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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

920260-TL

In re: Show Cause proceeding)	Docket No. 900960-TL
against Southern Bell Telephone)	
and Telegraph Company for)	Filed: August 16, 1993
misbilling customers)	
_____)	

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF DUVAL)

Deposition of CINDI BOOTH, taken pursuant to Notice of Taking Deposition, on Monday, August 30, 1993, at 301 West Bay Street, Southern Bell Tower, 20th Floor, Conference Room C, commencing at 2:10 p.m., as recorded by Patricia H. Vierengel, CSR, RPR and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at Large.

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

A P P E A R A N C E S

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A P P E A R A N C E S (Continued)

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I N D E X

WITNESS:

CINDI BOOTH

DIRECT EXAMINATION BY:

MR. BECK.....Pg. 7

MR. VINSON.....Pg. 19

N O E X H I B I T S

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S T I P U L A T I O N

IT IS STIPULATED that this deposition was taken pursuant to notice in accordance with the applicable Florida Rules of Civil Procedure; that objections, except as to the form of the question, are reserved until hearing in this cause; and that the reading and signing was not waived.

IT IS ALSO STIPULATED that any off-the-record conversations are with the consent of the deponent.

---oOo---

1 CINDI BOOTH,
2 having been produced and first duly sworn as a witness
3 herein, testified as follows:

4 DIRECT EXAMINATION

5 BY MR. BECK:

6 Q Mrs. Booth, my name is Charlie Beck with the
7 Office of Public Counsel and I'm going to start off with the
8 questioning. There may be some other questions from some
9 others here, or none.

10 It's not my intent during this deposition to ask you to
11 name any other service representatives or members of the
12 union as far as what they may or may not have done. We are
13 not taking this for disciplinary purposes. We merely want
14 to ask you questions about your job, about the environment
15 that you service the customers under. If you don't
16 understand any of the questions as I ask them, or if the
17 questions aren't clear, would you please stop me and let's
18 make it clear before we go forward. Is that agreeable?

19 A Okay.

20 Q Could you please state your name?

21 A Cindi Booth.

22 Q Are you employed by Southern Bell?

23 A No.

24 Q By whom are you employed?

25 A BCI.

1 Q Which is BellSouth Communications, Inc.?

2 A Bell -- yeah.

3 Q How long have you been employed by BCI?

4 A About six months.

5 Q What position do you hold?

6 A Service consultant.

7 Q Could you describe what that job entails?

8 A Implementation of major accounts.

9 Q What does that mean, "implementation of major
10 accounts"?

11 A Writing up service orders, services order requests
12 for services.

13 Q Are you -- Are these just certain customers that
14 you service?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Mainly large customers?

17 A Yes.

18 Q What job did you hold before that?

19 A Service rep.

20 Q Was that with Southern Bell?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. And where were you a service rep.

23 A Gainesville.

24 Q How long did you hold that position there?

25 A About six years.

1 Q Did you have any other jobs with Southern Bell or
2 an affiliate company before that?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Would you describe that?

5 A It was a service rep, but in another state.

6 Q What state was it?

7 A North Carolina.

8 Q And for how long were you there, just very
9 roughly?

10 A As a service rep. in --

11 Q Yes.

12 A Ten years.

13 Q Do you recall what type of sales approach was used
14 first of all in Gainesville? Was it customer centered
15 sales?

16 A Yeah. Yeah. (Affirmative Response). We just
17 started that. Before it was just sales.

18 Q Do you recall the type of sales approach that was
19 used in North Carolina?

20 A Huh-ha. (Negative Response).

21 Q Does the term "assumptive sales technique" mean
22 anything to you?

23 A I have heard it.

24 Q Do you know what it means?

25 A Huh-ha. (Negative Response).

1 Q That's a "No"?

2 A Right.

3 Q You'll have to do that for the --

4 A I'm sorry.

5 Q Was the customer centered sales approach just
6 being implemented when you got to Gainesville?

7 A No. Just the last three years. Approximately.
8 I'm not sure.

9 Q What brought you to change positions to work for
10 BCI?

11 A I have always wanted to be a service consultant,
12 and I finally got it.

13 Q It was voluntary on your part?

14 A Oh, yeah.

15 Q Okay. Let me focus the questions, if I could, on
16 the time in Gainesville when you were a service rep there.
17 Did you get appraised in your position in Gainesville?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Do you recall what the things were that you were
20 appraised on?

21 A Sales and services.

22 Q In your opinion did the company emphasize one of
23 those two more than the other?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Which one?

1 A Sales.

2 Q What were the criteria used to judge sales? I
3 want to do this with each one; first sales, and then
4 services, the things that they looked at in the appraisal
5 system.

