

BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

Outrageous Customer Service Stories, Seen Through The Eyes Of The Agent

(NAPSA)—For many businesses, call centers are a cost-effective way to serve their customers. While we all hear about the bad experiences some consumers have in dealing with call center agents, what about the other side of the story? What about unreasonable, rude and downright wacky callers?

As a tribute to the more than 12 million hardworking agents around the world, Interactive Intelligence—an early pioneer in call center technology and one of the industry's major growth stories over the last few years—recently ran a contest to find the most zany and preposterous call center stories.

“Everyone hears about the consumer side of an interaction gone bad,” says Joe Staples, senior vice president of worldwide marketing for Interactive Intelligence and the creative brain behind the contest. “We thought it would be appropriate to turn the tables and take a look at what experiences the agents have had. And after seeing some of the entries, the word ‘outrageous’ is a good descriptor.”

Anything Goes

Story entries include callers phoning refrigerator manufacturers wanting to know the best temperature for keeping worms in the fridge; callers and call center agents who have hit it off so well over the phone that they ended up getting married; a man who claimed a manufacturer's defect on an SUV he purchased because the vehicle had flooded when he opened the door while parked in the shallow end of a lake; a funeral services company that received a call from someone who wanted to arrange a funeral for a 1½-inch-long goldfish named Iggy;



What do longtime customer service reps have to say about you?

and a woman who would only book her New York hotel room if the agent could guarantee her a room with a view of the Eiffel Tower.

Numbers Needed

Consider the story of a computer help-desk agent assisting a caller who, for security reasons, had been locked out of her account. In order to verify that the person calling was really the owner of the account, the agent asked some standard questions: What is your badge number? What are the last four digits of your Social Security number? The woman seemed to be getting angry about what the agent was asking. Finally, in an exasperated voice, she blurted out, “Do you want to know my bra size, too?” Not thinking and not really planning on responding, the agent replied, “No, we already have that.”

Music To Their Ears

Another agent described her job at a call center selling season passes to past patrons at symphony houses around the U.S. One night while dialing, she was greeted by a Mr. D, who called his son to the

phone, violin in hand, and the 7-year-old began to play. For eight glorious minutes, the entire call center listened via speakerphone in pure rapture to some of the most beautiful music the agents had ever heard. The agent's note with the words “He's 7 years old!” floated around the room, as people stood silent. The performance came to an end, and the entire call center applauded. Then, with just the agent on the phone, Mr. D ordered two of the best seats in the house for the whole season.

“Working in a call center can be a stressful job,” adds Staples. “Our contest pays tribute to the agents who have made this industry what it is today and hopefully gives others a glimpse of what their jobs are like. And you have to admit, these stories help keep life in perspective and definitely put a smile on your face.”

About Interactive Intelligence

Interactive Intelligence (Nasdaq: ININ) is a global provider of unified IP business communications solutions for call centers and midsize to large businesses. FOR-TUNE Small Business magazine recently ranked the company 10th on its list of 100 fastest-growing small public companies in America—and second among the fastest-growing technology companies. To learn more about Interactive Intelligence, visit www.inin.com.

To read more zany and preposterous customer interaction stories, visit the Interactive Intelligence “Outrageous Interactions” contest Web page at www.OutrageousInteractions.com.

