

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



768 Hey Microsoft – Where’s the Service?

A client sent me an invitation to a meeting for next week, saying she was excited that we’re looking at working together again. I’m excited too, as this is a company I’ve long respected, and I think I can help them. However, her message led to unexpected consequences. I’m Jerry Roberts and the full story of what happened is next, on The Extra Point.

So I had the invitation from the HR manager, who is, by the way, a delightful lady, and we’ve always had good conversations. However, right in the middle of the invitation were sinister words, that we’d be meeting on an app known as Microsoft Teams.

I apologize. This isn’t language appropriate for polite audiences. Everyone knows “Microsoft” is a nine-letter, four-letter word — especially to a Mac user. Well, she didn’t know.

Every time I get close to a Microsoft app, my computer system and digestive system both pay the price. Yet, I want to make the client happy and show my willingness to be flexible. So, I downloaded Microsoft Teams.

One of the features didn’t seem to work as advertised, so I contacted support. One link led to another, and another, and finally there was a button that kindles pure ecstasy anytime I see it. LIVE CHAT. No filing a support ticket that would take days to be answered.

No, a human being would be along shortly to take care of business and solve the issue. Except, that I was number 62 in the queue.

I ate lunch, did some work, and when I returned to the computer, I was number 1. I thought to myself, “You know, there’s something different about today.”

Then, in an instant, Nancy came on the chat, ready to help. She is a Microsoft Teams expert. However, I opted for the free app, not the

paid version. Nancy only serves people who shell out the bucks. The freebie crowd would be sent to telephone support. By the time this was determined, a half-hour had passed.

Nancy asked where I live, and I told her Guam, a U.S. territory. She gave me an 0800 number for support, which is in Germany. No Nancy, Guam. U.S. We drive on the right side of the road, have indoor plumbing, spend green money, all the good stuff. She apologized and gave me the U.S. 1-800 support number.

After 8-10 minutes of punching a list of options into their phone system, I got the message that Microsoft phone support is no longer available, and they sent me back to the website support, which meant I again hooked up with...Nancy.

I typed out, “Nancy, I just need one question answered. It’s the same app for both free and paid, so you will certainly have the answer. She said, “I have to ask my supervisor.” Maybe it was another 10 minutes that passed.

She returned to the chat, and the supervisor had apparently said no, because she entered a long link to another support page. I clicked on it, and it came up with Page Not Found. She gave me another one. Page Not Found. And another. Page Not Found.

It’s now been an hour since Nancy and I began our date. So, I typed into the chat that I knew she was doing her best, and was trying to help, but she wasn’t getting the support she needed to help customers. Further, this was taking a really long time and I had to go. She then entered some stuff off a customer service script on how it was her pleasure to help me, and is there anything else she could do for me. I replied “no,” and clicked out of the chat.

As soon as I did, a survey appeared. They wanted my feedback on their service. Oh, happy day. (Con’t.)

There were two questions — how did we do and did they solve my problem on the first try? I could rate them from one to five stars.

I playfully tried one star and the word “terrible” appeared below it. I liked that, so I went to question two, and left a “terrible” on that one as well. Then, they asked me to add comments, and I did. From Germany to the phone support that wasn’t phone support, to Page Not Found, I gave them a full description, play-by-play.

I wasn’t unkind, I just told the truth, and tried to protect Nancy, saying that it was the service system, not her, that was at fault. It was fair, yet firm about the issues.

Satisfied, purged, my frustration emptied, I pressed the “submit” button. It didn’t work. I had not exceeded the number of words allowed. All fields had been filled out correctly. The “submit” button just did not work. Microsoft had stolen my hour and got away with it. Nobody at the company Bill built would ever know my pain.

In the end, I poked around inside the app and found the answer to my question. Will I use Microsoft Teams? Sure. My client likes it, and if that’s how they want to work, it’s fine with me. And there’s a message here.

Don’t put rules in place that prevent your service reps from doing simple things. That Nancy had to bounce me all over the place, instead of just answering my question, shows that Microsoft seems to value rigid policy over customer happiness. That’s a bad message to send to your customers.

That’s The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I’m Jerry Roberts.

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