

+ Frustrations with Technology

Anna Goodman



32, Sorority Chef, Berkeley

This chef claims her biggest issue using technology in the office is Costco's online ordering system. "It just sucks. They often don't deliver items in my order, and they don't warn me beforehand. Shouldn't there be a way to avoid this on their end?"

She told me that this failure to deliver items results in financial issues. She asks her finance officer to cut check to Costco for the order total, but because the items delivered almost never sum to the same value that she planned, she has to keep track of the excess and deduct it manually from the check the following week.

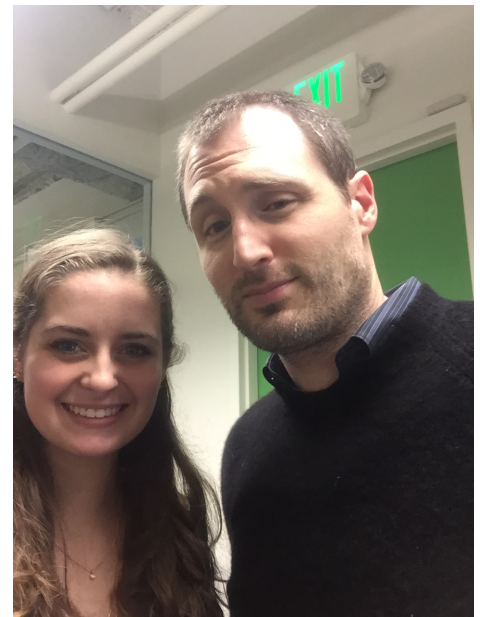
"Costco is so unreliable; I have to jump through hoops to pick up their slack. We would stop using them if they weren't so cheap."



54, Marketing Executive, S.F.

"Going from a larger company to a smaller company presented me with some issues, namely in the tools and support I get," this marketing executive laments. "I just don't have access to the same tools I'm used to having, and the IT team seems like they're doing a lot of learning on the job."

Her job mostly involves analysis and comparison of marketing strategies over time, and having to re-learn her tools for managing this has been a struggle. She claims that if the IT team had a better idea of the software and tools that they were using at the company, she would have to do less of the troubleshooting herself and spend more time solving the problems she's paid to solve.



48, Technology CEO, S.F.

This Tech CEO, while being described as "the least technologically competent person in the office", often struggles with the accessibility of his devices.

"Instead of taking a picture with me, you should take a picture of my monster hands trying to use Apple keyboards," he joked. But upon serious reflection, he revealed that all of his tech- from his laptop keyboard to his smartphone- is too small for his liking. "I had an Android, but the battery life was horrendous. And if there's one thing I hate as much as too-small-tech, it's carrying charging cords around because my phone will die."

+ What do these interviews tell us about the user's experience with their technology?

From the chef

We learned that her main struggles are with the unreliability of an ordering system. Costco's failure to follow through on their orders costs her time, frustration, and money as she scrambles to pick up the fallen pieces after every Monday delivery. She's upset that this is such a common problem, and rightfully doesn't understand why Costco doesn't have a workaround. She's also agitated that Costco doesn't notify her in any way when they aren't going to be delivering an item; it's a surprise when the delivery gets there. She would appreciate more **reliability** and **user sympathy** from her tech.

From the marketing exec

She would like better troubleshooting and technical support. Because she's recently had to adjust to new tools on the job, she's been disappointed in the technical support, or lack thereof, associated with her learning curve. This could partly be the product's fault for requiring such a significant chunk of re-learning when adapting from similar tools. She wants more **transparency** and **assistance**, both from her tools and her technical support team at work.

From the CEO

He taught us that accessibility is his biggest obstacle. He has spent quite a bit of time and money on finding solutions himself, but it's still a pressure point for him in his interaction with his devices. He didn't bring up specific mobile applications that he struggled with, but all iOS applications are not created equal in terms of keyboard size and general friendliness to those with larger hands. It's drastically changed how he interacts with his phone, his laptop, and his keyboard/monitor combination at work. He dreams of a day where his devices are **accessible** and **properly-sized**.

Overall

The folks that I spoke to seem to all have an issue with how their devices and services are laid out and operate. This is extremely important to remember as a maker of technology devices and services, because it speaks to how prevalent little annoyances are in everyday life. Nobody was hard-pressed to think of something technological that they grappled with and wish were done better, which means that there is a lot of room for improvement in the industry.