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#### **VENDOR RELATIONS**

- Establishing Constructive Relationships
- Hardware Support
- Software Support
- Cooperative Problem Resolution

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# Hardware Support • Vendor • 3rd-party • Self

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Hardware Support Vendor: • High expertise • Up-to-date training • Higher cost (10-15% of purchase cost / yr) ATS 5A - 5

#### Hardware Support

3rd-party:

- Lower cost (~33% cheaper than vendor)
- Suitable for established / obsolete equipment
- Get references from customers
- Require 3rd party support to pay vendor charges as part of contract
- Contact your vendor to be sure you will receive first-class service if you need it

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#### **Hardware Support**

Self:

- Suitable for large installations
- Train your own technician
- Hire a vendor technician -- with permission
- For old equipment, buy spares on used market
- Permits high availability, short response time

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#### **Software Support**

- Vendor responsibilities
- Client responsibilities

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#### Software Support

Vendor Responsibilities

- Define levels of support unequivocally
- Source code in escrow
- Provide user-group contacts
- Offer alternative sources of info
  - Fax-back service
  - Phone-in consulting service
  - Priority service
  - CompuServe/AOL/Prodigy support
  - Internet-based support or BBS

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#### Software Support

#### **Client Responsibilities**

- Identify a specific problem-manager
- Characterize each problem
- Isolate bug and reproduce if possible
- Research in documentation before calling
- Provide full information to vendor support team
- Document problem resolution in detail

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#### Cooperative Problem Resolution

- Records are important
- Problem database design
- Problem database usage
- Escalation
- Multi-vendor problems

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# Cooperative Problem Resolution

**Records are Important** 

- Share information among responsible staff
- Prevent thrashing
- Speed resolution
- Micro or network-based
- Enhance credibility with vendor staff
- Keeping consistent records may play role in legal battles

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	ase design	
KEY:		PRI
WHEN:	who:	
вү:	☐ WHAT: □	
ок:	PHONE:	FAX:
NOTES:		

# Cooperative Problem Resolution

Problem database usage

- Don't use abbreviations in WHO and WHAT fields
- Keep it short
- Integrate correspondence if messages are short
- Refer to longer documents by name and path
- Track dates and times
- Mark action items clearly
  - e.g., use -> and CAPITALS for action items

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### Cooperative Problem Resolution

#### **Problem Escalation**

- Keep support-line calls open until problem solved
- Obtain vendor escalation schedule
- Insist on proper escalation
- Keep your own upper management informed at every step
- Contact user networks for extra help and insight
- Meetings: high positions and equal levels
- Openly contact the vendor's competition
- Involve legal staff as last resort

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### Cooperative Problem Resolution

Multi-Vendor Problems

- Finger-pointing degenerates into deadlock
- Arrange meeting of vendor representatives
- Use external consultant if necessary
- Provide transcript of meeting notes to all participants
- Define tasks and deadlines cooperatively
- May be able to assign responsibility to one vendor for a fee

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#### Lab Exercise:

- Lecture from professional technical support expert
- Please ask questions! This is a valuable opportunity for you to learn from an experienced tech support specialist
- Take notes on your experience for credit
- Report key findings

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# Homework: Readings in Wilson's text

- Reread Chapter 1, "Manufacturer Support"
- Answer all the review questions from the instructor
- Submit all your homework after the quiz at the start of lecture 6

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