

Yes, I filed an expense report for a hair dryer, why do you ask?

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Back in the late 1990's one of my colleagues (who is now in [Office Labs](#)—check it out, they've got some pretty cool stuff) filed an expense report for a hair dryer, and it was accepted. But what valid business purpose would there be for a tester to buy a hair dryer?

At the time, my colleague worked as a tester for Windows power management. One of the things that needed to be tested was whether the motherboard accurately reported thermal stress (translation: overheating) to the operating system and whether the operating system responded appropriately to these reports. And when the project started, the most convenient way to get a motherboard to overheat on cue was to blast it with a hair dryer.

Of course, more official equipment arrived later, but it was definitely a cruel (or clever, depending on your point of view) way to introduce new people to the team: “This is your desk, and here is your hair dryer.”

Bonus makeshift testing hardware: During approximately the same era, a joystick tester hooked up the joystick to a series of mechanical linkages, all driven by a record player turntable, in order to stress test the joystick for hours on end. And no, I don't know whether it ran at 33 rpm or 45.



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