

The Day No Fucks Were Given

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I got fired recently. I'd never been fired before and, even half expecting it, that comes as a shock. I worked from home through a company called Teleprophylactic (or something) doing technical support for Verizon FiOS, solving issues with people's home phones, cable TV¹ and internet services.

They called, I answered, they babbled, I instructed, and at the end of the day Verizon customers paid my bills just by having unreliable services.

The job was cushy, I got to sit at my own desk in my own

¹ Verizon would insist, "It's not cable, it's FiOS!" much like I might say, "It's not a fruit, it's an ApPLE!"

chair² and do what I'm otherwise already good at (technology and I have an understanding, we get along well), but it generally sucked. People only call when something is wrong or not working; nobody I talked to was ever happy; many of them wanted to tell you their entire life story. The companies (both Teleperforation and Verizon) liked to track every aspect of our calls, ranging from the average time to complete one, the number of customers that called back in after talking to us, and our use of cumbersome scripting that was very likely written by a team of well-trained chimps. As if that weren't enough, a very large portion of our customers were from New Jersey. I don't like to stereotype people but, in my personal experience, New Jersey is where assholes go to (a) wither up, (b) get increasingly crabby or (c) pay exorbitant sums for internet speeds fast enough to download entire film libraries in seconds so that they can troll Facebook.³

My termination came about because I had discovered a knack for missing sections of my work day. The work day in question was actually two separate shifts, one four hour block in the morning and another four hours in the evening with what I called a five hour lunch break in between. For obvious reasons, scheduling around this can become complicated. As such, I had requested a change to my schedule, hoping to switch from full-

2 Although the chairs in the actual call center were much more comfortable.

3 Answer: (d) All of the above.

time to part-time, cutting out the morning shifts, as soon as scheduling conflicts became apparent. My haste in this was not matched by the company who, for the next couple of months, left my schedule unchanged. This is why I had started missing the morning shift.

Eventually my schedule was corrected but the change came suspiciously late. About a week after this, a single short week of perfect attendance, I went to work (read: upstairs) and tried to log into my company computer for my shift. The message I got was "ACCESS DENIED. REASON: PLEASE CALL WAHA⁴ PHONE."

This can mean something good, it's not always bad. Once I sat at the computer trying to log in for a couple hours, never being able to get access or contact any of my supervisors on the phone. The next day I found out that a tornado had torn through the call center, the building where the remote systems I worked on were physically housed. There were no casualties but there was a day nobody had to work and yet we all still got paid.

I'd worked there for nearly three years, longer than most people can even stand a call center, and consistently ranked among the top twenty agents out of around four-hundred or so that work in the same center, so I didn't hesitate to call in. Usually a call in there is answered in just a couple short rings. We had four supervisors with the WAHA project⁵ and at

4 Work At Home Agent

5 One of whom had actually worked with Telepropaganda longer than I had.

least a couple were there to answer the phone at any given time. If, for some reason they weren't at their desks, one of the supervisors who worked with the in-center agents would usually get it.

Around the time the phone reached the 30th ring I knew something was up.

Then our ACCM⁶ finally answered. In almost three years none of the various ACCMs have ever answered that phone. I've seen at least three come and go but I've never been worthy enough to talk to one on the phone⁷.

We said hi.

Oz said, "I put in a request for your termination based on your recent attendance and it was approved."

I said, "You have to request that?"

Silence⁸.

Oz said, "I can mail your final check to you or you can come pick it up here."

I said, "Okay."

Oz said, "I would just pick it up here so you can bring your equipment back and not get charged or anything."

I said, "Well, I would've rather continued my employment⁹

6 Assistant Call Center Manager, because it's practically blasphemy at Teleprecipitation for any simple phrase, assistant manager for instance, to not be overcomplicated and reduced to an acronym.

7 Nobody can call the great Oz!

8 Pay no attention to that man behind the cubicle, the great Oz has spoken!

9 Possibly a lie.

but yeah, I'll do that."

Oz said, "Well, we got your schedule change and then on the first day after that you were late again."

I said, "No I wasn't¹⁰. Anyway, I'm not going to argue, it's your decision to make. I'm a little ass-chapped but I suppose I should just appreciate my tenure here."

Oz said, "Thank you."

I said, "I would've given Teleperspiration two weeks notice¹¹, seems like I should be extended the same courtesy."

Silence.

I said, "Alright, I'll bring this stuff in some time."

Oz said, "Thank you."

Then the call ended. I've always had good relations with my supervisors, I knew them all personally and had even helped a couple when they were new, but I'd never known any of the management so we didn't exactly need to say our goodbyes.

I went downstairs after that. The kids asked if I was skipping work and I told them that I didn't think I was going to go in that night. I had initially planned to put in my resignation before the request to change my schedule and knew I might still be let go for my absenteeism. I was prepared to not work, had enough saved and enough income with my wife, that I

¹⁰Not a lie.

¹¹Possibly also a lie.

didn't need Telepenetration¹². I had already given all the fucks I had to them so I started planning how to give more time to better things and went outside to smoke a cigarette.

¹² "Transforming passion into excellence." -slogan of a well-known global communications company.