



# Stop Letting Your Computer Run You

By Ellen DePasquale/  
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**W**hen was the last time you were frustrated with your computer? Well, you are not alone. Research has shown that most of us are frustrated 43 percent of the time we are at our computers. That adds up to a lot of stress and a lot of wasted time.

How can you keep things under control even when it feels like you have none? First, take a deep breath – okay, maybe two. Then, follow the steps in this great stress reduction technique, adapted from an article originally posted on MayoClinic.com.

1. Identify the cause of your stress. The majority of the time it will be from a software issue, either from lack of skill or difficulty with the software interface. However, there are times when stress comes from reluctance to adopt newly implemented software.

Identifying the root of the problem is vital to finding the correct solution. It is also important to be specific when describing the problem. "It is not working," will only lead to more questions and more frustration. State the problem clearly. "The document's formatting changed," or "I am unable to access the data I need."

2. Clarify what solution you are looking for. What needs to happen and what needs to stop happening? For example, you need to see specific information, and you need to stop having to hunt for it. Or, you need to format a document based on the margins of the letterhead and need to stop having to figure out the spacing manually.

3. Create some options. It is time to be creative, and possibly share your problem with someone else. Keeping with our examples; instead of hunting for information you need a custom report. Instead of manually moving

text around the document, you need a template. It is also important to understand the limitations and best practices of the software. Maybe the document, because of its layout requirements, would be best created in a layout designer rather than a word processor.

4. Choose one of your options. Pick the one you think is best and go with it.

5. Evaluate your choice. Take a second look at the pros and cons of the option selected. Consider if it will cause any new problems that may just escalate stress. Depending on the urgency of the task you were trying to do, you may opt for software instruction or creating the customization you need so that you don't have this problem again. However, if you are under the gun to get something done, you may have to go with a short-term solution.

6. Implement the best option. Move forward with confidence that you thought-through the problem, regardless of how much time it took,

and go for it. If it does not work, then you know you have other options to choose from. And, you are truly never out of options. You can always consider using the help function (although sometimes difficult to understand), searching the Internet for additional help or calling technical support from the software vendor.

7. Reflect to find the lesson. When it comes to software there is a set number of lessons to choose from. You either need additional software instruction, customization of the software, or improved internal technical support.

Knowing you have a plan of action can prevent frustration from rearing its ugly head. Software issues may be out of your control, but how you react to them is not.

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Holocaust survivors, elected officials and the community joined Queensborough Community College for a ribbon cutting on the new building for The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives.

## Holocaust Resource Center Opens

**S**everal hundred individuals were on hand to celebrate a major event in Queensborough Community College (QCC) history on Sunday, October 18 – the ribbon cutting of the new building for The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives.

Before moving into its own building, which includes exhibition spaces, a library and conference room, the center had been located in the basement of the school's library.

QCC President Eduardo Martí explained that the center had been moved "from the darkness of the library to the forefront of the college" and that it "now serves as a symbol that we at Queensborough Community College stand proud against prejudice in all forms."

"It's a laboratory that provides our students with the tools that are necessary to combat prejudice and hate crimes," Martí also said.

## Solar Electric In Queens: New Policies Make It A No-Brainer

By Gabriel Carter

"The State of New York has been working to make solar energy both appealing and profitable for businesses and property owners. A package of different incentives has been created to achieve this goal which comes in the form of grants, rebates, and tax-related benefits."

Successfully navigating these policies can be daunting for businesses and property owners that are not familiar with all available options and requirements.

Two primary incentives that have supported the development of solar electric systems are grants by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) that provide up to \$160,000 in tax credits for commercial properties, and an accelerated depreciation schedule (MACRS) that allows businesses write off solar assets in a short 6 years. However, until recently only businesses with view beyond 7 to 10 years could reasonably see solar as an economically responsible cost-reduction method.

Two major incentive additions have, for solar systems installed by the end of 2010, changed the solar landscape in Queens for the benefit of

business and property owners and shortened the return on investment considerably.

The first is a change in the Federal Investment Tax Credit. This is an incentive for solar energy that returns 30 percent of the original cost of a system. Until this year, this return came in the form of a tax credit; which was problematic for clients who didn't pay federal taxes. Now, for any system installed before December 31, 2010 – this 30 percent rebate can be taken in the form of a grant instead.

The second key incentive now available for systems installed before December 31, 2010 is the New York City Property Tax Abatement for solar electric systems. This allows the business or property owner to defray an additional 35 percent of the cost of the system through a reduction in property taxes over the first four years of operation, calculated after the state and federal grants are considered.

Here's how this works, using an example scenario. A grocery store in Queens has a flat rooftop with around 10,000 square feet of unobstructed space, and the owner is interested in looking into solar to reduce their long-term energy costs. In this case, the owner can

look to develop an 80 kilowatt (kW) solar electric system, which is the largest system that can receive all rebate incentives from NYSERDA.

Original System Cost: 80 kW DC x \$7k per kW -\$560,000

Federal Investment Tax Credit (or Grant) - \$120,000

NYSERDA Rebate Program for Solar - \$160,000

Cost of System in Year 0 -\$280,000

Total Property Tax Abatement over 4 Years -\$140,000

Total Accelerated (MACRS) Depreciation Benefit over 6 Years -\$115,000

Year One Reduction in Electrical Bills - \$20,200

When these incentives are considered this new solar electric system for a non-residential building in Queens pays back in just under four years, and saves \$234,000 in electrical costs in the first 10 years of operation. Smaller solar electric systems and systems built for non-profits, schools, and municipal buildings can have even stronger paybacks due to even larger state rebate packages. These powerful

incentives, coupled with all-time low prices for hardware, can make solar electric a no-brainer for those that are interested in long-term and reliable energy savings.

Business and property owners in Queens should take advantage of these incentive packages while they last. Most solar companies will provide a complementary consultation to evaluate sites from a technical standpoint and show in detail how all of these financial incentives will impact their cash flows. Also, many solar companies can provide financing packages for solar systems that are similar to the well-understood and universal equipment lease; helping businesses and property owners realize the benefits of solar power without dipping into their cash reserves.

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