

THE CALL CENTRE

ten minute comedy skit

by Claire Demmer

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THE CALL CENTRE

Cast:

The supervisor (male/female)

The trainee/new employee (male/female)

The caller (male)

Set: The stage is divided into two sections. On one side there is a desk with a chair behind it. On the desk is a telephone, a large file with a number of pages inside and a laptop. On the other side there is what remains of the caller's home. It could be anything from a blank stage to some rubble lying around. The male caller needs a mobile (cell) phone.

PART 1: THE TRAINING

Supervisor: Look, it's not that difficult. (*Impatient and exasperated*)

Employee: Okay. (*Uncertainly and slowly*)

Supervisor: It's very simple. When a caller gets put through to you, what do you do?

Employee: You say, "Hello, my name is- "

Supervisor: No, "I say-"

Employee: You say?

Supervisor: No. Not me. You.

Employee: You or me?

Supervisor: I mean 'you.' (*Pointing at employee*) 'You' means me. Got it?

Employee: Can we move on? Please?

Supervisor: Do it again.

Employee: Do what again? (*Nervously*)

Supervisor: The phone. (*Level of voice increases*) Answer the (*Pause*) phone.

Employee: Now?

Supervisor: Yes! Now.

Employee: Er, hello? (*Without picking up the phone*)

Supervisor: Do it. Answer the phone. (*Points to the phone*)

Employee: But there's no one there.

Supervisor: Of course there's no one there.

Employee: I don't -

Supervisor: Just answer the bloody thing! *(To herself)* Why do they send me these idiots! Is it some kind of management test?

Employee grabs the phone and nervously grabs too hard so that it falls on the floor. Picks it up and puts it back on the table.

Supervisor: You'd better hope that that phone's still working, or it's coming out of your salary. Which at this point is pretty non-existent.... *(Under her breath)*

Employee: Sorry?

Supervisor: Ring, ring *(Waves demandingly at the phone)*

Employee: *(Picks up the phone and pretends to talk to a client)* Hello? My name is Mary/Arthur *(Whatever sex the actor is)* How may I help you? *(Waits and looks expectantly at the supervisor)*

Supervisor: I have a problem.

Employee: Oh, I'm sorry.

Supervisor: No you're not.

Employee: I'm not sorry?

Supervisor: No! You're not doing it right. Now – consult your handbook. *(Employee opens folder and peers at it intently)* What is the standard response to the “I have a problem” statement?

Employee: *(Reads)* Okay. Yes. How may I be of assistance?

Supervisor: I wish to make a claim.

Employee looks as if hunting for something

Supervisor: Page one - middle of the page.

Employee: *(Locates it and reads slowly)* What is the claim in regards to?

Supervisor: I have been involved in a road traffic accident.

Employee: *(Reads)* Oh, I'm sorry. Was the accident your fault?

Supervisor: No. Now follow the arrow under “no” to see what your next response will be.

Employee: Okay. I see. Was there anyone else involved in the accident?

Supervisor: Yes. Now follow the line down again.

Employee: Are you able to provide me with both your name, policy number as well as their names and addresses?

Supervisor: Yes. At this point you would take those details down and find their file on the computer but for now just carry on.

Employee: Okay. Was anyone injured in the accident?

Supervisor: No.

Employee: *(Follows arrow down to next line)* Was your device serviced and in good working order? Device?

Supervisor: It's the line you read for anything mechanical that's insured. 'Device' should be substituted for 'car' if they call for a motor claim etcetera, etcetera. It's quite simple.

Employee: Okay...

Supervisor: Yes.

Employee:Yes....

Supervisor: Yes, my car was serviced and in good working order. *(Sharp)*

Employee: Oh, I see. *(Continues reading)* Are you able to provide evidence of the device, car, being in good working order? A certificate or the um car itself?

Supervisor: Yes, my car recently passed its MOT (annual service test)

Employee: Have you filed a police report?

Supervisor: No.

Employee: Then unfortunately we cannot help you right now. Once we have the police report, we will be able to proceed with your claim. Thank you and have a nice day.

Supervisor: And - 'Good bye.' Now it's quite straightforward. You simply follow the arrows and say what it says as you go until you reach the bottom of the page. Easy?

Employee: I think so.

