

# TRAVELINK SOLUTIONS\*

By Noah Deszca, Teacher

Durham Board of Education

Gene Deszca, Professor Emeritus

Lazaridis School of Business and Economics,  
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, CA

Sixteen months had passed since Will had joined Travelink Solutions' Call Center. It had been both a fulfilling and frustrating employment experience. Now he was facing a decision concerning what to do next. Should he remain and try to make a difference or should he follow through on his plans to leave? Rather than let the experience simply fade, he had documented events, hoping it might be helpful to him and maybe even to the firm. He had submitted his resignation on Monday, but his call center manager had asked him to reconsider and Will was scheduled to meet with her on Friday.

On Wednesday of that week, Will met with Robert, his close friend and a marketing manager at Travelink. Robert had been with Travelink for three years. Will told him about his looming decision and he shared what he had documented. Robert's first job had been in the call center and he remained keenly interested in its operation, due to its impact on customer relations. He winced as he read. The writing captured what had been happening and left him pondering not only what Will should do, but what he ought to do with the concerns it raised. It was a topic he'd been thinking about for months but had yet to move on. Change was urgently needed if "the ship was to be righted" and it would not be easy. He turned to Will and shook his head. "Fascinating—let me read this once again."

## WILL'S BACKGROUND

Will was enthusiastic when he started at Travelink Solutions Canada: a service company that provided travel assistance to global travelers on a 24/7 basis. Its core product had been emergency roadside automobile assistance, but over the years Travelink had expanded into other areas of travel help, such as medical coverage, legal assistance, and emergency travel arrangements. The company did this for both its own individual customers and for other firms that offered related services but who had outsourced the product design and/or post sale customer service function to Travelink.

Will had completed his final university course requirements while working full time as a baker on the midnight shift at a Tim Horton's franchise, a fast food outlet. After eight months of beginning his workday at 11 pm, he looked forward to more normal working hours. He knew that there would be occasional night and weekend shifts at the Call Center, but Will had been told that it would be no more than one week or weekend per month. That would be fine, reasoned Will. He was confident that the challenge of this new job would prove more satisfying than slinging dough at 4 a.m.

The application process had been an intensive experience. At the age of 23, Will had never applied for a position that demanded a lengthy series of interviews, references that were verified,

---

\* © Noah Deszca, Teacher, Durham Board of Education and Gene Deszca, Professor Emeritus, Lazaridis School of Business and Economics, Wilfrid Laurier University, 2019. Not to be copied or reproduced without permission.

and tests designed to document his computer literacy and interpersonal and problem-solving skills. He felt very positive about having made it through their rigorous selection system. It suggested to him that this firm must be serious about the quality of the people it hired.

## CALL CENTERS: HOW THEY OPERATED

---

A number of call centers were located in Will's home region. The presence of three universities, a college, and the ethnic diversity of the area provided call centers with access to a literate and multilingual labor pool. Further, office rental costs and labor rates were moderate by provincial standards and there was an excellent telecommunications infrastructure. As a result, several of Will's friends had worked or were working for other call centers. Their experiences, however, had generally been negative—particularly for those working in outbound call centers, where employees made unrequested solicitations for everything from rug cleaning services to cell phones and charitable donations. Friends who had worked in this type of business told him that there were attractive sales-related performance bonuses but that the base pay of around \$15 per hour was what most had to rely upon to pay the rent. In addition, his friends reported that there seemed to be few employment benefits (e.g., dental plans) available in these firms and that a number of the positions were essentially permanent part-time positions, in order to fit the need for labor in the late afternoon and early evening periods and reduce benefit obligations further. They were almost unanimous in their descriptions of their outward bound call center jobs as quite stressful, characterized by hang-ups, call recipient abuse, and performance pressure.

Travelink, however, was an inbound call center that responded to customer requests for help with services they had already purchased. Furthermore, the people Will knew who had worked for the firm spoke very positively about the work atmosphere. Robert, for example, had started on the phones but had been promoted three times over a two-year period, most

recently to a marketing management position. Robert was the person who had urged Will to apply. At that time, he had commented on the supportiveness of coworkers and his boss, the decent pay, and the satisfaction derived from helping a customer sort through a difficult situation.

