’s in the finance area had outdated Norton antivirus programs. These were no longer supported or automatically updated with the latest antivirus definitions.
Once the antivirus programs and virus definitions were updated there were no more problems with viruses.

3. **Maintaining customer courtesy in difficult or tense situations**
   (Describe a time when you were faced with this challenge and what happened)

**Restoring missing files**

*Situation or Task:*

A frantic user called the help desk and said that a significant number of her files had suddenly disappeared.

*Action:*

I went to her desk and determined that she had inadvertently set a filter on the directory to exclude most file extension types. The seemingly lost files reappeared after the filter was reset.

*Results:*

The user was embarrassed because she behaved rudely to both the help desk and to me. I calmly explained to her how she hid the files and how to prevent this from happening in the future.

**LEARNING ABILITY:**

Able to assimilate and apply new job-related information and skills in a timely manner

1. **Successful application of new knowledge**
   (In a job with a technical focus, changes in products and technology can occur rapidly)

**Following detailed instructions required for a PC refresh project**

*Situation/Task:*

Implementation of detailed procedures to image new PC’s and notebooks

*Action:*

I replaced older PC’s and notebooks with new ones. This required the review and implementation of newly drawn up procedures for refresh. This involved using Ghost Imaging, runstream procedures, BIOS tweaking, etc.

*Results:*

Successful refresh of PC’s and notebooks.
2. Acquiring necessary skills to successfully perform difficult tasks

**Studied CCMAIL technical manuals to better manage the mail system**

*Situation/Task:*  
Learned to manage and maintain a Lotus CCMAIL post office and its associated SMTP gateway component for internet email access

*Action:*  
I carefully studied and reviewed the Lotus CCMAIL technical manuals. This was done in conjunction with the implementation of procedures and instructions from Lotus technical support for maintenance of the email database files. This involved obtaining utilities that were put into batch files used for routine weekly maintenance.

*Results:*  
Smooth operation of the email service both internally and externally through the SMTP gateway.

3. Providing new technical knowledge that helped others to perform assigned work tasks

**Produced written technical procedure for antivirus program installation**

*Situation/Task:*  
To write detailed procedures for help-desk technicians to roll-out new antivirus programs and updates

*Action:*  
I documented detailed instructions that explained how to update Symantec Antivirus software to the latest version.

*Results:*  
The help-desk technicians were successfully able to implement the updates.

**Produced written technical procedure for Novell network connectivity drivers**

*Situation/Task:*  
I developed a procedure to update PC’s from the older Novell NETX drivers to the newer VLM drivers. The VLM drivers were required for connectivity to the network after an upcoming transition to the Novell 4.1 operating system.

*Action:*  
I wrote a step by step procedure for other technicians. I created DOS batch files that were stored on media and distributed to the technicians. The newer VLM files were also included on these disks. All PC’s in the branch office had to be updated according to a deadline schedule.
Results:

The project was completed successfully ahead of schedule with the new VLM’s installed on all the designated PC’s.

MOTIVATION & ENGAGEMENT

MOTIVATION:

Sets high standards for self and others, takes responsibility and accountability for successfully completing assignments or tasks, imposes own standards of excellence rather than having standards imposed

1. Establish work procedures that achieved a high level of quality, productivity or service

Login script modification for Y2K project

Situation/Task:

Symantec created a program that would scan PC’s for Y2K compliance. It was designed to run as an executable in a login script. The results were then sent to a remote database for analysis. During the initial login process the batch file ran and the PC was scanned. During the next login, the PC would be scanned again even though the necessary data had already been obtained. The same batch file ran everytime the user would login. This increased network traffic significantly when large numbers of users would login in the next morning. This caused noticeable delays for users login time.

Action:

I created a batch file that was placed in a container login script. This batch file prevented a PC from being scanned a 2nd time. During the first pass, a switch would be set. The next time the batch file was run, it would bypass the scan routine if the switch had been previously set.

Results:

Network traffic and users’ login times were returned to normal and the morning login speeds increased due to the decreased network traffic.

