

- After about 6 hours I called for more pain. I was told that once again, there was no record of my order. Bearing in mind this was my 3rd attempt at ordering, I should really have given up.
- 5) However, still undeterred (and thinking Vodafone sponsor that Hamilton chap, so they must be good), I proceeded to place my order via phone pain. I was told that my number would port on Friday 11th September, and that I would receive my sim card within the next few days, and at the very latest in Friday's post.
 - 6) The next morning – Wednesday 9th and my sim card arrives. Excellent. We finally made it.
 - 7) Thursday 10th. A second sim card arrives. Oh dear.
 - 8) I called customer services to find out what had happened and which sim card I should use. I was informed that 1 of the cards was already active with a new number (Not my existing number). I explained that this was not what I had asked for in *any* of my orders (Now totalling 5). This card was cancelled over the phone.

I also asked the operator to check that my number would still port in on Friday as promised. I was informed that Vodafone had no record of my pac code so the transfer would not go ahead. I was told that if I provided the pac code at this point, the transfer could still be arranged for the following Monday.

I declined as, after 5 attempts and hours on the phone I concluded that Vodafone did not want me as a customer.

I instructed the operator to cancel all / any of my orders. The lady did try to persuade me to change my mind, but by now it was too late. I cancelled the whole move – the phrase “Out of the Frying Pan, into the Fire” ringing in my ears.

- 9) On Friday (Original port day) I received a phone call from Vodafone customer services regarding my recent order. Holding my head in my hands, I explained to the nice man that after 5 attempts I had cancelled my order, so I wasn't going to be a Vodafone customer after all. He tried again to persuade me - with enticing offers such as month after month of half price service line rental. I again refused as it was too little too late. I had, after all, tried really hard to be a customer and was feeling rejected.
- 10) The rest of Friday passed without event – despite my worst fears that the number would be transferred regardless. Although in a way, this was not surprising – Vodafone had lost my pac code so would not be able to move the number anyway.

At this point I spent the weekend discussing with my wife (well not the whole weekend – I have a life) what other options I had available. One quite appealing option was to stick with the nice people at Virgin. Their only issue was poor 3G coverage provided by T-mobile. And with the tie up between t-mobile and Orange in the papers, it seems like Virgin would be the best network out there – best coverage via a combination of Orange / T-mobile's networks, and they don't just have people working in their customer services – they have people who are helpful, and capable. And they are able to perform that most basic of tasks – answering the phone. Happy to stay a Virgin after all I conclude.

- 11) Early evening on Monday 14th September, my wife receives a call from a good friend of mine. He is concerned as he has been trying to contact me all day. He has left messages and texted me, but no response.
- 12) Following this, I called my phone from my wifes' phone – just to check. I was shocked by the response: “You are through to the Vodafone answering service.....” Ridiculous I thought – I am not a Vodafone customer. I am a Virgin.
- 13) I confirmed my worst fears by putting a Vodafone sim into my otherwise undamaged phone. Yup – Vodafone had used voda-voodoo to transfer my number despite not having a pac code.

I called the customer service computer, which didn't recognise my number as I am not a Vodafone customer. The computer then gave me a number of options and I eventually (after about 12 minutes 36 seconds, not that I was counting) got to speak to someone. I explained that my number had been transferred by accident and that I would like it transferred back. The operator said they would put me through to the porting department to have this arranged.

Excellent I thought. The problem will be sorted.

About 30 seconds of on hold music passed, before a recorded message told me I was calling out of hours and I was abruptly cut off. It was before 7.00 in the evening still, so I was surprised. I had found the customer services number on Vodafone.co.uk and it clearly says the lines are open 24 hours (although a# some services may be limited between 10pm and 7am).

Again undeterred (I am a determined, yet understanding and gentle chap), I rang back. This time using 191 from my Vodafone mobile. This will work I thought.

The computer still said my number was no good, but offered me options anyway. I tried the one to talk about my account – thinking this was a good place to get help. I was abruptly cut off. "We are sorry, we cant take your call right now".

...but your a phone company. It must be a mistake.

..so I called again.

..and again.

..and again. Every time I was cut off.

