

Working from Home

By Debra VanDeventer

In our pandemic world, many people are working from home. I recently made a phone call to a national company to dispute a bill I'd received, expecting a long period of annoying elevator music followed by a conversation with an outsourced customer service representative. Instead, I was routed to Tina's living room. This call may be monitored for quality assurance purposes.

Good afternoon. Welcome to customer service. My name is Tina. How are you and your family doing during this COVID crisis? Are you staying safe and healthy?

Oh, I'm so happy to hear that!

Now, what can I help you with today?

Um hm, so you're having a problem with your bill. Are you calling about the account that is associated with this phone number?

Fine... may I have your pin number please?

Perfect. Now, just for safety purposes, I'll need you to answer a security question. What was the name of your favorite childhood comic book hero?

You can't remember? You didn't read comic books? You don't think you set that up as your security question. That's Ok. How about the name of your first pet?

There you go. Thank you Ms VAN-der-VERT-er, did I get that right?

Oh, sorry, Ms Van-DEE-venter. Whew, that's a tricky one.

There we go. Now, what is the problem with your bill?

Um hmmm....

Um hmmm....

I see....

No, we shouldn't have charged you for that. Let's see what I can do... just a moment now...

Oh, my gosh! Milo just jumped on the table! About scared me to death! Do you have cats? No? Well, one of my new kittens just jumped up on the table, that little rascal!

Ok...so I'm just going to credit that amount back to your account... I'm doing that now... it will just take a second...

Do you know those pretzels that come in a multi-flavored package? Well, this cat just loves them. That's why he's on the table. I had a dish here by the computer and he's just goin' to town on them.

What?

Yes, I *am* working from home. I *love* it! I moved here so I could have cats. In my other apartment, pets weren't allowed. I hadn't had a cat in *years*. As soon as I moved here, I went down to the animal shelter to get one, but there was this bonded pair, a brother and a sister, and I got them both. The little boy here, now he's a rascal. He likes to get up on my shoulder while I'm working. And the little girl kitty is *so* sweet. She just cuddles in my lap like a baby. She gets in the crook of my arm and looks up at me. I just *love* them. And they are so good with kids. Really good with kids. My grandkids love them. 'Course I haven't been able to see my grandkids for a while, you know, but they *love* these kittens!

What's that? You want to know my name again? It's Tina...T..I..N..A.

Most people think I'm a man when they hear me on the phone, ya' know? Ha! I have this deep voice. Sounds like a man to some people. Too many cigarettes, I suppose. I'm trying to cut back but this isn't the best time to do *that*, is it? Ha!

Well, Ms DEE-ter, let's get you all fixed up here... Let's see, it looks like you're going to need to go ahead and pay this bill so your service won't get shut off. You certainly don't want to be without your TV *these* days. On the next billing cycle, we'll credit the amount back to your account. Does that sound alright to you?

Ok, great. Well, it has been *such* a pleasure talking to you this afternoon Ms Van-de-mer, it really has. Is there anything else I can do for you? Anything at all?

Ok then. Thank you *so* much for calling. You take good care of yourself now, and your family too. Don't let the COVID get you. Be safe and have a *blessed* day. Bye-bye now.

Click.