Will's new position came with comprehensive health benefits, paid holidays that exceeded legislated standards, and special rates for things such as local gym memberships, theme park passes, and concerts—discounts that the human resources department had negotiated for Travelink employees. It seemed to Will that his new employer had thought about how to make the firm an appealing company to work for. "Wow! A living wage, combined with such benefits—what a pleasant change." (See Exhibit 1 for compensation and benefit details.)

## BUILDING A BUSINESS

---

Travelink was founded in 1987, in Jackson, Mississippi, to provide roadside assistance to car owners. It had grown from a tiny office space of fifteen employees to a billion-dollar, global service firm with offices based in Europe, Asia, and Australia. In 2002, a Canadian office of 20 employees was established in Will's home town. Sixteen years later, Travelink Solutions Canada had grown. Two hundred of its employees and its Canadian call center were located in two stories of a ten-story office building. Travelink's offerings had been extended over the years to include insurance policies that provided emergency support for national and international travelers facing a variety of perils, including medical emergencies, the theft of personal property, automobile breakdowns, accidents, legal assistance, travel interruptions, and emergency travel related concierge services. Policies were modular in nature and were designed for the traveler who wanted to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Travelink's Canadian call center was located on the lower of the two floors it occupied and involved approximately 150 of the 200 employees located in the building. A reception area on the upper story led into office space for

underwriting and marketing employees, the human resources and training department, IT, accounting, supervisory personnel, and senior administration (see Exhibit 2 for a partial organization chart of the Canadian Division). Call center activities were supported by a website that provided customers with valuable travel-related information, advice, and links to other relevant websites.

## NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Training for Will commenced December 1st and lasted one month. On his first day, Will joined eleven other new employees, all of whom were university arts graduates. Some (Will included) had been referred to the company through friends that worked for the firm. As a recruitment incentive, a bonus of \$500 dollars was offered to any employee who referred a potential employee who was hired and successfully completed the training. Travelink Solutions tried to coordinate its hiring so that a group of 6 to 12 began training at the same time.

Will's trainers, Luther and Marie, seemed approachable and knowledgeable. They worked diligently to accommodate any questions that were asked about work procedures, customer service, company policies, or the call center industry. Will found himself quickly integrated into a comfortable training environment where dialogue occurred openly and people seemed to be genuinely helpful. The training program was quite structured and occurred in a classroom environment. The first two weeks focused on industry and firm specific information that would be relevant to those who would be addressing customer questions and concerns. It included information related to specific products and services, what associates could expect from the customer and their employer, and what was expected of them. The second two weeks included additional content related to products, corporate policies, and workflow procedures, as well as call center simulations and role plays. These latter activities were designed to develop employee competence with the firm's customer service strategies and effective work practices.

At one of the first training sessions, Marie explained that the Travelink Solutions Call Center offered uniquely satisfying service opportunities. As Marie said, "You are not merely the voice on the end of the line. You are the help line. You are someone's lifeline during an experience that will vary from the simply inconvenient to situations that are frustrating and, at times, frightening. If a customer is involved in a serious accident in Mexico, has a medical emergency they need to deal with, or gets mugged or arrested in a foreign land, you are one of the first persons they turn to for help."

Luther told Will's training group that the average cost of recruiting and training a new call center employee was approximately \$8,000. Will learned that Travelink Solutions employed approximately 200 people in the Canadian office, 75% of whom were directly involved with the phones in the call center. Direct sales of Travelink's services were done through brokers, agencies, and the internet. Travelink Solutions had a team of underwriters and marketers who crafted and promoted automobile, medical, and travel-related service policies throughout Canada, via its distribution systems. This group was also heavily involved in the design and delivery of similar services for other firms (e.g., banks and insurance companies), under their clients' brand names. This accounted for approximately 75% of Travelink's gross billings, profitability, and call center volumes. Trainees were told that Travelink was considered a leader in customer service quality. Industry benchmark data rated them in the top 10% in customer satisfaction and quality and it was reported that they had almost never lost a corporate account once the business was won. Business volumes and profitability had been growing by more than 20% per year since 2002.

At the end of the month-long training period, each new employee was required to write a three-hour comprehensive exam, dealing with the information that they had been exposed to. If a grade of 90% was not achieved, then an employee was required to retake the test before being permitted to field calls. Although he was nervous, Will believed that his training sessions had been effective

in transferring the needed knowledge, and he passed the exam with flying colors. Out of his training group of 12, two people needed to retake the exam before receiving a desk within the call center one week later.