6 A I have forgotten just about -- Well, just what you
7 sold.

8 Q Was it dollar figures?

9 A Yeah.

10 Q Were there certain objectives that you were
11 supposed to meet?

12 A Yes.

13 Q How about in the service area?

14 A Accuracy. Quoting the right rates, giving the
15 right information, and doing the paperwork correctly.

16 Q And how did they go about evaluating that?

17 A They listened to you.

18 Q Do you recall how often you'd get appraised?

19 A About twice a year.

20 Q Why do you think the company put more emphasis on
21 sales?

22 A I don't know.

23 Q No, I don't mean the purpose. You know, why did
24 they --

25 A Oh, I don't know.

1 Q I don't mean the purpose of the company behind
2 that. What is the basis for your feeling that the company
3 emphasized sales more than service? --

4 A Will you rephrase that again?

5 Q Earlier you told me that you felt that the company
6 put more emphasis on sales than service. Do you recall
7 that?

8 A Um-ha. (Affirmative Response).

9 Q Why do you think that?

10 A Oh, because it was a higher percentage.

11 Q Do you recall what the percentages were?

12 A No, I don't.

13 Q Have you ever heard of people selling or putting
14 down as sales to customers, or putting services on their
15 bills when the customer never consented to it or agreed to
16 it?

17 A Have I ever heard of it?

18 Q Yes. Have you ever heard of that happening while
19 you were in Gainesville?

20 A No.

21 Q Do you know or -- whether anybody ever told
22 management that there's cheating going on?

23 A I have heard people say they thought so, but that
24 doesn't mean it was.

25 Q Do you know --

1 A I don't know of any instances.

2 Q Okay. Do you know of any occasions when that was
3 communicated to management?

4 A No.

5 Q Are you familiar with bridging?

6 A Yep.

7 Q Could you describe what that entails?

8 A It entails the same thing as customer centered
9 sales: getting information from the customer and telling
10 them about the services that are available that they might
11 could use from what you found out.

12 Q Were you required to bridge on calls people would
13 make to the -- to you as a service rep.?

14 A Right.

15 Q Were there any types of calls that you would not
16 bridge on?

17 A Um-ha. (Affirmative Response).

18 Q What types of calls?

19 A There was three, basically, but I can only
20 remember two of them, and they were ones that I felt strong
21 about: if somebody was cut off, or was irate, you normally
22 wouldn't do that.

23 Q If somebody called in with a question about their
24 bill would that be the type of call where you would be
25 expected to bridge?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Do you know of anyone ever being criticized by the
3 company for not bridging when they had an opportunity to
4 bridge?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Could you generally describe those occasions?

7 A I would say it would be a situation where it was
8 like a billing and the person didn't do it.

9 Q Have you ever been either disciplined or
10 criticized for not bridging when a bridging occasion was
11 presented?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Was that a frequent occurrence, do you know,
14 within the group of service representatives?

15 A I can only speak for myself.

16 Q What was the occasion for yourself?

17 A I usually did it, so it was rare.

18 Q Okay. Were you -- I asked you whether you were
19 ever criticized or disciplined, and you said yes. Which one
20 was it?

21 A Oh. Criticized.

22 Q By whom?

23 A My supervisor.

24 Q Okay. Did you feel under pressure to meet sales
25 quotas as a services rep.?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And what things would make you feel like there was
3 pressure on you to achieve the sales quotas?

4 A The objective.

5

6

7 A Yes.

8 Q Could you describe what happened and what
9 responses you took?

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18 Q Do you think the company's emphasis on sales
19 hinders the ability of service reps. to provide good service
20 to customers?

21 A I think that would probably depend on the person.

22 Q You mean which service rep.?

23 A Right.

24 Q Can you think of any ways that it wouldn't hinder
25 the ability to provide good service?

1 A Can I think of any ways that it would --

2 Q Or do you know any ways that it did, either by
3 talking to the other service reps. or by your own
4 experience?

5 A Well, I would say it was rare that that would be
6 the case. Like I said, it's an individual thing, you know,
7 where some person might, you know, not be meeting the
8 objective, might cut corners, you know, that might be more
9 friendly to the customer or something. But I don't see how
10 that could be generalized because it would be an individual
11 thing.

12 Q Have you ever had complaints from customers about
13 trying to sell them services when they -- when they didn't
14 want you to try and sell them services?

15 A No.

16 Q As a service rep. you would take new orders, would
17 you not, from customers?

18 A Right.

19 Q And billing inquiries?

20 A Right.

21 Q Complaints?

22 A Right.

23 Q Did you ever have occasion where a customer called
24 in about a service that they didn't want?

25 A Yeah.

1 Q What would you do when that happened?

2 A Take it off.

3 Q Okay. Did you ever have occasion when a customer
4 said that they hadn't ordered the service and asked you to
5 take it off?

