



“We Talk With You, Not At You.”

If someone is great with plants, we say they have a green thumb. But there is no such term for those who are great with computers. And it's too bad, because there are some people around whom computers just seem to run better.

By Jim Brumm

Juan M. Hernandez, owner of Mawson Computer Center in Santa Rosa, is just such a man. Juan is a master of interpreting, diagnosing and solving computer problems. But he has something else as well—a sense of how they *think*,

Like many, Juan discovered his life's work accidentally. Growing up a straight-A student in Central California's San Joaquin Valley, he was always a hard worker. He worked at McDonald's and had his own car in high school. He was also in the Sheriff's Explorers. He and his wife, Cindy, married when he was 18.

Juan finished school, received his diploma and started working random jobs. A natural leader, he rose quickly everywhere he worked. "I started every job at the bottom and ended up as a manager or supervisor," he said. "But for a long time I couldn't find what I was good at; I didn't know what I wanted to do."

After a stint as a tanker in the army, he began working for a professional apartment management firm as a troubleshooter. Handling tenant problems and performing construction and maintenance for 12 or so years, Juan and Cindy moved from one apartment complex to the next, living on site at different properties all over California. They had two children and though they moved a lot, it was a good life.

Then the magic happened. At one of the apartment offices, there was a computer. The company didn't know how to "make it work," and asked Juan to figure it out. Always one to step up to a challenge, Juan began studying the manual and calling tech support on the phone. Laughing, Juan told of one tech support person who "made a mistake, and gave me the code to the backdoor—the brains of the computer. I went in and



Juan M. Hernandez



Mawson Computer Center owner Juan M. Hernandez presents a new laptop computer, part of a \$500 donation to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

could immediately see how the information flowed, how it was processed; I learned how it thought.”

Later, Juan received a call from one of the tech support people who had been helping him. “I haven’t heard from you,” the tech said. Juan told him that he had put in the correct information and programmed the computer and it was working fine. “No way!” was the tech support person’s response, at once incredulous and impressed.

Word traveled fast. Soon after that, Juan received a call from that same computer company offering him a job. “I didn’t know anything about computers,” he said. “But I took their computer test and did really good. The next day they offered me a job. I told them that I appreciated it, but that I had a job and really didn’t know anything about computers. They asked me to take two weeks to learn and see. I did. They had twelve programs and in that time I mastered ten of them.”

That led to Juan accepting work doing database calculations for State Housing and Urban Development programs. Quickly becoming the resident expert, he was tapped to train managers to do the same work in other states.

Over time Juan worked at several computer firms, taking each company to a higher level and honing his skills at programming, theory, networking and repair. At one point he and his hand-picked team managed, in 25 days, to program and install a networking system connecting nine

company branches worldwide, a job that the company’s own IT team had failed to accomplish in six months. This earned him a six-figure job heading up the IT department for several years.

Now living in Sonoma County, a friend told Juan one day that Mawson Computer, a well-established computer repair and service company, was up for sale. Juan did some research, spoke to the owners, and agreed to purchase the company.

It was a long journey, but a fulfilling and exciting one. Juan finally had the opportunity to take the helm of his own company. Setting high standards for customer service and workmanship, word of Juan’s integrity and quality work spread. Soon his company earned Diamond Certification, awarded only to those companies rated highest in customer service and quality.

At Mawson Computer Center their motto is, “We talk *with* you, not *at* you.” Juan and his carefully selected team of technicians know how to explain what is happening with your computer in terms that are understandable. They will never leave until the computer is fixed or you understand exactly what the next move is. In fact, if Juan can’t fix your computer, he won’t charge for the visit. This writer knows from experience, as I called Juan because of a faulty USB hub, only to have him point out that I hadn’t plugged it in. I sheepishly went to write him a check to cover his time and travel, which he refused. “I didn’t do anything,” he said,

shaking my hand, “Call me back when you have something I can fix.” Believe me, I will.

And that sums up the way Juan does business and the way he treats his customers. Juan is a warm and soft-spoken man who laughs easily and loves his work. He considers his reputation and word to be the most important aspects of his business. Every decision is made with the good of the customer in mind. Giving easy-to-understand explanations of what they need to do—and why—he makes sure his customers are informed about anything he does. And, if he can’t provide what you need, he’ll tell you and recommend your next step. With expertise in virtually every problem a computer owner/user will encounter, from failed hard drives to networks that won’t connect, laptops to desktops, Juan’s goal is to keep the technology running so smoothly that his customers never have to think about it.

Mawson Computer Center’s certified technicians specialize in HP printer repair, can design Web sites and obtain parts for most brands of computers, new and old. Their customers include Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, schools and individual home computer users. No job is too big or too small.

As an involved member of the community, Juan volunteers his time with local food programs serving the disadvantaged. He is also active in the Hispanic business community.

“Our vision at Mawson Computer Center is to help people,” said Juan, “To give them the knowledge they need that will change their lives. The difference between me and the other guy is I really care about my customers. I want their lives to run better. I want them not to have to think about the technology in their lives.” He paused and added, “My word is my bond.”

In a world where computer “experts” often confuse customers with technical terms and rarely take the time to be certain the customer understands what was wrong, what was fixed and why, Juan M. Hernandez stands out like a breath of fresh air. With integrity, commitment and unparalleled knowledge, Juan’s world is one where a handshake means more than a contract and customer satisfaction comes before profit.

Mawson Computer Center is located at 3345 Industrial Drive, Suite 11, Santa Rosa, CA95403. Call Juan at 707-528-2841, or visit his Web site at www.mawson.com.