

Professional Communication – Negative Message

Subject: Re: Complaints regarding your Indian call centre

Date: Saturday, June 9, 2012 2:00 PM

From: Arthur Robert <arobert@seamobile.ca>

To: Becky Brennan <becky_b10@sympatico.ca>

Dear Ms. Brennan,

Thank you for your recent message to Sea Mobile regarding our hiring practices. I understand that our Customer Service Representative (CSR) was able to help you resolve the issue that you were having with the GPS mapping functionality on your phone. The CSR who assisted you, Habib, is based in Bangalore, India. Our company policy as a smaller telecommunications provider has always been to outsource the telephone customer service portion of our business. Sea Mobile has never established nor had any business plans to establish a customer service call centre in Canada; therefore, Canadian jobs were not lost through our outsourcing practice.

As you are perhaps aware, Sea Mobile is a very small telecommunications provider that does not have nearly as much market share as Bell, Rogers, Telus or any of the other larger telcos in Canada. For this reason – and in order to survive in such a fiercely competitive market – we have to review every way in which we can reduce our expenses. With these savings, we are able to provide value to our customers in other areas of our business. For example, you may have noticed that our monthly rates are on the average lower than any of the previously mentioned major telcos. We are able to deliver these low rates partly because of the savings that we achieve through our outsourcing practice.

Your comment that Habib was very difficult to understand during your call has been duly noted. We are actively working to address this issue and have been putting our CSRs through regular ESL training sessions. As I'm sure you can appreciate, learning a second language to a fluent level takes a major investment in time. Habib has been taking ESL courses in Bangalore for about three years now and we hope that he'll be at a fluent level with his English within the next year. Also, you are correct that Habib lacks familiarity with Canadian geography. When you were trying to explain to him the particular geographic areas that were not showing up on your GPS, Habib had to take some time in order to research the area to which you were referring. Habib, like all of our CSRs at Sea Mobile, has also been studying relevant geographic data. He is learning with each call and will be able to address an issue like yours more quickly when he encounters it again in the future.

We at Sea Mobile realize that outsourcing is a politically contentious issue and one that we take very seriously. The reality is that if we did not have the ability to outsource our customer service operations, Sea Mobile would not be able to exist in the Canadian telecommunications market. This is not a hyperbolic statement, but one that is based on thorough market research that we carried out before entering this business. Feel free to read more about our business model on our website: seamobile.ca/business-info

Although we cannot fulfill your request to relocate our call centre operations to Canada for these reasons, I'd like to let you know that I will be relaying your concerns to our call centre manager in Bangalore, John Mayhew. I'm sure that John will appreciate your feedback and use it as part of his materials to motivate our team in Bangalore. Rest assured that your comments have been duly noted and will be used productively by Sea Mobile. We value your business and look forward to offering you improved services in the future.

Sincerely,
Arthur Robert
Communications Manager, Sea Mobile

Professional Communication – Negative Message

Subject: Complaint ID #382 – Becky Brennan

Date: Saturday, June 9, 2012 4:00 PM

From: Arthur Robert <arobert@seamobile.ca>

To: John Mayhew <jmayhew@seamobile.ca>

Hello John,

I hope you've been well. I've noticed that your centre's results from last quarter were stellar - congratulations on your achievement. Keep up the good work. I don't normally like to bother you with customer complaints, but one came in recently that requires attention regarding customer service. It's from a 28-year-old woman in Montreal named Becky. She's been with us for a little under a year now. She called in to your centre on June 5 with a technical issue about the GPS mapping function on her Nexus S mobile. Habib Ahsan answered the call. Allow me to quickly summarize Becky's issues for you. She says:

- She had difficulty understanding Habib. This seems to have been **not** due to bad reception but because of language barriers.
- She was very annoyed with Habib's lack of familiarity with Canadian geography.
- She expressed concern about jobs being taken away from Canadians because of our call centre operations in India. She even requested that we move these operations to Canada (ha, ha).