6 A Yeah.

7 Q Were there any special reports made by you when a
8 customer called in and said that they hadn't ordered the
9 services?

10 A No. And the reason being that sometimes people
11 forgot and they said they didn't place the order, or their
12 husband did or something, so it was hard to tell a lot of
13 times if there was anything shady about it. I usually gave
14 them credit.

15 Q You would handle it just like any other call by a
16 customer?

17 A Unless I thought it was something really bad,
18 which I have never handled anything like that, but I think
19 I probably would have.

20 Q How frequently do you think that happened?

21 A Rarely.

22 Q Okay. Do you think there's been any change in the
23 last year or two with respect to the emphasis of the company
24 on sales?

25 A Yes.

1 Q What change do you think -- has there been?

2 A Well, it's so hard to say. I feel they have
3 relaxed a little bit, actually.

4 Q The amount of pressure isn't there anymore?

5 MR. BEATTY: I object to the question. That's not
6 her testimony, the witness's testimony.

7 Q You can answer the question.

8 A What was it again?

9 Q As I understand it, you said that you thought it's
10 been relaxed some with respect to sales pressure; is that
11 correct?

12 A Right. That's correct.

13 Q Would you elaborate on that?

14 A Well, I think customer centered sales helped a lot
15 because it's basically tailoring the sales to the customer,
16 and that's been emphasized real strongly.

17 Q Is there anything else besides that that makes you
18 think it's been relaxed?

19 A Huh-ha. (Negative response).

20 Q Have you ever heard of any service rep. ever
21 failing to tell the customer that a service was optional?

22 A Have I heard it or have I heard of it?

23 Q Have you heard of it?

24 A Yeah.

25 Q Okay. Do you know personally whether that's ever

1 occurred?

2 A I think as long as you have human beings there's
3 going to be people who will forget something like that.

4 Yeah.

5 Q Did you ever feel that you were -- had to try to
6 sell a service to a customer when they couldn't afford it?

7 A I don't feel that I would be a person that would
8 judge that situation. I mean, how do I know if they can
9 afford it or not?

10 MR. BECK: Thank you. That's all I have. There
11 may be some other questions.

12 BY MR. VINSON:

13 Q Mrs. Booth, are you familiar with any recent
14 changes in the evaluation of customer service reps.?

15 A I have been gone for six months, so --

16 Q Let me back up and reask that question. You
17 mentioned that you felt that sales had been emphasized more
18 strongly than services when we were talking about the two
19 parts of the job?

20 A Um-ha. (Affirmative response).

21 Q And you said something about the percentage being
22 higher?

23 A Um-ha. (Affirmative Response).

24 Q During the time that you were a customer service
25 rep. did that percentage change, or was there just one that

1 you -- one weighting that you worked under that you can
2 recall?

3 A I just know the last time I had one it was higher.

4 Q The sales was weighted higher?

5 A Yeah.

6 MR. VINSON: Those are the only questions I have.

7 MR. BEATTY: That's it.

8 MR. BECK: Okay. Thank you very much.

9 (Witness excused).

10 (Whereupon, the deposition was concluded at 2:20 p.m.)

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AFFIDAVIT OF DEPONENT

This is to certify that I, CINDI BOOTH, have read the foregoing transcript of my testimony, Pages 1 through 20, given on August 30, 1993, in Docket No. 900960-TL, and find the same to be true and correct, with the exceptions, and/or corrections, if any, as shown on the errata sheet attached hereto.

CINDI BOOTH

SWORN to and subscribed before me this

_____ day of _____, 1993.

Print name here:
Notary Public - State of Florida
My Commission No.:
My Commission expires:

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F L O R I D A)

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CERTIFICATE OF OATH

COUNTY OF DUVAL)

I, the undersigned authority, certify that CINDI BOOTH personally appeared before me and was duly sworn.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 20th day of October, 1993.

Patricia H. Vierengel

PATRICIA H. VIERENGEL

Notary Public - State of Florida

My Commission No.: CC296027

My Commission expires: 6/21/97

**PATRICIA H. VIERENGEL
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF FLORIDA
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 6/21/97
COMM. # CC 296027**

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STATE OF FLORIDA)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

COUNTY OF DUVAL)

I, PATRICIA H. VIERENGEL, Court Reporter, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing deposition of CINDI BOOTH;

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Patricia H. Vierengel
PATRICIA H. VIERENGEL, Court Reporter
Telephone No.: (904) 725-8657

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF DUVAL)

The foregoing certificate was acknowledged before me this 30th day of October, 1993, by PATRICIA H. VIERENGEL, who is personally known to me.

Wadeon N. Brown
Print name:
Notary Public - State of Florida
My Commission No.:
My Commission expires:

