

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Docket No. 900960-TE ~~900960-TE~~
Filed: August 16, 1993

In Re: Show Cause proceeding against
Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph
Company for misbilling customers

* * * * *

DEPOSITION OF: MARTHA POWELL
DATE TAKEN: Wednesday, September 1, 1993
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: 900 North Nova Road
Daytona Beach, Florida
REPORTED BY: LISA L. TAYLOR, RPR-CP, Court
Reporter and Notary Public

* * * * *

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A P P E A R A N C E S

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ALSO PRESENT:

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Julia August
Staff Manager
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Wilma Wilkins, Secretary/Treasurer
Union Local 3102

C O N T E N T S

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TESTIMONY OF MARTHA POWELL

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S T I P U L A T I O N S

It is hereby agreed and so stipulated by and between the parties hereto, through their respective counsel, that the reading and signing of the transcript are expressly reserved by the Deponent.

1 A In Daytona Beach.

2 Q How long have you been a service rep here?

3 A Since 1988.

4 Q What did you do before that?

5 A I worked in Miami as an engineering clerk and also
6 a service rep. And before that, in Homestead as a service
7 rep.

8 Q How many years total do you have with the company?

9 A I have 23 years.

10 Q Are you familiar with the customer-centered sales
11 approach?

12 A Yes, I am.

13 Q Could you describe briefly what that is?

14 A Meeting the customer's needs with the products
15 that we have, asking them questions and seeing if some of
16 our services could be of benefit to them.

17 Q About how long have you been using that sales
18 approach?

19 A I don't remember.

20 Q Do you recall a sales approach which preceded the
21 customer-centered sales approach that's called the
22 assumptive-sales technique?

23 A I really have never heard of that phrase.

24 Q Have you ever heard of a quick close?

25 A Yes, I have.

1 Q Could you describe that?

2 A It's been about ten years ago and it's hard for me
3 to remember.

4 Q You don't recall anything about it?

5 A Uh-uh (negative), no.

6 MR. JOHNSON: She can't take down uh-huh and -- I
7 won't say anything else. My wife's a court reporter so
8 I know better.

9 BY MR. BECK:

10 Q Do you receive evaluations or appraisals from the
11 company on a regular basis?

12 A Yes, we do.

13 Q About how often do you receive that?

14 A Once a year.

15 Q Do you know what the different criteria or grounds
16 are for your appraisal?

17 A Observation, your order accuracy, sales.

18 Q Do you know how those things are weighted?

19 A No, they -- the sales and the service used to be
20 weighted equally and now the service is weighted a little
21 higher.

22 Q

23

24 A Yes, I have.

25 Q Could you describe what happened?

1 A
2 Q
3 A
4 Q
5 A
6 Q
7 A Yes.
8 Q Who was your supervisor at that time?
9 A Kathy Reagan (phonetic).
10 Q And what happened after that, anything?
11 A
12
13 Q
14 A I don't understand.
15 Q
16 A I'm trying to think how to put it.
17 Q Okay.
18 A They gave me a satisfactory appraisal.
19 Q
20
21 A
22
23 Q And you did so --
24 A Uh-huh (affirmative).
25 Q -- after that?

1 Was the criteria a sales objective?

2 A Uh-huh (affirmative).

3 Q

4

5 A As far as I can remember.

6 Q Do you recall whether the sales objectives were
7 being raised at that time?

8 A I don't really know.

9 Q Did you think the sales objectives were fair at
10 that point in time?

11 A Not really.

12 Q Did you think it was difficult to meet those
13 objectives?

14 A I did, yes.

15 Q Did any others in the -- any other service reps
16 you know of feel the same way?

17 A I think some of them did, yes.

18 Q Have you ever heard of anyone cheating in order to
19 meet a sales objective?

20 A Just rumors, I've heard, that's all.

21 Q Now, without giving the names of any persons, what
22 kinds of rumors did you hear about that?

23 A Putting things on people's, you know, accounts
24 that they didn't order.

25 Q Was that -- I don't know how to describe this -- a

1 regular rumor or did you discuss it frequently?

2 A Oh, no, no.

3 Q Was there ever any talk that people cheating or
4 putting down sales was helping to raise the quota, thereby
5 making it more difficult to meet?

6 A No, I really didn't hear anything like that.

7 Q Have you ever had customers call in to the office
8 and tell you that they had services on their bill that they
9 had not ordered?

10 A Yes.

11 Q How would you handle that?

12 A First I would express regret that that happened
13 and then I would take it off and, you know, in effect,
14 bill -- date it back to the date that service went in.

15 Q Did you refer calls like that to any special
16 group?

17 A Yes, refer to my supervisor.

18 Q Would you make any special notations or reports
19 about those types of calls?

20 A No, I didn't personally.

21 Q Was there a time period when you received calls
22 like that more frequently than other time periods?

23 A I can't remember any one time was more than the
24 other.

25 Q Do you still receive those types of calls?

1 A Very, very seldom.

2 Q How about, like, three years ago, were they more
3 prevalent then?

4 A I can't remember, it's been so long.

5 Q Do you have any trouble meeting the present sales
6 objectives?

7 A Right now, I don't, no.

8 Q Are you familiar with the term "bridging"?

9 A Uh-huh (affirmative).

10 Q Have you ever been counseled about doing more
11 bridging than you used to?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Could you describe what bridging is?

14 A Bridging is when a customer calls in to ask about
15 services -- I mean, ask about a problem on their account or
16 whatever. When we take care of that problem, then we're to
17 see if there's any services that they could benefit from.

18 Q Are there any types of calls where you do not
19 bridge?

20 A Yes.

21 Q What types?

22 A Calls that you transfer to other departments, such
23 as repair, because we want to take care of their problem
24 that they have right now first.

25 Q Is that the only time?

1 A When we transfer calls to collections, you know,
2 when they need to make arrangements on their bills or
3 things like that or AT&T, if they need to go to AT&T.

4 Q Have you ever tried to bridge a customer on an
5 occasion when you didn't think it was appropriate to do so?

6 A No.

7 Q Have you ever tried to sell services to a customer
8 who you felt really couldn't afford the extra services?

9 A No.

10 Q Have you ever told anybody in management, either
11 supervisor or manager, that you had heard that people were
12 cheating to make sales quotas?

13 A No.

14 MR. BECK: That's all I have. Thank you.

15 There may be others.

16 CROSS-EXAMINATION

17 BY MS. WILSON:

18 Q

19

20

21 A

22

23 Q Did you feel that there was undue pressure being
24 placed on you to make sales at that time?

25 A No.

1 MS. WILSON: Carl, do you have anything?

2 MR. VINSON: No.

3 MR. BECK: I guess that's it.

4 MR. BEATTY: I do have one question.

5 CROSS-EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. BEATTY:

7 Q You indicated, I believe, in response to Mr.
8 Beck's questions that you currently are able to make your
9 sales objectives; is that correct?

10 A Uh-huh (affirmative), yes.

11 Q Do you feel that the current sales objective is a
12 fair one?

13 A Yes.

14 MR. BEATTY: I have nothing further.

15 (Whereupon, the taking of the deposition was
16 concluded at 10:05 a.m.)

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