

Decision No. 85462

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

WORTHINGTON FORD, INC.,
a California corporation,
dba CAL WORTHINGTON FORD,

Complainant,

vs.

GENERAL TELEPHONE COMPANY
OF CALIFORNIA,

Defendant.

Case No. 9904
(Filed April 18, 1975)

Joseph R. Kalan and Louis Gotenstein,
Attorneys at Law, for complainant.
Mary L. Sullivan, Attorney at Law,
for defendant.

O P I N I O N

Complainant, Worthington Ford, Inc., seeks an order compelling defendant, General Telephone Company of California, to provide adequate telephone service so that complainant can receive and make telephone calls without interference or interruption, without "losing the other party", and without having the telephone lines go "dead" during telephone conversations.

Public hearing was held before Examiner Johnson at Los Angeles on October 20, 1975 and the matter was submitted on December 12, 1975 upon receipt of transcript.

Complainant's Position

Testimony and exhibits were presented on behalf of complainant by one of its attorneys, by its business manager, and by its switchboard operator. This testimony indicated that:

1. Complainant was dissatisfied with the quality of service rendered by defendant since the Cal Worthington Ford agency first commenced operations in May 1974.

2. On February 25, 1975 complainant's business manager issued instructions to all employees to keep records of all instances of telephone problems which resulted in a tabulation of all such instances noted between April 17 and October 7, 1975 being entered into evidence as Exhibit 1.

3. During the period June 1975 through October 1975, there were 188 instances of calls reverting to in-house after dialing "9" for an outside line, 64 instances of a recording incorrectly notifying complainant's employees that a number dialed was disconnected, and 126 instances of silence after dialing (Exhibit 2).

4. Since September 16, 1975 (first day of employment), complainant's telephone operator experienced over two dozen instances of inadequate service each day and, in spite of frequent contacts, was unable to have trouble corrected by defendant's personnel.

Defendant's Position

Defendant presented exhibits and testimony through one of its division managers, a customer service representative, a trouble serviceman, and a senior engineer. This testimony indicated that:

1. Complainant's telephone facilities consist of an Automatic Electric Model B-PABX switchboard with 20 local trunks (213)420-3333) and eight foreign exchange trunks (714) 995-2323) providing service to approximately 95 stations.

2. On January 20, 1975 defendant's district manager became aware of a serious traffic overflow problem created by complainant's television advertising of the availability of part-time sales positions.

3. Ten additional connectors were added in the Lakewood central office to handle this traffic overflow problem.

4. The additional connectors were not enough so an additional eight-line rotary group was installed bypassing the switching system and terminating on a push-button telephone system.

5. The number of complainant's lost-call numbers within the connector board were well within defendant's standards of acceptability of 65 lost calls within a two-week period.

6. A repairman was assigned to complainant's premises full time for the period January through May 1975 and difficulties detected during this period were all resolved.

7. Defendant's representative made numerous unsuccessful attempts to contact Mr. Worthington's representative to discuss service conditions.

8. Complainant's personnel on the agency premises were, generally, not dissatisfied with the quality of service provided by defendant.

9. All tests performed by defendant indicated that complainant's facilities meet or exceed defendant's standards of performance.

Discussion

The record indicates that a heavy response to a television advertisement shown in January 1975 overloaded complainant's facilities to the point that outside parties experienced great difficulty in completing telephone calls to complainant

and complainant's employees could not originate or transfer calls. To alleviate this overloaded condition an additional ten connectors were added in the Lakewood central office and an eight-line rotary group was installed bypassing the switching system and terminating on a push-button telephone system. In addition, the record shows, defendant initiated a complete and thorough maintenance inspection of all telephone equipment on complainant's premises as well as the associated equipment within its central office and found the system to be in good working condition. In a further effort to improve the service a repairman was stationed on complainant's premises full time from the last week in January through the month of May. His assignment was to receive reports directly from complainant's switchboard operator and take immediate action on them. Inasmuch as, in the opinion of defendant's supervisory personnel, a satisfactory level of service was being rendered complainant at that time, the repairman resumed his regularly assigned duties in June 1975. Most of the instances of unsatisfactory service testified to by complainant's witnesses encompassed a period subsequent to the time the repairman resumed his regular duties.

The record indicates, moreover, that the number of service complaints from complainant increased from seven in May to 14 in June and 21 in July. Furthermore, complainant's switchboard operator, who commenced employment in September 1975, testified that the present level of service rendered complainant by defendant is, in her opinion, very unsatisfactory. Consequently, in spite of defendant's extensive efforts to improve service, further inquiry into this matter appears warranted. The order that follows will require a further review of the quality of service being rendered complainant and require defendant to take such measures as are required to improve the quality of service to complainant to a satisfactory level.

Findings

1. Service was first provided Cal Worthington Ford at its present address in Long Beach by General Telephone Company of California in May 1974.

2. In January 1975 complainant advertised on television for part-time salesmen which resulted in a large number of telephone responses that overloaded the facilities serving complainant.

3. To alleviate the resultant overloaded condition, an additional ten connectors were added in the Lakewood central office and an eight-line rotary group was installed bypassing the switching system and terminating on a push-button telephone system.

4. Defendant made an effort to raise the standard of service to a level acceptable to complainant by such measures as assigning a repairman to the premises full time for a four-month period, consulting with general office engineering personnel, performing extensive tests on complainant's equipment, replacing key pads, and adjusting the various equipment components.

5. In spite of these efforts, complainant is still very much dissatisfied with the quality of service rendered.

6. Most of the service imperfections detailed on the record by complainant's witnesses occurred after General's personnel had completed the above-listed service improvement efforts.

7. Further study of complainant's operations by defendant should be made to determine the measures required, if any, to raise complainant's service to a satisfactory level.

The Commission concludes that the relief requested should be granted to the extent provided in the order which follows.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Within thirty days after the effective date of this order defendant shall assign a service supervisor or equivalent to call at complainant's premises at least once a week for a two-month period to discuss the level of telephone service being rendered and have all reasonable measures taken to ameliorate any service deficiencies.

2. Within thirty days after the above two-months' period defendant shall submit a written report to this Commission detailing the results of this study and the corrective action taken. A copy of this report shall be sent to complainant.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 18th day of FEBRUARY, 1976.

William J. ... President
Alton ...
Paul ... Commissioners

I dissent

*This type of
Complaint should
never reach this
Commission, the
record shows a lack
of co-operation on the
part of the complainant
to resolve the problems*
Vernon L. Sturgeon