

STRIKE STORIES



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During the recent 32-day strike at the MTA, I worked the 6 a.m. shift at Telephone Information for about three weeks. What a job!

Route searches are computerized and knowledgeable supervisors were always at hand to help. Thomas Guide books were not obsolete, though, and, soon enough, formerly unknown areas of Los Angeles became a lot less mysterious.

The many sincere 'thank you's' doled out by concerned customers were always bright spots, but I found myself truly tired at the end of every working day. The Telephone Agents I'd previously met were pleasant and friendly - and now I know these are must-have qualities, in relentless abundance, for anyone working this closely with our customers.

The other transit carriers covering similar MTA bus and train service areas were lifesavers for many customers. After about a week, a disproportionately large number of calls emerged from the "blind spots" where only MTA offered general service or connections - now no longer available. Some trips were difficult or impossible and it was very tough to disappoint a customer.

My favorite caller was an undaunted high school student, whose early morning trip could not be completed without taking four buses in three hours, walking over ten blocks and still arriving one hour late for class. "I can do it," he insisted. "I have to."

This determined spirit exemplified the outlook of many customers and the positive staff effort in Telephone Information during the strike.

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