



IT Services & Support COMMUNITY

Tech Support Specialist

Choose your path in mobile, cloud and traditional technologies as a tech support specialist. For an entry-level IT profession, you'll be given a lot of responsibilities, from installing software desk-to-desk in multinational enterprises to troubleshooting networks of devices for small startups and family businesses. It's crucial for companies to know they're hiring the best talent here, because tech support specialists hold the front line for the IT world.

Responsibilities

Tech support specialists manage user accounts and access people's computers remotely, repairing hardware and software at home base and off site. Even entry level specialists will be trusted with passwords, permissions and internal access. Today's user juggles a lot of devices and services, and you'll be asked to respond on the spot to a lot of different issues — plenty of chances to be a hero.

Aptitude

Tech support specialists possess strong problem solving, troubleshooting and conflict resolution skills. Patience is another major factor; you'll have to remain thorough and calm while you talk frustrated people through their computer issues.

On the job, successful tech support specialists:

- Troubleshoot connectivity and make key decisions that help users gain access to services.
- Manage data from mobile devices.
- Reset passwords and ensure secure authentication.
- Ensure proper access to the network through virtual private networking.
- Repair hardware and software based on company and client needs.
- Provide hardware installations for clients in a variety of environments.
- Troubleshoot networking issues for mobile, desktop and notebook systems.
- Migrate data from one device to another.
- Unpack, assemble and test hardware and software.
- Work with virtualized services.
- Answer service request tickets, offering remote assistance and onsite visits.
- Troubleshoot independently and with the assistance of a remote helpdesk.
- Understand good customer service and what it takes to interact positively with coworkers and clients.
- Use diagnostic software on tablets, computers and mobile phones.

- Finish documentation, pictures and call closure in a set timeframe.
- Inventory items, including their assets, and coordinate ordering and shipping.
- Test solutions to ensure updates don't have unintended consequences.
- Ensure the client's site is clean and free of debris once the work is complete.
- Follow all safety guidelines, policies and procedures.
- Consider security implications of support requests.

BEGINNER 0 - 2 YEARS	INTERMEDIATE 3 - 5 YEARS	EXPERT 6+ YEARS
\$45,000 - \$65,000	\$70,000 - \$80,000	\$85,000 - \$92,000

Salaries

Tech support specialists can start working with just a little training, and make good money right out of the gate. Salaries range from \$45,000 to \$92,000, depending on the level of expertise and geographic location. People living in London, Manhattan or San Francisco will have significantly higher salaries than those living in less-populous regions. Salary information courtesy of the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Educational Paths

For a comprehensive introduction to tech support, you can earn a two- or four-year degree in computer science.

Direct Paths

It's also possible to dive right into the field through certifications and specialized training. Here are some popular certification and training programs for each level of your career.

Beginner

- CompTIA IT Fundamentals
- CompTIA A+ Certification

Intermediate

- Apple Certified Support Professional
- Microsoft Certified Professional Certification
- Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator
- CompTIA Network+ Certification
- CompTIA Security+ Certification
- Cisco Certified Network Associate Certification

Expert

CompTIA Authorized Security Practitioner
Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert Certification

Career Flexibility

Learning technical support can lead to lots of outcomes. Here are a variety of jobs you may be qualified for throughout your career:

- Helpdesk
- Technical support
- Service desk
- Network engineer
- Systems engineer
- Account manager
- Technical account manager
- Project manager
- Product support engineer
- Software developer or architect
- IT manager

Social Skills

It's not all technical — a successful technical specialist needs to be able to work well with others and:

- Be punctual, reliable and able to follow detailed instructions.
- Possess good customer service skills.
- Have solid time-management and prioritization skills.
- Work well in a group, and openly share knowledge.
- Practice self-discipline and possess a strong work ethic.
- Take ownership and deliver on promises.
- Communicate and collaborate well.
- Commit to principles and ethical actions.
- Work proactively with little supervision.

Technical Skills

A beginner with zero to two years of experience must:

- Follow instructions and not deviate from a standard script.
- Troubleshoot problems.
- Support mobile devices.
- Migrate data.
- Install and remove PCs and laptops, as needed.
- Provide hardware support and warranty work.

- Track computers and hardware that have been sent out for repair.
- Work with warranties.
- Manage peripheral and accessory setup.

An intermediate with three to five years of experience must:

- Interact well with users.
- Remain calm under pressure.
- Exercise sound judgement in decision-making, delegating and ensuring timelines are met.
- Use virtualized systems.
- Offer wi-fi and wired network support.
- Receive escalated requests to support and maintain PCs, peripheral equipment and printers.
- Troubleshoot software, virtual private networks and problem areas in person, by telephone and by email, all in a timely and accurate fashion.
- Provide end-user assistance.

An expert with six or more years of experience will be expected to:

- Administer setup and maintenance of client and server systems.
- Enable security measures.
- Configure LAN and intranet services on client and server sides.
- Configure, upgrade and support hardware and software.
- Analyze and implement technological solutions.
- Possess superior customer service and documentation skills.
- Manage others as part of a project or installation team.