## THE WORK BEGAN

---

When he graduated to the phones and live customers, Will was initially apprehensive. He often consulted online and paper manuals to ensure that he was providing callers with the proper information and advice. For the first few weeks, Luther and Marie were available on the floor to answer trainee questions that arose. Beyond the presence of the trainers, team leaders encouraged new employees to discuss any questions or concerns with experienced associates. Will was directed to Yolanda, a senior associate who said that she would be happy to help. She had been working at Travelink Solutions for over three years and the supervisors allowed Yolanda to log off her phone whenever new associates approached her with questions. Overall, it seemed to Will that the call center was a smooth and efficient operation. The friendly and helpful environment gave him confidence that he would be able to effectively assist callers. Initial supervisory checks and feedback during his first month on the phones further honed his competence and reinforced his confidence.

Marie's comments during the training session concerning the importance of the services that call center employees provided to customers proved true. Offering assistance to distressed travelers was quite satisfying. Will deepened his familiarity with policy details and advisory support materials to ensure that he was providing callers with the correct information, useful advice, and effective service. Of course, there were occasional complaints and angry callers who vented their unhappiness with the quality of service (e.g., tow truck operators who were slow to respond or rude) or the answers they received concerning whether or not they were eligible for the requested coverage. Will quickly learned that it was not helpful to dwell on such calls. Instead, through the guidance of the trainers and Yolanda, he developed

techniques that calmed customers and helped to defuse difficult situations. By and large, Will received positive feedback from the callers and this increased in frequency over his first three months on the phones.

Will's experience within the call center was not an anomaly. Comments from fellow trainees echoed his reactions. He noticed that there was far less turnover and absenteeism than what friends at other call centers had led him to believe were the norms in the places they worked. Employees at Travelink voluntarily participated in and seemed to enjoy company events such as potluck lunches. Friends employed at other call centers told him that this was not the case within their firms. One person reported that her firm had made participation mandatory at its corporate social events, leading her to post a message stating that management had decided the floggings would continue until morale improved.

## THE CHANGES

---

After about five months of employment, Will began to notice changes in his workplace. For example, senior managers were voicing concerns related to the need for greater efficiency and new business at the monthly company meetings and team leaders seemed more stressed than they had been earlier. Robert, the marketing manager and Will's friend, explained to him that Travelink had ramped up its staff levels within the call center in anticipation of obtaining new business that had not materialized. As a result, management was under pressure from the head office to improve its financial performance. Robert commented, "I've been working 60-hour weeks for the past several weeks, exploring new opportunities, and drafting proposals related to potential contract bids, and there are rumours that senior management is considering layoffs."

Will was shocked by Robert's candid comments. Sure, the phones had been less busy lately, but this was also May, a month in which clients were no longer faced with the winter elements that breed traffic accidents and mechanical breakdown. May was also a month in which

vacation travel was typically down, resulting in fewer travel-related emergencies. Was this not a time when the phones were supposed to be quieter, allowing staff to follow up on the claims that had arisen earlier?

Within the next four weeks, four of the people who had trained with Will left the firm. In their places were empty cubicles. Every time an employee was laid off or quit, the human resources department would send an email to all employees, notifying them of the person's departure. For example, one day Will came into work to find that Linda, a friendly woman who sat in the cubicle next to him, was no longer there. Within two hours, he received a company message that read, "We regret to inform you that, as of today, Linda Jameson is leaving Travelink Solutions. Please join us in wishing Linda all of the best in her future endeavours." Within an hour, Will received a second email that read, "Please be advised that the door security codes have been changed to 25678. Thank you for your cooperation."

Over the following weeks the number of empty cubicles grew. He was surprised that the departures were almost never discussed on the floor. It was as if the employees who had once filled the space had never been there in the first place. The loss of people also seemed to be associated with declining morale. People's willingness to help one another decreased, as did the overall friendliness of the workplace. Will began to save his money to ensure that he would have something to carry him through in the event that he too "went missing."