Undeterred (I like that word), I called back from a land line, instead of 191. The computer still didn't want to talk, but I selected the option to leave Vodafone. This is a trick I learnt from my time with Orange. They don't pay you much attention until you want to leave. Then they give you all the time in the world and try to smooth things over and keep your custom. I am pleased to report something positive finally - Vodafone have a much more effective way of stopping customers from leaving. That's right – I got cut off long before I got to speak to anyone in that team.

...so I tried again – in case it was a mistake. It wasn't.

...so I called back and spoke to someone in customer services and explained my predicament again. They said they would put me through to someone to get my pac code. I reluctantly agreed – I was hoping for a solution other than this for reasons I will explain later. However, I shouldn't have worried. I got cut off again – this time with a message about my number being invalid. That computer really doesn't like me.

At this point I gave up and wrote you this letter. Its taken a while, but I thought you should know where we stand now.

As I see it, Vodafone have ported my number without proper authority and despite me instructing them not to. I am now a Vodafone client, like it or not.

I also note that Vodafone have taken the liberty of setting up a direct debit with my bank so you can help yourself to my money as well as my number. I have taken the liberty of cancelling this. Well within my rights as far as I am concerned:

- a) I have no contract with Vodafone
- b) I have not agreed to pay Vodafone any money. Ever.
- c) Vodafone have effectively stolen my number and custom.
- d) I am really quite upset about the whole ordeal.

As I mentioned earlier, I am now not only finding myself a reluctant customer, but I am also now out of pocket. I had just paid a further month in advance to the nice people at Virgin. That's something I won't be getting back. I have also spent a long long time on the phone to Vodafone and a great deal of time has been spent constructing this text as your computer won't talk to me.

On top of this, on checking my new Vodafone messaging service, I have missed important messages from both customers (who pay me for telephone support) and suppliers (who were providing me with information regarding potential sales to my customers). My customers are not used to talking to computers, except when they are swearing at them.

I also had my main business line diverted to my mobile phone for periods today. This is something I do regularly as I am then able to get away from my desk. I cannot quantify the number of customers or potential customers that I may have missed as you stole my number. Suffice to say, One hour of missed work is £95. One missed product sale is a minimum of £525 and could be as much as £20 – 30K. And let's face it, if you wanted to spend that kind of money and you got the Vodafone answerphone, you probably wouldn't leave a message.

So, where do we go from here?

Well, somehow, even after all of this, I am not clawing at the doors to get out and leave. That is actually for 2 reasons:

- 1) I don't want you to have any more opportunities to break it, and
- 2) That Lewis guy is still good to watch.

I mentioned at the top of this letter that I have cc'd it to the Facebook Community. I will also be posting your response.

So, I hope you write back to me with some ideas as to how this can be resolved. Feel free to use a computer, but don't ask me to speak to one again....

Yours Sincerely,

Bryan Paul Ebrey

Complaints Department
Vodafone Limited
Vodafone House
The Connection
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 2FN

Sent via Royal Mail Recorded Delivery

Cc:
Facebook Community

Bryan Paul Ebrey
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

20th September, 2009

Re: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir,

Further to my letter dated 14th September, 2009 (copy enclosed), I feel obliged to inform you of progress so far.

It seems that as an alternative to contacting me to offer a solution to my problem, your chosen solution was to restrict my account and prevent me from using my phone. I first noticed this early on Saturday 19th, when trying to send a text message which failed. However, I did not confirm this until much later when I finally tried to call my pregnant wife to check on her condition – and instead received a message to contact customer dis-services.

I was extremely disappointed at this stage, as I thought you would do better. However, I have learned very quickly not to be surprised. So I called customer services:

7.50 pm:

I got through to a chap who promptly cut me off.

7.51 pm:

I got through to a man called James. I explained the situation to him and James looked at my "account" (I still deny I have an account with Vodafone). My account had apparently been restricted by your credit control department.

Oh dear I thought. Why would they do that?

James explained to me that by cancelling the direct debit you had set up without authorisation (and hence illegally) I had automatically had my account placed on hold. It seemed very strange to me that a phone company would not bother to phone me to query this. You must have phones? Or do they not work? (I know that feeling well...)

