

“Customer Service Representative: Nick”

Written by

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FADE IN: EXTERIOR OFFICE BUILDING. ENTRANCEWAY

People are going in and coming out of the entranceway.

ANGLE ON SIGN that says,

“Time Unlimited. Customer Service Center. Metropolitan Office
We are here to maximize efficiency in your daily time needs”

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE

The office has people waiting in line for a service desk area on the far side of the entrance.

A sign posted on a stand says,

REFUNDS WILL NOT BE GIVEN FOR THE FOLLOWING:

1. TIME SPENT WATCHING OR PARTICPATING IN ANY FORM OF A MARATHON.
2. TIME USED BY ANYONE IN A GOVERNMENT OR SERVICE RELATED JOB POSITION.
3. TIME SPENT WAITING IN ANY FORM OF CUSTOMER SERVICE LINES. (ESPECIALLY ANY LINE ASSOCIATED WITH THE D.M.V)

THIS IS TIME UNLIMITED’S OFFICIAL T.S. POLICY

TRACK DOWN a line of people waiting. One person is looking impatiently at his watch. The next person is going through a stack of forms nervously. The following person is staring at a clock on the wall. There are four more people standing in line for the service desk that is in front of them.

CUT TO:

COUNTER TOP:

Name plate: Customer Service Representative. Nick. Proudly providing quality assistance for over 25 years.

A hand hands the person at the counter a clock unit.

ANGLE ON:

NICK is a middle-aged man sitting behind the counter.

NICK

This is your official refund for the time that was incorrectly used on the March 15, 2001. All you have to do is press the button on the unit and the time will be restored to you. It may not seem like anything has changed but, trust me, it has.

PERSON (taking the clock unit)

Thank you. Have a wonderful day.

NICK

You too. Goodbye now.

A YOUNG MAN (BILL) walks up behind NICK. He is wearing a suit with a nametag. The nametag says, ”TRAINEE: Bill”.

NICK (turning to BILL)
You see that's how you provide friendly service.

BILL
Do these units really refund time?

NICK
They appear to. (Turning back towards the line) Next!

The SECOND PERSON (MR JACOBI) in line steps forward to the window. He hands the forms to NICK who then looks over the forms and makes a few marks with a pen on them.

NICK
Mr. Jacobi.

NICK looks through the stack of papers

MR. JACOBI
That's me. Is there something wrong with my refund application?

NICK
No. Everything looks fine. (He glances through the form)
However, it's Part 3 here. You need a better explanation of the reason for a refund other than, "Horny for my neighbor."
I'm not sure what this means. But that is really your business.
(Handing him back the forms) I am going to have to ask you to re-do this part and come back.

MR. JACOBI
This is already taking longer than I thought it would.

NICK
Sorry sir, but you have a better chance for approval with a more significant explanation. And I really want you to have this approved.

MR. JACOBI (taking the forms back)
Do you think it will help?

NICK
Most definitely.

MR. JACOBI takes the forms and walks away from the counter.

BILL
So that's all there is? You have them fill out a form for something that appears to work. And they believe they are refunded time.

NICK (Turning to BILL)
Yes.

BILL
I'm not sure I could do this job under such pretensions.

NICK (Turns to the line)
Next! (Turns back to BILL) Listen the whole idea of customer service is nothing more than providing the illusion that they are going to get what they feel they deserve to have. Whether that is true or not is really not for me to say. (Turns back to the line) Next!

An OLDER WOMAN steps out of line and slowly walks for the counter.

BILL
Isn't this lying?

NICK
It's the pulling of a rabbit out of the hat.

BILL
What do you mean?

NICK
Isn't the magician lying by presenting the idea that the rabbit might be in the hat to begin with?

The OLDER WOMAN and places her forms on the counter.

NICK (smiles)
Good day Ms.

OLDER WOMAN
Good day. The weather's too nice to be in here.

NICK
I agree. But that's the price for working for Time.

NICK quietly looks the forms over and makes a few marks on them.

OLDER WOMAN
Is everything all right with my application? (Pause) Sir?

NICK makes a few more marks

NICK (looks up at her)
Madam. I can approve this form right now. (He pulls out a rubber stamp and places a mark on the form.) This is a classic example of the trip you paid for does not come close to matching what was promised in the brochure.