## A NEW ASSIGNMENT

But Will did not go missing. One afternoon in June, he was surprised to find that his employment situation was about to change for the better. He was invited by his team leader and the director of information technology to participate in the "Datasmart" project, as the individual who would be in charge of drafting and editing the standardized company correspondence forms that would be used by employees in Canada. He would be entering these documents into a new corporate database that was under

development. He was excited about the opportunity to advance within the company and use some of the writing skills he'd developed at university. As part of his new assignment, Will was offered a pay increase that would kick in after his next performance review which he anticipated would be held within a few weeks. He was given a quiet workspace away from the call center where he could concentrate on his writing and editing tasks.

The company correspondence project was part of a larger organizational undertaking that involved the revamping of their information systems. In order to pave the way for a new work flow management system called Datasmart, all company information, standardized documents, reports, and work flows were to be charted, reviewed, and revised to reduce error rates and enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness. While working on the project, Will was to report to the Datasmart project manager and was involved in weekly meetings with the IT staff who were overseeing the implementation.

Shortly after moving into his new role, Will was sent on his first business trip to attend a training seminar at the parent company's U.S. headquarters. However, supervisory guidance in Canada was quite limited. His new supervisor was always very busy with more pressing tasks and had minimal time to discuss questions that Will had regarding the content of specific documents or due dates. "Sorry, but I can't meet with you this week. I'm drowning in work. Can we reschedule? Just use your judgment—you seem to be making good progress," was the usual response he received from his supervisor.

All members of the 10-person Datasmart project team seemed to be very busy with the components that they were individually responsible for. Will could not help but feel somewhat out on a limb as he revised company forms and documents that were to be housed in the Datasmart system. People were beginning to use some of his revisions, but had he understood the implications of the wording and made the right changes? He was concerned that one day, he would be terminated as the result of something he had written that opened the firm to unanticipated liabilities or created serious difficulties with one of the firms for whom Travelink

supplied services. The processes related to approving document changes had been fairly informal over the years, with the individuals processing the claims handling these elements largely on their own.

A number of other events over the next three months caused Will additional concerns about his future prospects at Travelink. Will knew that the firm had invested a lot of time and money developing Datasmart. However, the launch date for this software solution had come and gone on two separate occasions. Each time that Datasmart appeared ready to go live with some of its modules, an email would come out advising that the launch would be postponed to a later time. The emails that Will received, as a member of the project team, suggested that both the U.S. and Canadian offices were having implementation problems. Eventually, no new emails concerning the release date were sent out.

By mid-September, Will was noticing that there was a new topic on the embargo list. No one in management was discussing the new software. In June, all employees had received two hours of training on the basic purpose and planned functions of the new software, and staff had been told that detailed training related to the use of the software would follow. In the beginning there had been some excitement generated concerning the benefits that the new system would bring and special T-shirts had been distributed to celebrate its anticipated benefits. Will wondered if others were wondering what had happened to Datasmart but were afraid to ask. Robert told him that it looked like the project was going to be halted and that the Americans were planning to bring in consultants to sort out the underlying problems. Will was not surprised by the rumors, but he took pride in the fact that a number of his rewritten documents were being put to use on a daily basis.

## FRUSTRATIONS DEEPEN

Will had still not received his performance review and promised raise by the middle of September. The Travelink Solutions employee handbook stated that each call center

associate would receive an appraisal review after six months of continuous employment. Once a successful review was completed, an employee would be entitled to a pay increase. He had checked with the remaining members of his training group and none had been approached yet, regarding their six-month reviews, despite the fact that they were now into their tenth month of employment.

The initial feelings of frustration that Will experienced concerning this were slowly turning into anger. After all, he believed that he had performed very well. He had taken the initiative to learn about the office structure, the policy and procedure intricacies underlying different types of services, and different service techniques that went well beyond the competence required of a phone operator. When asked to join the Datasmart team, he had willingly volunteered and worked hard to understand and improve standardized documentation templates and corporate correspondence and had done so under minimal guidance. Yet, ten months had passed and there had been no formal review and no increase in pay, despite his attempts to remind his supervisors that such a review was overdue. There had been consistent supervisory comments that he was doing a terrific job and that the performance review would be looked after soon. However, managers were very busy and nothing was ever scheduled.

