

November 11, 2022

Sisters and Brothers,

The Bell Craft bargaining committee has an update on the situation surrounding Outright Sales (ORS).

Background

In September of 2020 the Union filed national policy grievance #2020-002. The Union filed said grievance due to the Company's decision to no longer support the products of the "ORS" range, as well as, to no longer support the maintenance and updates of these products by its unionized employees of Bell Craft and Services. Throughout the grievance process, the Union argued this was only a ploy to camouflage the sub-contracting of work related to these products and thus violating the application of the various clauses of the collective agreement on job security, in the context of sub-contracting, as well as the Canada Labour Code.

The Company replied by stating they had made a decision to focus its effort on the promotion and sale of Bell Total Connect (BTC), a Bell owned technology. The company response:

"In light of this, voice IS PBX systems and software upgrades to existing systems for customers in the commercial segment will not be sold by Bell. This decision is consistent with Bell's strategic imperatives to drive growth with innovative services and operate with agility and cost efficiency. Commercial customer's seeking sales assistance on PBX systems/upgrades will be referred to a Bell external sales channel partner who can fulfill their own orders under their own company (i.e. not on behalf of Bell). Revenue related to the sale, installation and maintenance for these products/services would then be realized directly by this partner. This is not contracting-out. In regards to our conversation concerning EWEE's involvement with BTC, I can confirm that EWEE is a contracted sales agent for the BTC product. EWEE is not performing the installation and maintenance of the product. There has been no violation of the collective agreement. This grievance is denied."

The Union responded to the Company in November of 2020 stating they were unsatisfied with the Company's response and therefore advised the Company of its intention to proceed to arbitration.

Current State

Recently the company has begun to contact our small to medium business clients serviced by ORS products such as Mitel, Avaya and Toshiba to advise them that the Company is no longer going to provide these services. Bell has sent letters to customers, which indicate as of October 1st, 2022, that their phone systems Extended Warranty Plan which is covered under the Bell Canada Master Maintenance Service Agreement and maintained by our Unifor Technicians, will not be renewed.

Bell claims they are going to focus on Bell Total Connect for medium and enterprise customers, while small business clients are no longer going to be serviced.

These products are often 'anchor' services which many clients have said is part of the reason why they use the suite of Bell services. Small businesses are being entirely cut off and if the medium sized customer does not want BTC they will have to use a 3rd party instead of Bell. Even worse, contractors such as E-WEE have advertised they also sell and service BTC.

Bell Craft technicians have always and continue to, build relationships and generate sales. Unfortunately, the company would rather prop up other companies and give our work to a 3rd party.

Moving Forward

The arbitration case will begin being heard in 2023.

This is not about dropping an unprofitable business venture, as there has been no indication ever made to suggest ORS is not profitable. The business case presented by the company to make these moves is weak. What the executives have decided to do is leverage the commitment our technicians have to our clients, by using the sales leads our technicians generated to kill off profitable unionized jobs in order to prop up contractors that only provide our communities precarious work and couldn't convince customers to switch over themselves.

Bell has failed to indicate what ORS technicians will be doing moving forward and we will continue to demand answers on this issue.

Your bargaining committee has and will continue to fight against the erosion of our bargaining unit.

In Solidarity,

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