Now, one approach that a more authoritarian company might take would be to fire Habib and make a public example out of him. We could show this complaint to all our call centre employees so that they know precisely why he was terminated. I believe that this would probably result in some short-term job performance gains, but short-term isn't good enough. We need long-term gains and I personally believe that productivity from *any* business unit within a company comes from its culture. A healthy culture cannot be fostered by outwardly firing an employee and antagonizing your remaining employees into enhancing their job performance.

I don't know Habib but I'm sure he's a dedicated employee. I don't think that merely reprimanding one employee is going to be a solution here. I do know that our language training module is solid, so I'm confident that that's not the issue. That's why I'm suggesting you build a new module into your training system that deals specifically with Canadian geography. I'm not suggesting that your CSRs become experts in Canadian geography, but I do believe that Ms. Brennan identified a very real knowledge gap here. Habib and all Sea Mobile CSRs should have an instinctive understanding of at least the most significant Canadian geographic locations. I know that advanced research tools are always at their fingertips, but frankly I don't think that a CSR should have to consult *any* tool in order to find out where Yonge & Dundas or the Eaton Centre is located within Toronto. CSRs should have a strong intuitive understanding of these major geographic areas within the city centres that we service.

What do you think of this idea, John? Of course, you won't be expected to implement the training module by yourself. I can make arrangements so that a collaborative effort can be made on it and perhaps even send one of our developers to Bangalore for a few weeks. Again, great job on last quarter's results. I'm confident that the successful implementation of this module will allow your team to do an even better job in future quarters.

All the best,
Arthur Robert
Communications Manager, Sea Mobile

Persona

Becky Brennan, 28-year-old student from Montreal, Canada



“In the long run, we’re all dead anyways...” (often says this sarcastically after making a purchase)

Photo credit: by Flickr user “joeri-c” (Creative Commons license)

Title Preference

She is unmarried. “Ms.” is fine.

Personal Background

Becky is the only daughter of Irish immigrants who settled in the working-class neighbourhood of Pointe-Saint-Charles in Montreal. She has four older brothers. The Point is known to be one of the poorest and toughest neighbourhoods in not only Montreal, but all of Canada. Becky quickly acquired a strong work ethic and hard-edged attitude toward life growing up in this neighbourhood. She grew up primarily around Anglophones in the city and never learned much French.

Although Becky never had the highest grades in school, she excelled at athletics, especially women's ice hockey and basketball. She got into McGill on an athletic scholarship and decided to study political science because of her argumentative and opinionated nature. She passed her first two years with average grades, but dropped out in her third year after debt started piling up too high. She acknowledges that this was mostly her own fault because she was never good with money and doesn't like to save. But she also partly blames the provincial government for making it difficult for students to find decent part-time employment. For this reason, she has developed a disdain of government and relatively conservative views. She dislikes regulation, most forms of taxation and high levels of immigration (somewhat ironically, considering her family history).

After working mostly blue-collar jobs since postponing her education, Becky is in a slightly better financial situation now and will be returning to McGill to finish her degree.

More About Becky

Group Identity

Generation Y/Millennials. She identifies with this group and especially the problem of “arrested adulthood”.

Goals/Needs

Becky can get frustrated with a product very easily. When she's using her phone, she expects voice quality to be perfect and texts messages to go through immediately. She uses the GPS mapping feature frequently and expects it to load and identify her location within 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Engagement & Activities

Computer Usage: High – uses both a Macbook Air and a netbook PC

Internet Presence: Strong – particularly engaged in political blogs and news sites such as Huffington Post and Reddit

Mobile Usage: High – uses a Google Nexus S every day

Social Networking: Medium – uses Facebook frequently

Favourite TV Show: Doesn't watch TV

Favourite Book: *America Alone: The End of the World as We Know It* by Mark Steyn (read in undergrad)

References

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