By October, Will's correspondence and documents project was three quarters of the way to completion, but the phones in the call center were busy again—very busy! Robert had told him in mid-August that they had won a major new contract. While management was pleased to have obtained the new business, Robert was apprehensive. As a marketing manager, he was delighted that his hard work had contributed toward obtaining this new account. As a former employee in the call center, however, Robert was frightened that the additional call volume would greatly exceed the current resources available. Robert told Will that he had argued to have new employees hired and trained in advance of the start dates for the new contracts but senior management said no. Robert said “the word from upstairs was that they would scale their capacity to handle an increased volume of calls

closer to when the new revenue began to flow. Even crazier, a number of senior managers seem to believe that fewer new employees would be required once the call center was organized to better respond to volume patterns and leverage existing technology. I don't see how this approach can work."

Robert's concerns became a nightmare for the employees within the call center over the next few months. The phones started ringing and there were simply not enough hands to pick them up (see Exhibit 3 for call center volumes). In addition to the spikes in call volume generated from the new contracts, Travelink was now entering its busier season. Just a few months ago, the phones had been relatively quiet—to the extent that employees found time in between calls to provide extra service steps for their clients, such as arranging billing for insured expenses or expediting alternative hotel and flight arrangements. Now, there was no time between calls. From his new workspace, Will overheard managers discussing that it was not uncommon for clients to be placed on hold for up to five minutes while waiting for an available agent. Travelink provided a contractual guarantee that clients would only be on hold for a maximum of three minutes, and Robert told Will that account managers were finding themselves having to explain to their contract representatives why individual customers were forced to hold for extended periods of time.

One day in early November, Will was asked to move back to the phones. The increase in call volume necessitated his reassignment to his old position, without even a formal "thank you" for the work he had been doing. With the lack of available trained employees to service the increasing volume of incoming calls, the customer service managers were scrambling to ensure that the hold time was eased as much as possible. The following Monday morning, Will entered the call center and noticed that Luther, the trainer, was sitting beside him in the cubicle Linda used to occupy. Marie was sitting directly behind him. As he looked around the office, Will realized that other staff members were also in the call center, answering calls. When asked why he was there, Luther simply shook his head and said, "I worked here and earned my way

to a training position. Now, I'm back where I started." Marie overheard the conversation and simply threw her arms up in frustration when Will nodded to her. All available hands were now busy answering calls rather than providing their usual support services.

Will noted that there were now almost no company events being organized by the human resources department. Social events and birthday celebrations were cut from the schedule due to work pressures and the monthly management-staff noon hour corporate update meetings were postponed. When an event did occur, added pressure was placed on employees to partake. It seemed to Will that managers desperately wanted to believe that employees were still enjoying their work and feeling good about the firm.

By mid-February, customers' hold times had increased from five minutes to, at times, thirty minutes or more. On one occasion, Will talked to a man who had been on hold for over an hour waiting for someone to arrange for a tow truck. Team leaders sent out emails that reminded agents to apologize to customers who were required to wait for periods of ten minutes or longer. "Please apologize profusely," the messages read. At this point, Will was so frustrated that he would often forget to apologize. After all, it was not his fault that the company he worked for had not made the proper arrangements to service their clients. Why should he apologize when he and his coworkers were suffering too? Will found himself making less use of some of the techniques that contributed to customer service excellence, such as empathy, friendliness, and attention to detail.

The lack of appropriate planning and implementation related to heightened call volumes was having a visible, negative impact on the performance of all call center associates. For example, anytime that an agent logged off the phone to document a call, they were required to go on "not ready" status. This status was employed in order to write the required case notes into the Travelink database. According to the employee manual, agents were allowed to go on "not ready" for an hour each day, in addition to scheduled break times. With so many calls flowing into the call center, however, acceptable "not ready" time had disappeared.

Team leaders were able to see agents who were not taking calls and they began sending out emails that read, "Please log in. Several calls are waiting." Out of frustration, Will began counting the number of emails he had received that were titled "Please log in." Within one week, the tallied amount was 32.

Eventually, team leaders stopped using emails to ask agents to log in and began phoning their direct extensions every time they were not prepared to take a call. On one occasion, Will received a call from his team leader asking him to log in while he was documenting a call that he had received from an elderly couple that had been in a serious automobile accident in Mexico. From that point on, he attempted to type his notes for one case while he was on the phone with the next client. He questioned the efficacy of the new shortcuts that he was employing, but there was nothing that could be done. Every time that Will or any of the other operators tried to log off of their phones to document a call, they were messaged to log back in. Scrambling to keep one's head above water had become the new normal. To make matters worse, the claims department, which was in charge of reviewing the documented cases, was growing increasingly frustrated with the customer service agents over the increasing number of mistakes. The workload related to correcting errors in claims that had been opened by operators had essentially quadrupled.