2. Dedicated time and energy to a work assignment to assure that no aspect was neglected

Remote back-up project

Situation/Task:

A remote regional office was unable to perform tape backups because the tape back-up changer had failed and required repair.

Action:

I researched and located a local IT service provider near the remote office. I then scheduled to have the service provider test the back up changer to determine the required repairs. The server that it was connected to had failed. When it was determined that the changer itself was functioning properly, I had them move it to another functioning server. I also shipped a stand-alone PC with new back-up software on it to the remote location for the management of the back-ups. I installed “PC-Anywhere” on the PC before
it was shipped to the remote location. The PC would be dedicated for backup use only. Once this PC was connected to the remote office network, it would allow for the remote management of the backups through the ArcServe backup software console.

Results:

The tape back-up changer and tape back-ups were functioning again. The remote back-up system could now be managed and monitored from the main office.

TEAM INTERACTION:

Actively participates as a member of a team to move the team toward the completion of goals; and develops relationships to help accomplish work goals; adheres to the team's expectations and guidelines; fulfills team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team.

1. Give a recent example of how you contributed to a team’s success

Replacing 90 PC’s for a FEMA project

Situation/Task:

About 90 PC’s had to be replaced at an IRS facility. The new replacements had to have updated FEMA software installed in anticipation of upcoming potential hurricane emergency.

Action:

I worked overtime with another coworker to assure that all these machines were replaced in time for potential emergency usage.

Results:

All machines were replaced with new ones and were prepared ahead of schedule for emergency usage. Although they weren’t needed for that purpose at that time, they would be ready for future events.

2. Describe a situation where there was difficulty getting along with a peer

Virus hoax problem

Situation/Task:

An overzealous manager heard about a new virus scare from her husband who worked at another company. Early one morning she sent an email out to everyone in the company warning them of this virus threat. After I got this email I immediately went to the SARC, “Symantec Antivirus Research Center”, and started researching this. I found that the particular virus in question was a “hoax”, which meant that it didn’t exist and was not a threat. When I brought this to the attention of the individual that sent the emails she insisted that there was a threat. She was determined to circumvent the IT department in the future if she felt such warnings were necessary.

Action:

I informed the newly appointed IT manager about the exchange I had with this manager and he agreed that it was inappropriate for her to be doing this. He understood the need to deal with this problem at the management level to avoid such false alarms in the future. I explained that this could also create a “cry wolf” scenario in the event that a real threat emerged and required action.
Results:

This was addressed at the management level after which there were no more incidents.

3. Giving feedback and/or coaching other team members to help improve performance

Problem noticed on an electronics schematic drawing

Situation/Task:

I was working as an Associate Engineer for a Senior Electronics Engineer at a laser diode manufacturing company. We were reviewing a schematic diagram for a new design of his. The schematic had just been converted to a CAD drawing and was going to be sent to a circuit board vendor for a limited production run.

Action:

During the review, I noticed a configuration error in one of the circuits on the drawing and brought it to his attention. At first he didn’t see the error because it was subtle. He was most insistent that it was correct. I knew it was drawn wrong and was dogged in my determination to get him to see this error for himself.

Results:

When he finally realized I was right, he was grateful for my persistence. He was able to correct the error before sending this out to the circuit board vendor. An entire batch of defective circuit boards was avoided as a result. These would have to be scrapped or at least required time consuming rework. My keen observation saved the company time and money by preventing an expensive rework later.

JOB ENVIRONMENT

MULTI-TASKING ABILITY:

Able to juggle many different and sometimes competing tasks or work assignments; perform a wide variety of tasks; effectively managing one’s time and resources to ensure that work is completed efficiently.

1. Getting work accomplished when there were many demands requiring decisions

Prioritizing day to day issues

Situation/Task:

Handling day to day problems as sole IT person for a mid-sized manufacturing company

Action:

I focused on problems that affected the most users first. The remaining problems were handled on a first come—first served basis. The company did not have a help desk program for users to log problems. I created an email account called “Help-Desk” and instructed all users to email all IT related problems and requests to that address. I monitored that account throughout the day and followed up on all requests promptly.

Results:

The company ran smoothly as priorities were juggled to accommodate business needs.
2. Describe how you have organized materials, (files, records, etc.), for ready access

**Basic organizing of information**

**Situation/Task:**

I organize computer file information into specific subdirectories and review these periodically to delete or archive info no longer needed. I never allow paper documents to accumulate in stacks on my desk. These are routinely reviewed and filed or disposed of.

**Action:**

I make sure that all important information is stored on network drive shares designated for personal files. This provides the added protection of routine back up.

**Results:**

Important information is always at hand and rarely missing or deleted. Paper documents are easily located when needed because my desk is always organized and without clutter.

**Updated work search procedure**

**Situation or Task:**

To locate copies of job descriptions quickly when contacted by prospective employers.

**Action:**

After completing a work project, I start a new search for projects on the internet job boards. I save copies of job descriptions so they can be referred to during follow-up phone calls from employers. Printing these out and saving them in paper stacks would make it very difficult to locate and refer to later. When I apply for a specific job, I also copy and paste each job description into a WORD document and save each one in a folder named for each week ending date. The saved name of the document is the advertised job title. When I need to locate a specific copy of an applied for job, I do a keyword search for the job title to retrieve it.

**Results:**

When someone calls about a job that I have already applied for, I do a search using the job title. The document readily appears in the search results and can be opened immediately.

**Taking detailed notes when given instructions**

**Situation/Task:**

Starting new projects always requires gathering detailed instructions and information. This is required in order to fulfill the company’s requirements.

**Action:**

I always take extensive paper notes while instructions are given. I will later transfer these hand written notes into a Microsoft WORD document. I keep information organized by using bold headings. This document will also have detailed instructions on performing procedures and the location of resources for the project. Whenever I need to perform a procedure that I have previously taken notes on, I can just do a key word search in the document and find it instantly. The WORD document can be easily backed up and updated as needed.
Results:

I have been able to operate more efficiently because all my notes are in one place and easy to read and navigate. Taking extensive notes eliminates the need to have the same things explained repeatedly. Senior staff can focus more on their responsibilities when they don’t have to explain the same things over and over again.

ABILITY TO WORK WELL UNDER PRESSURE:

Able to maintain focus on work priorities; meets deadlines as necessary while keeping a positive attitude; understands personal limits and can strive towards balancing work and other obligations

1. **Describe a time when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands**
   (How did you handle it and what was the outcome?)

   **Replacement of 90 PC’s for FEMA project**

   **Situation/Task:**

   About 90 PC’s had to be replaced. The replacements had to have updated FEMA software installed in anticipation of upcoming potential hurricane emergencies

   **Action:**

   I worked overtime with another coworker to assure that all these machines were replaced in time for potential emergency usage

   **Results:**

   All machines were replaced with upgraded ones and ready for any potential emergencies.

   **Recognize personal limits to achieve a balance between work and other obligations**

   **Situation/Task:**

   Negotiating a work schedule with employers that allow me to be more productive

   **Action:**

   I have always tried to negotiate a daily work schedule that would allow me to avoid the busiest and most congested traffic times during my daily commute.

   **Results:**

   I have been more productive during work schedules that allowed me to commute to and from work during the least congested times. This has helped me achieve a good balance between my work and personal responsibilities. An early daily work schedule provides a better balance for work and most personal obligations. Many personal obligations and appointments can be handled after my scheduled work day. This has resulted in greater productivity because I don’t have to take time from work to handle these obligations.
ABILITY TO HANDLE CHANGE:

Able to maintain effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks or the work environment; adjusting effectively to work within new work structures, processes, requirements, or cultures.

1. Adapting to change when organizations go through rapid change

**Performed a multi-week work project at a remote facility on short notice**

*Situation/Task:*

I had to report to another facility within the same company to handle an immediate work assignment with only half a days notice. The planned few days for this project ended up lasting for several weeks.

