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articles

IN A LEAN ENVIRONMENT TECHNOLOGY COMES ONLY THIRD!! The Dovanoc case



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IN A LEAN ENVIRONMENT TECHNOLOGY COMES ONLY THIRD!!

By Carlo Scodanibbio – January 2023

When I am in one of the Countries in which I spend a few months a year, I don't have Wi-Fi at home: so, I use one of my mobile phones as a "*hotspot*" to create a Wi-Fi signal in my entire house. That phone is used only as a hotspot: it has no other use. So, it only consumes Mb or Gb of Data, that's all. Obviously, I need to buy data for that phone from a local Mobile Telephony provider. Let's call them *Dovanoc*.

Now – as I do with all providers I use in several Countries – I check regularly my usage: residual credit, data used, data balance, etc. Just in case...

So, one blooming day, I discover that my Air Time Credit decreases of Local Currency X30 (approx. 1,8 USD) every day....

I try to call Dovanoc Customer Care: impossible!

No-one answer the call, whichever Menu option I choose. All I can do is to talk with "*Boti*", their Digital Assistant: a digital chat via SMS (free SMS!!!).

Digital Chatting is simply absurd: Menus, choose from 7 items, wait, tap on the phone keyboard like mad, yell digitally..... a horrific experience!

Eventually, using all the patience in this world, after 40 minutes of chat I manage to understand that there is an active subscription to *Game Lords* (??&%\$£?#?), that so far has eaten X120 of my air time credit.

Obviously, I never subscribed to *Game Lords*.... Generally, I simply cancel and throw away the 4 or 5 promotional or marketing SMS that land in my phone almost daily... Possibly: one of these messages was conceived in such a way that if you **DO NOT REFUSE A SUBSCRIPTION, IT WILL AUTOMATICALLY SUBSCRIBE YOU?** I don't know...

Again, fighting digitally with the digital monster, and going through absurd menus, I manage to cancel the subscription! Confirmed by Boti!

But not to get refunded of my X120 – which is not a significant amount of money. However, purely as a matter of principle, I want my stolen air time back. Full stop.

So, I drive to a Dovanoc outlet. I explain the story to a lady, and she tells me that she needs my hotspot phone to call Dovanoc Customer Care, since only Customer Care can authorize a refund.

I don't have that phone with me, it's at home.

And, also, I explain the lady that it's impossible to talk to Customer Care.

She very calmly gives me the Customer Care number and states that – if I do not select any menu but just wait – eventually I will be able to speak to someone to claim my stolen credit back.

Hhhmmmm, that I didn't try.... So, let's try...

I go back home, and I try to call Customer Care: impossible!

After waiting and waiting, and after repeating the menu twice, the call is closed... Now I am furious!

So, I go back to the Dovanoc outlet: now there is another lady. I explain again my full story, and now I have my phone with me.

The lady, very kind, says she will call Customer Care with my phone on my behalf: because **I MUST TALK WITH CUSTOMER CARE AND CLAIM MY CREDIT BACK...**

Very well, I say. So, she calls Customer Care. But after 40 minutes of trying and trying, no joy... She cannot manage to get through....

At this stage, I almost lose my temper, and start using my loud voice in a loud way, as the situation deserves. There are quite a number of people in that outlet, and I can see they look at me with great sympathy and almost applause....

The lady understands the message. She calls Customer Care from her phone AS A CONSULTANT (sigh...)! And after 10 minutes of talking an un-understandable language, **she manages to get my refund!** An SMS arrives promptly to my phone: your air time has been credited with X120, regards (!!!). Oh Boy, oh Boy, oh Boy! **DONE!**

So, I thank and praise the lady loudly, and ask her 2 more things:

- Does Customer Care have an email address? The answer is NO
- So how do I call them or communicate with them? The answer is Boti!!!

And I ask her 1 more thing:

- Yesterday I recharged my air time with X200, so I received an SMS stating that – as a reward to be such a loyal customer – I had X200 of free calls for the day. A message that I normally ignore. But yesterday I decided to avail myself of this special bonus. I have called this local number, and my air time credit has gone down... Why? And how much did the call cost? The lady checks my records, the call costed X40. Hah hah, and what about my free X200 air time Bonus? The lady: No, that is not a Bonus - first they charge your air time.... and only when the air time is depleted, they give you free calls.... sigh.... Now I use my loud voice again: “but this is pure fraud!!!”
The lady, silently, agrees.... In the outlet everyone is listening to our conversation with horrified faces.....

This is my Dovanoc story.

Quite sad, but quite enlightening.