Travelink began to actively recruit new phone agents in January, with the first ones arriving in the call center on February 1st. Melanie, a new agent, moved into the empty desk in front of Will. She was friendly and a hard worker, but she noted that she was feeling overwhelmed and ill prepared. She explained that some of the new employees were being hired on a contractual basis and that her contract was for a period of three months. Will could not understand the rationale behind hiring new employees for short-term contracts. The volume and complexity of the work was not going to go away. Furthermore, the fact that the new hires had only received two weeks of training made them unaware of several elements, including workflows and basic policy terms and conditions

that were essential to the proper decision making and documentation. Will believed that the impact in errors, added costs (e.g., authorizing services the customer was not entitled to), and service failures would become all too apparent. By this point, employee turnover and absenteeism had risen markedly (see Exhibit 4).

Robert was equally distressed by the fallout that was occurring due to growing call volumes and a lack of properly trained customer service agents. Some of the companies that had placed their customer service contracts with Travelink Solutions call center were now threatening to pull their contracts because Travelink was not honoring its service delivery promises. The operations department noted that 10% of all calls were now being lost due to the lengthy response time. In other words, 10% of all customers were not getting through to a representative, even though this might be a time of great need.

## CONSIDERING HIS ALTERNATIVES

---

One evening in early April, Will sat down to consider his future with Travelink Solutions. He was thankful for the training and job experience that he had received—competencies that would undoubtedly be useful in many other positions—but he was unsure how much more turmoil he could endure. He had saved enough money to, at the very least, pull himself through until a better opportunity came along. One thing seemed certain: Travelink Solutions no longer fit well with his goals.

Will submitted his resignation on Monday of the second week of April, to take effect on April 30, sixteen months after he had commenced employment. On the day after he submitted his resignation, Will received an email, apologizing for his long overdue performance appraisal interview. In the email, his manager applauded his performance, rated his potential as excellent in all categories, and asked what it would take to get him to reconsider and stay. The manager requested that they meet Friday. As Will thought about the offer, the words that came to mind were these: Too little, too late.

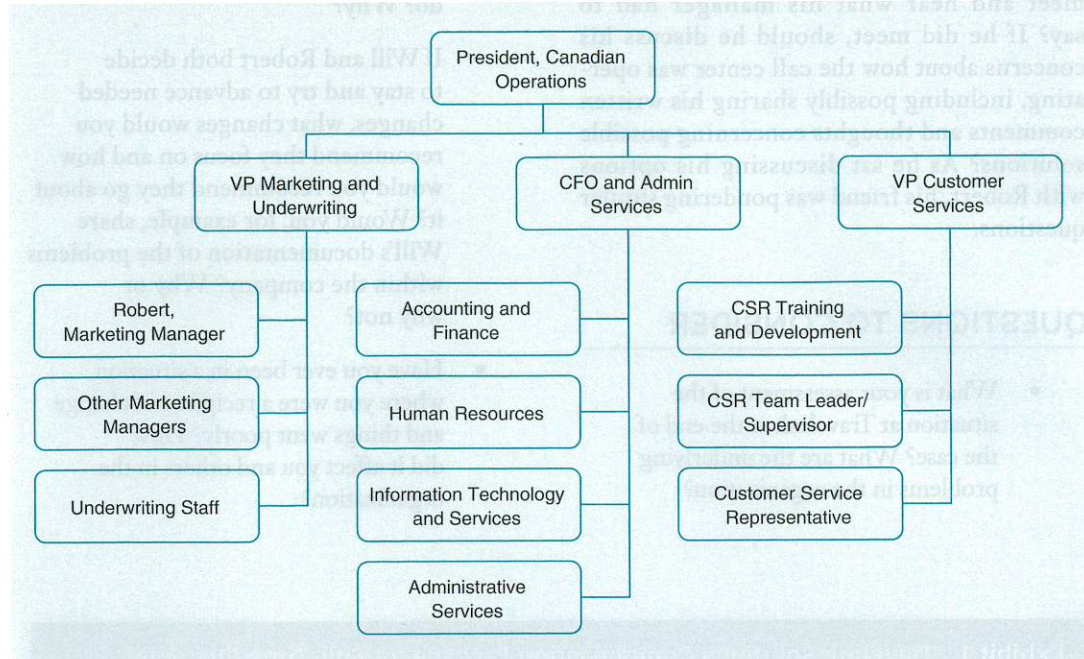
Will, however, bit his tongue: Before confirming his decision to quit, should he meet and hear what his manager had to say? If he did meet, should he discuss his concerns about how the call center was operating, including possibly sharing his written comments and thoughts concerning possible solutions? As he sat discussing his options with Robert, his friend was pondering similar questions.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is your assessment of the situation at Travelink at the end of the case? What are the underlying problems in the organization?
- If you found yourself in Will or Robert's situation, what would you do? Why?
- If Will and Robert both decide to stay and try to advance needed changes, what changes would you recommend they focus on and how would you recommend they go about it? Would you, for example, share Will's documentation of the problems within the company? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you were a recipient of change and things went poorly? How did it affect you and others in the organization?

