December 23rd, 2025   🔥🤩🎉 4 reactions

When irate product support customers demand to speak to Bill Gates
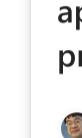
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A colleague of mine who used to work in product support told me that they had a procedure if a customer became irate and demanded to speak with Bill Gates. (This was, of course, back in the days when Bill Gates still ran the company.)

The product support technician would apologize for not resolving the problem to the customer's satisfaction, but if the customer continued to demand to speak with The Boss, the technician would indeed transfer the customer.

The customer was transferred to a special internal phone number, and when the operators saw a call on that line, they took the call and said, "Bill Gates's office." They weren't *actually* in Bill Gates's office. They were just pretending to be Bill Gates's secretary. Their job was to tell the caller that Mr. Gates is currently unavailable, but if the customer leaves a message and their contact information, they will pass the information to Mr. Gates.

Of course, I assume[1] the information was never actually passed along to Bill. The information went back into the product support channel with a note that the customer was escalated to "Bill Gates's office." The technician who returned the call would probably say something like "Bill Gates asked me to contact you to follow up on an issue you had earlier."

[1] Maybe Bill got a copy or a summary of these messages, I don't know.

😊 4   💬 4   ↗ 1

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Author

👤 Raymond Chen

Raymond has been involved in the evolution of Windows for more than 30 years. In 2003, he began a Web site known as The Old New Thing which has grown in popularity far beyond his wildest imagination, a development which still gives him the heebie-jeebies. The Web site spawned a book, coincidentally also titled The Old New Thing (Addison Wesley 2007). He occasionally appears on the Windows Dev Docs Twitter account to tell stories which convey no useful information.

4 comments

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Flux 2 weeks ago 🔥 2

🎄 Hello. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, you loveliest person in the entire Microsoft! 🎄

Falcon December 23, 2025 🔥 0

A worm from the early years of this century had a string in it that said: "billy gates why do you make this possible ? Stop making money and fix your software!!"

raykoopa December 24, 2025 • Edited 🔥 1

And when they did speak to him, they didn't even know.

edit: no clue why this became a reply, blog software is funny. billy gates why do you make this possible ?

Antonio Rodríguez December 23, 2025 🔥 0

Somebody has been rude to me on X (how did they dare?). So give me Elon Musk's personal phone number. Now!

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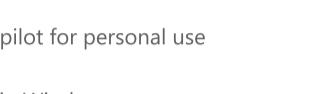Get notified when new posts are published.

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