Because this kind of things should not happen, but they happen more and more.

And the story is not over..... listen to this!

Less than 3 weeks after the first chapter, all of a sudden, I discover that X15/day are disappearing from my air time credit!

Furious like never, I start another chat with Boti, and digitally yell and scream for this new episode of violence. And discover that there is a new active subscription, this time to *Mobio360* (??&&\$%\$£??). And by yelling and screaming digitally, eventually I manage:

- To cancel this new subscription
- To get called by a human being!!! (a new option that suddenly appears to me in my chat with Boti)

So, a human being from Customer Care calls me! Unbelievable!

Pointless to say, this time I can yell and scream in a human, non-digital way to someone!

- I manage to cancel all my active and future subscriptions, forever and ever – then confirmed by a subsequent SMS!
- I manage to STOP once and forever receiving any promotion, marketing or whatever else SMS from Dovanoc. I am pretty clear: *all I want is SMSs confirming my air time recharges, and SMSs informing that my Data are decreasing or almost exhausted.* That's all! Also this request of mine is then confirmed by a subsequent SMS!
- And I manage to get refunded of X30 (15 +15, over 2 days of Mobio subscription).

This last point, is very intriguing: because the SMS I receive, confirms that I have been refunded not of X30 but rather of X150!!! Why? Mistake! The useless, digital bureaucrats refunded me also for the previous X120 of the first part of this story for a second time!!!

Did I complain? NO. Did I inform them I was over-refunded? NO!!!!!! Because useless bureaucrats deserve a moral punishment. And I do not feel dishonest – at all – if I scored X120 (a few \$). Well done, Carlo!

So, let's come to very simple conclusions.

Surely, Dovanoc are not LEAN. At all! Just imagine – apart from the over-refund of X120 to me – how much this entire story costed to:

- Me, first of all. Me, the customer: frustrations, aggravations, loss of temper, hyper-cholesterol, time, 2 visits to their outlet, etc. etc.
- Them. Their consultants' time wasted, their system filled with digital chats.... And – most important – their loss of reputation! Not only at their outlet, with a dozen people sympathizing with me for my yelling and screaming.... But also through this newsletter: I have thousands of subscribers in the Country I am referring to, and it does not require a strong effort from them to understand who Dovanoc are in reality.....

Which leads to the well know Lean principle. **IN A LEAN ENVIRONMENT:**

1) **People** come first. Where People are Clients and internal Personnel.

2) **Methods** come second: Lean Methods! (maximum **Value** to Customers with minimal or zero internal processing **Waste**...)

3) Third, and only third, comes **Technology**.....

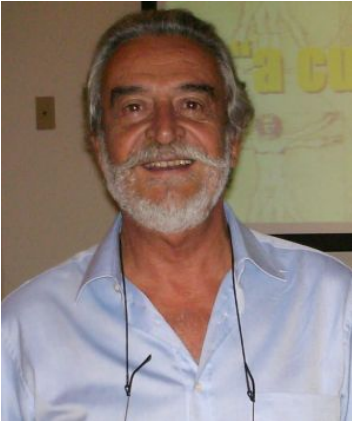


Surely, when the above priorities go lost or get mixed up, we face a disaster – especially when Technology (digital or non-digital) comes first, forgetting that there is a **Monster Client** out there waiting for **Value, Value, Value**.....

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Carlo Scodanibbio, born in Macerata (Italy) in 1944, holds an Italian doctor degree in Electrical Engineering (Politecnico di Milano - 1970).

He has over 49 years of experience in Plant Engineering, Project Engineering and Project Management, as well as Industrial Engineering and Operations Management.

Free-lance Consultant since 1979, he has worked in a wide spectrum of companies and industries in many countries (Southern Africa - Italy - Cape Verde - Romania - Malta - Cyprus - Lebanon - Mauritius - Malaysia - Nigeria - Kenya - India - Saudi Arabia - Seychelles), and operates as an Independent Professional Consultant and Human Resources Trainer to industry. His area of intervention is:

World Class Performance for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Project, Manufacturing, and Service sectors.

His favourite area of action is: the "lean" area.

He has co-operated, inter-alia, with the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce, the Cyprus Productivity Centre, the Malta Federation of Industry, the Mauritius Employers' Federation, the Romanian Paper Industry Association, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and the University of Cape Town.

His courses and seminars, conducted in English, Italian and French, have been attended by well over 20.000 Entrepreneurs, Managers, Supervisors and Workers. They feature a very high level of interaction, and are rich in simulations, exercising and real case studies. The approach is invariably "hands-on" and addressed to immediate, practical application.

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