Exhibit 1 Travelink Solutions Compensation Package for Full-Time Customer Service Representatives	
Salary	\$17 per hour or \$35,360 to start, progressing to \$25 per hour or \$52,000 after 2 years (performance reviewed every 6 months)
Performance Bonus	Up to a 5% bonus is available to individual representatives, on an annual basis, based upon individual and corporate performance
Salary Review	Every 6 months until staff reaches the maximum for their pay category. After that, salary is reviewed annually
Benefits	A comprehensive benefit package, including dental, eye care, drugs, extended health, and insurance
Pension	Firm contributes 3% of employee's annual salary, employee can elect to contribute up to an additional 5% of their salary, with the firm matching this at a 50% level
Vacation	2 weeks of vacation for the first year of employment; 3 weeks after 5 years, 4 weeks after 15 years
Sick Days	5 paid sick days per year
Personal Obligation Days	Up to 2 paid personal obligation days per year
Education and Development	100% reimbursement for courses preapproved by the manager

## Exhibit 2 Partial Organization Chart for the Canadian Operations



### Assumptions:

- Call staff answering norms are 15 minutes per call or 26 calls per 8-hour shift (1 hour is allocated for post call documentation and follow-up work + two 15-minute breaks)
- It takes approximately 2 months (1 month of training and 1 month on the phones) before an operator is fully able to operate at capacity, handling both direct customer contact and call documentation with < 1% error rate
- One full-time, trained employee equates to approximately 18 availing working days per month. Absenteeism is estimated at 5%. Since all non-statutory holidays are taken in the July-August period, available days during the winter remains at 18 days
- Further capacity could be created by scheduling overtime and statutory holiday work.
- A maximum of 80 call cubicles are available, leading to a maximum shift capacity of 2,080 calls per 8-hour shift.
- At a staffing level of 140 full-time employees on the phones, total call volume capacity per month = 65,520.

Exhibit 3 Call Center Call Volumes by Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Call Volume	48,600	48,600	47,000	44,300	40,000	36,200	35,000	33,200	33,000	40,700	42,900	46,700	52,900	56,500	57,200
Wait Time Avg	<2 min	<3 min	<2 min	<1 min	<1 min	<1 min	<1 min	<1 min	<1 min	4 min	5 min	6 min	10 min	11 min	12 min
Lost Calls	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	3%	6%	8%	10%	10%

Exhibit 4 Call Center Turnover Data by Quarter and With the Year-End Total

	Jan-Mar 04	Mar-May 04	June-Aug 04	Sept-Dec 04	Year 04 12-Month Summary	Jan-Mar 05
Absenteeism	3%	2%	3%	6%	3.6%	8.3%
a) Quits	0	2	5	10	17	19
b) Layoffs	0	0	16	0	16	0
c) Dismissals	0	1	1	2	4	0
Total (a+b+c)	0	3	22	12	37	19
New Hires	24	9	0	13	46	20 Full-Time + 19 Contract Employees
Total Call Center Staff (excluding trainers and team leaders)	140	146	124	125		145 Full-Time + Contract Employees