

Your Call Is Not Very Important To Us

by Roz Warren

Please stay on the line. Or don't stay on the line. We don't care. If we cared about your call, we'd answer it. Which, to be honest, isn't going to happen.

We're going to make you hold. And while you hold, we're going to subject you to some really bad music. For a very long time. If that doesn't drive you away, maybe we'll let finally you talk to somebody.

They will be friendly and cheerful but completely unable to help you. Because YOUR CALL IS NOT VERY IMPORTANT TO US.

We don't care about your call, or about the problem you are seeking to resolve, or about you. We care deeply about the lovely green stuff in your wallet. But that's as far as our caring goes.

PLEASE STAY ON THE LINE.

When we say that, we're lying!

We really want you to hang up and go away. Answering the phone, even with an automatic system like this, costs money. We'd much rather you log onto our website, so we can fire the few remaining phone-answering employees we actually have left on the payroll.

YOUR CALL WILL BE ANSWERED BY THE NEXT AVAILABLE OPERATOR.

Now there's a laugh.

It's true as far as it goes, but it implies that there are sufficient operators -- somewhere -- standing by waiting to take your call.

In your dreams, pal.

Once upon a time, there were.

Back in the Golden Age of Customer Service, in the halcyon days of the rotary phone, we had a huge team of well-informed, motivated people who promptly took calls and actually cared about helping you.

We fired them all and replaced them with five guys in Bangalore. They are eager to speak with you. Unfortunately, they will barely be able to understand you, let alone understand your problem. Helping you solve that problem is, of course, totally out of the question, so PLEASE STAY ON THE LINE.

How many hours will you spend in Customer Service Limbo listening to crap music and our lying insistence that we care and our relentless plugging of our website before you hang up? Or hang yourself?

We don't know. And we don't care.

So go ahead --

PLEASE STAY ON THE LINE.