Supervisor: Now have a look through the file and go to the bottom of each page.

Employee: Okay. *(Reads)*

Supervisor: You will see that, ultimately, we only have five standard responses when someone makes a claim. *(Starts to pace proudly)*

One – An element of their paperwork is missing. Examples of paperwork include a police report, an accident report, a hand drawn diagram of the accident, the copy of their insurance policy that we posted them when they first joined our company fifteen years ago, their doctor's note to say they did actually have an accident and

visited their doctor for an accident related injury on the day in question, a copy of their passport, birth certificate, driver's license, latest eye test etcetera, etcetera. There's a list in the back of the file of all the paperwork they have to provide us with before we can even look at their claim. It's extensive. *(Proudly)* Now, until you can provide this paperwork we will be unable to process your claim. Then you say "Thank you and have a nice day." *(Brightly)*

Employee: Thank you and have a nice day.

Supervisor: Two – An element of the other party's paperwork is missing. Until they provide that, we are unable to process your claim. Examples of the other party's paperwork are also listed at the back of the folder. Thank you and have a nice day! *(Brightly)*

Employee: Thank you and have a -

Supervisor: *(Pacing again)* Three – we're sorry but your policy renewal date was on such and such a date. Usually choose a date smack bang in the middle of their claim. Because of this, we are unable to proceed further with your claim. Thank you and have a nice day!

Employee: Thank you and -

Supervisor: Four – we're sorry, but your bank did not provide us with the necessary funds on time for your most recent payment. Because of this, we are unable to proceed with your claim. Thank you and have a nice day!

Employee: Th -

Supervisor: Lastly – and this one is my particular favourite – Would you like me to give you a reference number for this call?

Employee: When do I say that?

Supervisor: When you can't find the answer.

Employee: Does it work?

Supervisor: Every time.

Employee: Okay. Where do I find the reference number for their claim?

Supervisor: Don't worry about that. Just make something up.

Employee: Make something up? But what if they call back and want to use it?

Supervisor: Don't worry, there are thousands of call centre minions. The odds that the same person would get through to you again are one in a million.

Employee: You sure?

Supervisor: Trust me. *(Cheesy grin)*

Employee: But where are the other employees?

Supervisor: Working.

Employee: Somewhere...else?

Supervisor: Oh, yes. Definitely.

Employee: When does someone get to make a claim?

Supervisor: Oh, don't worry, that's not your concern.

Employee: But what happens if everything they need is in order? What happens then?

Supervisor: Then they get a reference number.

Employee: Then what happens?

Supervisor: Nothing.

Employee: But they'll call back.

Supervisor: Then they get a second reference number. That's all you need to do. You don't need to handle any of that other stuff. Is that clear?

Employee: Not really.

Supervisor: Now, Mary/Arthur, you have completed basic training, I think you are ready to take your first call. You'll go live in 1 minute. Is everything clear? Do you know what to say?

Employee: No.

Supervisor: You'll be fine. Just follow the arrows and you can't go wrong.

Employee: Okay. *(Nervous)*

Supervisor: Have a nice day! *(Exits. Lights down whole stage)*

PART 2 (THE CALL)

Lights up on the whole stage. On stage right Employee sits behind their desk nervously poised to take their first call and shuffling through the file. On stage left there is a man with a phone. He has a bedraggled, frazzled appearance and has a battered suitcase next to him. If the set allows he may be smoking slightly and appear to be standing in a burnt out ruined building. He dials on his phone. (A mobile phone/cell phone can be used here) The phone rings at the call centre. The employee jumps and watches the phone nervously as it rings. 5 rings must pass. The man must start to pace impatiently and the employee must appear very hesitant.

Employee: Er, hello?

Man: Is this the superbudget insurance company?

Employee: My name is Mary/Arthur. How may I help you?

Man: Help me? Oh...yes. I'd like to make a claim, please?

Employee: *(Leafing through the file)* Er, er, oh here it is - what is the claim in regards to?

Man: My house burnt down.

Employee: Your house burnt down *(Searching through the folder and paging furiously)* your house burnt down...

Man: That's what I said.

Employee: Oh, I'm sorry. Was the fire your fault?

Man: Let me see. I was in Jamaica at the time.

Employee: Er...

Man: My house is in Surrey.

Employee: Is that 'no' then?