OLDER WOMAN
Thank heaven. I thought I would never get those five days back.

NICK
That's my job to make it all right. (NICK reaches for a clock unit, sets the time and then hands it to the OLDER WOMAN) Here you go Ms. All you have to do is hit the red button before you go to bed tonight.

OLDER WOMAN

That's all it takes?

NICK

That's it. And in the future may I recommend a travel agency that has more than just evening hours.

The OLDER WOMAN takes the clock unit and walks away.

BILL

If this is essential a shell game then why didn't you refund Mr. Jacobi? And yet you easily did it for that woman.

NICK

If we gave back time to everyone then everyone would be disappointed. Besides she was nice and I am pretty sure Mr. Jacobi's story is going to be a good one, so we can have a laugh at lunch about it.

NICK gets up from the chair. He grabs BILL by the sleeve and they step back a few feet from the counter.

BILL

I don't see how if they are willing to buy this concept in the first place. They shouldn't get the refund.

NICK

You see the application and the approval process make this all look official. It gives the illusion that people want. It's the rabbit out of the hat trick. They know the rabbit isn't in the hat

BILL

So what's the point then?

NICK

They really want the illusion. Because possibilities exist in believing in that illusion. And that believing is what makes people happy.

BILL

I think people would rather have the truth. They would make real meaningful connections if this was real.

NICK

Look people if given more time wouldn't try to make any real connections.

BILL

I think that is underestimating them.

NICK

25 years on this job and I realize people just cannot handle their time. You see people try to make connections using vague terms in personal ads. And they want to make more time for those vague relations by buying products that will make their lives more convenient so to have more time to make connections. And the products never live up to how they are portrayed on TV. And they run up the credit card bill in order to pay for those items. So then they have to work more hours at a job they hate in order to pay for the things they bought to create more time. Then one day they suddenly realize those things were a complete waste of time. And then come here wanting that time back. They don't realize after all this time that no matter how much they invent or buy there is and always will be 24 hours in day. End of story.

BILL

But in college-

NICK

Hold that thought.

NICK walks back to the counter. He then sits back down.

NICK

Next!

A MAN who appears to be in his mid-thirties and a wearing a business suit steps from the line and approaches the counter. He places his forms on the counter. NICK takes the forms and looks over them.

MAN

Is this going to take long?

NICK

Sir. I am just going through the paperwork. Article 35 Paragraph 8 Section 21 states that all forms must be filled out properly for legal reasons in order to assure a proper refund.

MAN

I understand that. But I am a busy man who needs to make a 1:00 meeting across town.

NICK looks over the forms again.

NICK

Yep. The old time is money clause.

MAN (impatiently)

Well. Am I entitled to a refund?

NICK (looking the forms over)

Being that this is first time you have ever attempted a refund. I can grant you this one. (He stamps the form.) However, may I suggest that going out with your secretary may not be the best way to solve your misuse of time. As you stated here. (He points to the form) Given your job title stated here (He points to another part) Her butt really does not offer any real chance for any long-term job advancement.

MAN

I think you should mind your own business when it comes to how I intend to use my refund.

NICK

You're right. I'm not here for advice. I am here for time. (NICK reaches for a clock unit and sets it) Sir, here you go. The operation instructions are printed on the back of it. (NICK then hands it to the MAN who takes it.

MAN (looks at the clock)

And this had better work.

NICK

I set the thing myself. Just read the instructions. (THE MAN starts to walk away.) Have a nice day.

NICK gets up off the chair and walks back to where BILL is standing.

BILL

As I was saying. In college-

NICK

Wait a second. This is not college. This is the reality. College is a bunch of theories and ideologies that the real world doesn't really support.

BILL

But-

NICK

Hear me out.

CUT TO:

The MAN is walking toward the exit. He looks at his clock unit. It says 11:00.

CUT TO:

NICK

Listen you went to college to make the world a better place in someway. You didn't get the "Happy-dream job" So you're here to have something to pass the time. This is a great place to do it.

CUT TO:

The MAN looks to the clock on the wall. It says 11:00. The MAN then looks back at the clock unit.

CUT TO:

BILL

But I think people want the truth.

NICK

No, they really want the illusion.