*Action:*

I had to obtain driving directions and learn MARTA train procedures for getting to the downtown Atlanta facility. I reported to the facility the following day.

*Results:*

I adjusted to the new commute routine quickly and was able to arrive on time each day for my work assignment.

2. Performing an unfamiliar service for the first time

**Performed a document conversion for a legal department using OCR**

*Situation/Task:*

The legal department at Palomar Medical had a large, multipage paper document that needed to be edited for a presentation. There was no electronic file for the document that could be easily edited.

*Action:*

There was an HP printer in the legal department area that had scanning capability. I did some research and learned that it was also capable of performing optical character recognition or OCR. This would allow printed documents to be scanned so that the text could be converted into electronic format. The printer had never been configured for optical character recognition. I loaded the extra software required for OCR functionality and tested it successfully. I then showed the office paralegal how to load the document pages for scanning and processing into a Microsoft WORD document.

*Results:*

The legal department was grateful that I helped them with this because they were able to convert and edit the document in time for their presentation.
Performed a memory upgrade on an unfamiliar file server

Situation or Task:

Palomar Medical had about 50 employees and 1 Compaq file server that the company was dependent on. The company had purchased an advanced ADP software accounting package for the finance department. The ADP software had a minimum memory requirement which was more than currently installed in the server. The server required more memory in order for this software to work.

Action:

I ordered the memory and scheduled a time to bring the server down to upgrade the memory. I had to locate instructions on how to replace the memory on this particular Compaq file server. On a Friday evening when the company was closed, I powered down the main server and located the removable tray that contained the memory card module. I removed it from the server and replaced the existing memory with the new modules. I reinserted the memory tray and powered the server back on. I monitored the boot up process on the monitor to assure that the new memory size was recognized.

Results:

When I undertook this project, I was nervous about the possible consequences of not performing this upgrade properly. The entire company was dependent on this one file server. The company would be unable to conduct its business if it was not working on Monday morning. Thankfully, I completed the upgrade successfully and the new ADP software worked great with the increased memory.

WORK ETHIC:

Interacting with others in a way that gives them confidence in one’s intentions and those of the organization. Creating and maintaining an environment that naturally enables all participants to contribute to their full potential in pursuit of organizational objectives

1. Doing the “right” thing even if this results in ostracism from others

Handling abuse of the email system

Situation/Task:

In the course of my network administration duties, I noticed that several individuals were conducting non-company related personal business with their email accounts over an extended period of time.

Action:

I imposed restrictions that limited or stopped the use of the email system for non-company related business. The users involved in this activity protested. I discussed the issue with my manager and it was decided to relax the restrictions until an acceptable use policy could be established for all email users.

Results:

An acceptable use policy for the email system was subsequently established for all employees. Because the policy applied to everyone, no one could complain that they were unfairly singled out. Inappropriate use of the email system gradually stopped.
2. Conducting oneself with integrity and respecting others in the workplace as an important value

**Working with hearing impaired employees to complete a roll-out project**

**Situation/Task:**
To replace a large number of PC’s in one department

**Action:**
The project required that I coordinate my efforts with the lead technician who was hearing impaired. He wore hearing aids and could speak well enough to be understood most of the time. He was more dependent on reading lips and communicating via emails. Another technician was also dependent on reading lips. Another could only communicate with sign language which required that an interpreter be present at all times.

**Results:**
I was able to adjust and work well enough with these people to get the project done by focusing on the project and not on their disability. I treated them as equal peers at all times while working to accommodate their disability. This experience taught me to be more patient and understanding with others regardless of any handicaps.

3. What is your best work ethic quality and how does it help your work?

**Expeditious work ethic**

**Situation/Task:**
Dependability, honesty and integrity

**Action:**
I take great pride in my work and follow through on all work assignments leading toward successful completion. In the event that I need additional direction in moving forward on a project, I make sure to get the necessary assistance in order to complete the assigned project on time.

**Results:**
Highest quality of work with the greatest of integrity is always appreciated by employers.