



REVIEW COMMITTEE



PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
375 N. WIGET LANE, SUITE 130
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94598
(530) 246-6430

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF
ELECTRICAL WORKERS, AFL-CIO
LOCAL UNION 1245, I.B.E.W.
P.O. BOX 2547
VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94696
(707) 452-2700

ROBIN WIX, CHAIRMAN
☐ DECISION
☐ LETTER DECISION
☐ PRE-REVIEW REFERRAL

KIT STICE, SECRETARY

Pre-Review Committee Number 22659 Customer Care – Call Center Operations – Fresno

Chris Diamond
Company Member
Local Investigating Committee

Rey Mendoza
Union Member
Local Investigating Committee

Subject of the Grievance

This case concerns the termination of a Customer Service Representative (CSR) for call avoidance.

Facts of the Case

The grievant was a Customer Service Representative with 2.5 years of service and no active discipline. The grievant was terminated on June 25, 2014 for call avoidance.

The primary responsibilities of a Call Center CSR is to timely assist customers via inbound calls, and to remain readily available to take calls when not directly engaged in assisting a customer.

In April 2014, a Sr. Service Representative (SSR) informed his supervisor that the grievant had conferenced in on a call without a business reason, and had not announced that he had remained on the line for over 28 minutes. The grievant only released the call when a supervisor questioned what he was doing following the notification by the SSR that the grievant was still on the line.

Following this incident, the Company reviewed call handling reports and the grievant's recorded calls for the period of time between December 18, 2013 and April 21, 2014. The investigation determined that the grievant had demonstrated three separate types of call avoidance behaviors on 35 separate occasions during the four month period reviewed. On 13 of the occasions, the grievant failed to follow the appropriate transfer protocols and remained on the line without a business reason when transferring customers to various Specialty Lines, including the Spanish line, BRSC, SCOL, Solar, and escalated calls to Senior Service Representatives. The grievant acknowledged that he understood the appropriate transfer process for the calls, but remained on the line for "self-teaching" purposes, without permission from his supervisor.

On 9 of the calls, the grievant failed to follow the appropriate "Ghost Call" procedures and delayed releasing the calls timely per procedures. On the remaining 13 calls, the grievant remained on the line without a business reason while the customer was on hold waiting to speak to someone else.

Discussion

The Union argued that termination is too severe as no direct customer impact occurred. Additionally, the grievant was upgraded to SSR at times and had no formal training, therefore he was required to resort to "self-teaching" by remaining on the line to gain experience for different types of escalated calls. The Union contends that the Company has disregarded the grievant's excellent work performance record as demonstrated by more than a dozen positive contacts for customer compliments, outstanding achiever, and attendance during 2012, and bypassed the positive discipline steps without just cause.

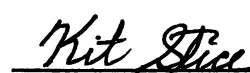
The Company argued that the grievant's explanation of "self-teaching" is not plausible. The grievant could not produce any notes he indicated he took for learning purposes during the "self-teaching" calls. The grievant stated he remained on the line to provide a "warm hand-off" for escalated calls, however the recorded calls show that he did not perform a "warm hand-off" on any of the calls. The grievant did not work the specialty lines and therefore had no reason or need for training on these calls. In fact, he remained on the line after transferring a Spanish call and he does not speak Spanish, so it is unclear how he was to gain any experience on this call. As for the 9 ghost calls, the grievant had no explanation as to why he did not follow the appropriate procedures.

The Company further argued that customer impact did occur because the grievant purposely remained unavailable, without a bona-fide business reason, to assist customers timely. During the LIC, the grievant acknowledged that he was sure there were customers in queue during some of the calls and also acknowledged that direct customer impact would have occurred in the form of longer wait times if customers were waiting in queue. The termination was for just cause.

Decision

The Committee discussed this case at length and agreed that a CSR's primary responsibility is to assist customers as timely as possible, and when not assisting customers, to be available to take the next call. In this case, the grievant failed to follow the appropriate procedures to ensure that he timely carried out his core responsibilities. Furthermore, the grievant did not request permission from his supervisor to undergo "self-teaching", and some of the explanations he provided are questionable. The Committee agreed the termination was for just cause in this case. This case is closed without adjustment.

 2/19/16
Robin Wix, Chairman Date
Review Committee

 2/19/16
Kit Stice, Secretary Date
Review Committee