BILL

But-

NICK

It's all about the illusion. The illusion is the basis of the marketing profession. Not to mention most of your alternative medicines and diet plans. Illusions. Plain and simple. That's what people want. And we are here to do just that. Illusion, the trademark of a good centerfold.

NICK walks back to the counter.

NICK

Next!

A YOUNG WOMAN steps out of line towards the counter. The MAN is also walking to the counter. NICK notices THE MAN approaching.

NICK (to Bill)

Just stand there. (NICK notices the MAN coming towards the counter)
Hold on. We are about to have a L.B.M.

BILL

A what?

NICK

Someone's just had a light bulb moment.

THE MAN pushes by the YOUNG WOMAN. He comes to the counter and places the clock unit on the counter.

THE MAN

How stupid do you think I am?

NICK

What do you mean, sir?

THE MAN

This unit is set exactly to the present time. (Pause)
How can I be getting a refund if this unit is set to present time?

NICK takes the unit and inspects it. He also reaches under the counter and presses a red button.

NICK

Are you sure that you have accidentally set the unit of?

THE MAN

I did no such thing!

CUT TO:

Two uniformed GUARDS come out of a side door in the office area. They are walking towards THE MAN.

CUT TO:

THE MAN

I think I am too smart of a person to be get sca-

The GUARDS come next to the MAN

GUARD (1)

What seem to be the problem here?

NICK

This gentleman misused his time refund unit and is trying to insinuate something-

THE MAN

I am not! I am saying that is a complete fra-

GUARD (2)

Sir, you need to come with us.

GUARD (2) motions The MAN to the side door.

THE MAN

I am not going-

GUARD (1)

Sir, you need to come with us.

GUARD (2) garbs the MAN'S arm and they start moving towards the side door.

THE MAN

This is an outrage! I will not fall for this blatant-

GUARD (2)

Sir. We cannot have this display in front of all of these people. We cannot have a disruption of service. So please come with us now.

The MAN begins to struggle. THE GAURDS grab him and move quickly to the side door.

THE MAN (going towards the side door)

Listen! This is nothing more than a-

They go into the side door. The side door closes.

CUT TO:

The YOUNG WOMAN goes to the counter.

YOUNG WOMAN

I hate people like him

NICK

Don't be so judgmental. Everyone has a bad day.

BILL taps NICK on the shoulder.

BILL

Can I have a word with you?

NICK (to the YOUNG WOMAN)
Hold on a moment. I'll be with you in a second.

NICK and BILL step back from the counter.

NICK
What is it?

BILL
What is going to happen to that man?

NICK
Don't worry. Nothing that could be considered a felony.
(Pause) Just kidding. Most likely, tomorrow he'll wake up in a strange motel with wicked hangover and a hooker next to him.

BILL
This is so wrong.

NICK
Everyone has had morning like that at least once, maybe twice in their life. He forget about this place for sure after that

BILL
This is crazy.

NICK
Not really. It helps us to sell what we are all about.

BILL
I'm not sure about this.

NICK
Listen. It took me 10 to 15 years to figure all of this on my own. I like you. I am saving you time in your own life. Everyone wants to have a magnificent job that impacts the world. And I am telling you it is right here. That way when you leave to go home at night instead of wasting time contemplating on how pointless your job is, you can do those truly life affirming activities. Whatever they may be. You want to be happy. They want to be happy. And here's the place for just that. They want the rabbit. And your here to be the magician. You get to make people happy because that's all they want. Most people want a job that makes a difference in the world. Here the illusion of time refunds does just that. Don't going wasting time for that chance is right here. The only other professions that provide the same sense of illusion are circus clowns and strippers. No offense, you really don't look qualified for either one of those jobs.

BILL
What do you mean?

NICK
(beat)
Just think about what I told you. Stand here and just keep watching me.

NICK walks back to the counter and sits down.

NICK (to YOUNG WOMAN)

Thank you for being patient. Let me see your paperwork.
(She hands the papers to him.) Another case of how a nice
looking woman like you wasted 3 years trying to change her
boyfriend.

BILL stands watching him

CAMERA TRACKS past NICK and then down the customer service line as more people get into it.

NICK (OFF CAMERA)

Let me make sure if this falls under Clause 75.

YOUNG WOMAN (OFF CAMERA)

I hope so. I really shouldn't have wasted all of
that time trying to -

FADE OUT

THE END