



SERVICE QUALITY vs. RIPPED OFF

A recent article in a popular consumer magazine labelled I.T. and computer service people “cowboys” due to their misdiagnosing of problems and their constant over charging. Similarly we have seen features TV shows like Today Tonight and A Current Affair do on shoddy mechanics and trades people. Now most fair minded people realise just because there a few rotten apples in an industry group doesn't mean they are all bad but the perception is never helped when these people try to rip you off.

On the other hand when you pay extra for a Mercedes over a Commodore or a good restaurant over fast food you expect and would generally receive a better and more satisfying experience. The question and issue is how you distinguish between quality service for an appropriate price versus receiving sub par service at an unreasonable price. Just because a service company charges more for seeming the same service does not mean they are over charging because you must look at all factors. These include the quality of the service itself, the professionalism, qualifications and/or experience of the person and other perks like warranties and guarantees as well as overall peace of mind that the trust you put in someone else has been well vindicated. The things you should look out for in regards to computer service businesses in terms of cost and quality are; 1. *Whether they involve you in the process by explaining things in understandable manner.* 2. *When selling you goods, they ask you about your needs and requirements first.* 3. *That they always qualify their quoting and advice regardless of whether you think the quote is expensive or cheap because unforeseen circumstances do arise.* 4. *They never undersell the importance of good Anti Virus software.* 5. *They are not afraid to give honest opinions about products and services, whether positive or negative, with appropriate justifications.* Remember like a chocolate company once said; **“there is no substitute for quality”.**

INTERNET

Now to continue our series of improving areas of your business via I.T., we will look at the Internet. I think is getting to the stage that any business that utilises the Internet on a daily basis should switch to broadband for both the efficiency of your business and the cost savings you will make both on the Internet & phone bills themselves as well as the time spent by staff. For example if you connect to the Internet twice a day and are on a standard dial up contract that equates to approximately; \$10 p.m. (phone dial up costs) + \$25 p.m. (Internet access charge) = \$35 per month. There are many broadband Internet plans around that mark and some are cheaper and that is not accounting for the considerable timesavings and efficiency to your business. Faster Internet also becomes critical in getting both your Anti-Virus and Windows updates in a timely manner which are essential for the overall security, health and operation of your computers.

Gripe of the Month

MYOB & Quicken. Between these two fine accounting software packages, they have a market share covering a vast majority of the small to medium businesses and personal accounting users. It can be fairly costly and extremely time consuming to switch products. However with their most recent versions of their software they have both made it mandatory to purchase their new versions if you want the otherwise freely available, most recent tax tables incorporated in the program. In the past you were able to download and integrate it into older versions. Claims that it could be risky and unstable to keep making things backwards compatible are unreasonable considering a more complex program like Windows releases far more critical and complex updates freely all the time.

Planning A Holiday?

Most of love a good holiday, whether it is down the coast or to the other side of the world. And these days you can virtually plan your whole holiday at your desk. Starting from the tickets at the airlines websites, to the accommodation at the hotel's or special travel sites and plus deciding what events and attractions you want to see from both their sites and the travel review sites. The Internet has definitely enhanced our both our actual and imaginary travel experience. If you go to the links page on www.ctsbayside.com.au there is a link to “Wot If” where you can virtually plan an entire holiday of any magnitude at your PC.

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