

Human-Centred IT Communication Guide

Based on Nathan Beranger's *Support as Relationship: How Human-Centred IT Builds Trust*

The way you communicate in IT support shapes whether people feel handled or genuinely helped. This guide consists of practical language and real scenarios to make every interaction feel more human.

Six moments worth getting right

Six situations that come up constantly in IT support. In each one, the better response doesn't necessarily have to be faster, just more empathetic.

01 THE ONE WHO'S BEEN WAITING TOO LONG

"This has been broken for three days and nobody's fixed it."

Lead with acknowledgment, not the backlog: *"I hear you, three days is a long time to be stuck, and I'm sorry."* Then solve it. The explanation can come after, if it's needed at all. The acknowledgment is what changes the conversation.

02 THE ONE WHO APOLOGIZES FOR ASKING

"Sorry to bother you, I know you're busy, but..."

Cut off the apology, warmly: *"Never a bother, this is exactly what I'm here for."* Notice who says this often. It's a sign, not small talk.

03 THE URGENT ONE THAT MIGHT NOT BE

"I need this fixed right now, it's urgent."

Take the urgency seriously before assessing it. Dismissing it, even politely, costs trust. Instead, ask: *"Tell me what's blocked right now so I understand the impact."* That gets the real picture, without making anyone justify themselves first. If possible, try to take care of it on the spot, urgent or not. Sometimes the fastest way to build trust is to skip the triage altogether

04 THE ONE WHO CAN'T DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM

"My computer's just... not working. I don't know how to explain it."

Skip the diagnostic questions. Ask instead, *"What were you working on when it happened?"* Let them talk. The technical details surface on their own once someone feels heard instead of interrogated.

05 THE REPEAT VISITOR

Same person, same problem, again.

This one tests patience the most, and it's tempting to just repeat the same fix and move on. Don't. Try, *"We've been here before, that's frustrating, let's get to the bottom of it."* Then investigate and fix the root of the problem. Sometimes the same issue returns because the real cause was never obvious.

06 THE "CAN YOU JUST QUICKLY..."

"It's probably nothing, but can you just quickly reset my password?"

Take it at face value. Start warm, even if it turns out to be more than a quick fix. If it grows, something like *"turns out this needs a bit more, here's what I'm doing"* resets expectations without walking back the warmth. Expectations can always be reset once you're already in it. Starting warm doesn't cost anything, even when the fix does.

WORDS THAT CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

Same message, said like a system versus said like a person. The difference is in the tone.

Sounds like a system	Sounds like a person
Your ticket has been received. Estimated resolution: 2-3 business days.	Got it, I'll take a look today and keep you posted.
Please provide additional details so we can proceed.	Quick question before I dig in: what were you working on when this happened?
Your request is under review. We'll update you when there's a status change.	Still working through this one. I haven't forgotten about you. I'll have an update by end of day.
A solution was identified; implementation is pending scheduled maintenance.	Good news, I know what's causing this. The fix goes in Thursday night, so you'll be set Friday morning.
This request falls outside current policy and cannot be actioned.	Can't make that happen right now, but here's why, and let's see if there's another way to help.

A QUICK EXERCISE

Before you close this, ask yourself these questions:

Do people hear from you before there's an answer, or only after?

What does "sorry to ask" say about how asking has gone before?

Are requests just getting solved, or are people getting a little more capable each time?

There's no right answer. Pick the one that's hardest. Try it on the next request that fits.