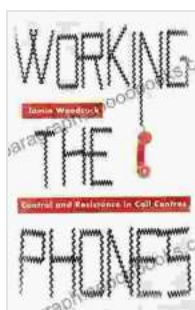


Unveiling the Hidden Dynamics: Control and Resistance in Call Centres Wildcat

In the bustling world of call centres, where efficiency and profit maximization often take centre stage, the human element can sometimes be overlooked. However, behind the headsets and cubicles lies a complex tapestry of power relations and worker resistance. In her groundbreaking book, "Control and Resistance in Call Centres: Wildcat", Dr. Anna Kelsall explores the often-hidden dynamics shaping these workplaces, shedding light on the strategies workers employ to navigate the challenges of call centre employment.

Control Mechanisms in Call Centres

Call centres are characterized by a high level of control over workers' activities and behaviour. This control is often exercised through a combination of technological surveillance, performance monitoring, and strict adherence to scripts and procedures. Kelsall argues that these forms of control are not merely superficial attempts to maximize productivity but are also deeply rooted in a managerial ideology that seeks to subordinate workers' autonomy and subjectivity.



Working the Phones: Control and Resistance in Call Centres (Wildcat) by Jamie Woodcock

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 879 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 210 pages

X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled



Surveillance technologies, such as call monitoring and screen-recording software, enable supervisors to track and assess every aspect of a worker's performance. Performance metrics, like average handle time and customer satisfaction scores, are constantly scrutinized, creating a constant pressure to conform to management's expectations. The use of scripts and standardized procedures further limits workers' ability to respond to customers' needs in a meaningful and autonomous way.

Worker Resistance in Call Centres

Despite the seemingly all-encompassing nature of managerial control, workers in call centres are not passive victims. Kelsall's research reveals a wide range of resistance strategies that workers employ to protect their autonomy, dignity, and well-being.

One of the most common forms of resistance is "wildcatting", a term that refers to unsanctioned or unorganized collective action. Wildcatting can take many forms, including work-to-rule (strictly following procedures without taking any initiative), sabotage (intentionally disrupting or slowing down work), and even outright strikes. These actions are often driven by a sense of frustration and anger over unfair work practices and a desire to assert a degree of control over the workplace.

Another form of resistance is "voice resistance". This involves workers expressing their concerns or complaints through formal channels, such as

grievances or union meetings. Voice resistance can be effective in highlighting problems within the workplace and pushing for change, but it can also be risky for workers who fear retaliation from management.

More subtle forms of resistance include "hidden transcripts" and "subterfuge". Hidden transcripts refer to the private conversations and jokes that workers share among themselves, often expressing their frustrations with the job and the company. Subterfuge is the use of deception or evasion to get around management's rules and regulations, such as taking unauthorized breaks or hiding errors from supervisors.

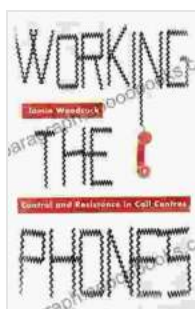
The Significance of Control and Resistance

Kelsall's analysis of control and resistance in call centres has significant implications for understanding employment relations in the wider service sector. The book highlights the often-overlooked experiences of frontline workers in low-wage jobs, who are often subjected to intense forms of managerial control. It also demonstrates the resilience and creativity of workers in finding ways to resist these controls and protect their own interests.

Furthermore, the book challenges traditional notions of resistance. Kelsall argues that resistance in call centres is not always overt or organized, but can take a variety of subtle and subversive forms. This highlights the need for researchers and policymakers to recognize the complexity and diversity of resistance in contemporary workplaces.

"Control and Resistance in Call Centres: Wildcat" is a groundbreaking work that lifts the veil on the hidden dynamics of control and resistance in these often-overlooked workplaces. Through a detailed exploration of the

strategies workers employ to navigate the challenges of call centre employment, the book provides valuable insights into the nature of power relations and the resilience of workers in the face of oppression. Its findings have significant implications for understanding employment relations in the service sector and for developing more just and equitable work environments.



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