

STOP THE BOSS

BURN OUT STRESS SYNDROME

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Meet fellow call centre workers from around the world - we have profiles of customer service professionals from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Holland, India, the Philippines, USA and others on our special action month website.

Find them at:
www.stoptheboss.org



Lucimara Helena Ortega is a member of the Brazilian telecom union SINTETEL. She has worked for Atento (a subsidiary of Telefónica) for a year.

Getting along with people is important she tells us - and her union is there to defend the workers. "What matters is that all workers are aware of their rights and are able to assert them."

Dimitra Makri, President of COSMOTE Greece



'Stress exists in every call centre - there are no exceptions to this rule'

Tackling **Burn.Out.Stress.Syndrome**

It's once again Global Action Month for customer service workers around the globe. Unions in many countries have activities planned for October and both UNI global union and the International Transport Workers Federation are working together to coordinate events. This year the clear emphasis is on stress. Stop the B.O.S.S. - Burn Out Stress Syndrome.

A clear outcome of our first ever conference for call centre workers - in Athens in October 2005 - was that stress is an issue that affects customer service professionals wherever they work.

The technology, the way the work is organised and the pressures to meet deadlines and targets all increase the stress.

It's a key issue for these professionals - and their unions.

That's why this October we aim to step up organising and recruitment and we want to highlight the high

levels of stress customer service workers are exposed to. Stress, anxiety, burn-out and depression fuel low morale, raise staff turnover and absenteeism and affect service and productivity. Unions believe that customer service professionals - who are well trained and highly qualified - should be well treated so that they can provide a good service to the customer.

It's not easy for individuals in call centres to demand their rights from a company on their own - the balance of power is stacked against the individual.

Customer service professionals - like workers in other skills and service industries - need the collective support of their colleagues and a union.

Go to www.stoptheboss.org for more information and the history of union action months that goes back to 1999. And you can get your free anti-stress kit.

'Collective issues in call centres are all about health, safety and the well being of staff - they are all quality of life issues'

Matt Goodwin from the Australian union centre ACTU

www.stoptheboss.org



UNI global action month for customer service professionals

UNI launched this year's call centre action month website with information on stress. There are posters, hand-outs in five languages and UNI's Call Centre Charter and Offshoring Charter to download, interviews with call centre workers, quotes from call centre organisers and a photo gallery.

News from around the world of activities planned for October include the United States where the CWA will be leafleting many sites and publishing the latest report on conditions in call centres in both the USA and India. The report is a joint effort of CWA, Jobs with Justice and several Indian unions and organisations.

Our union kit helps you de-stress

UNI has put together a kit to help customer service professionals unwind. It's not the answer to persistent and unacceptable stress levels - the long term solution lies with strong unions and collective bargaining with your employers.

But we do have some tips to help you relax.

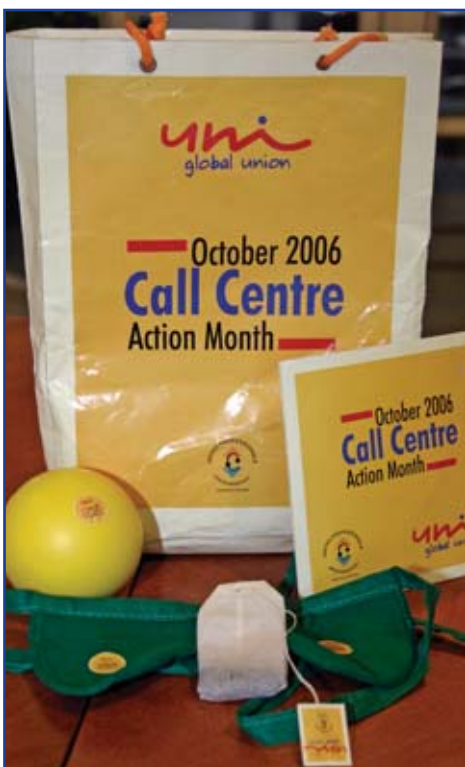
On the website you'll find a Yoga guide. Yoga can help reduce the tension, stress, anxiety, weakness, helplessness and negative thoughts that are on the

increase in modern work.

We've also put into our anti-stress kit a stress ball, an eye-mask and even herbal tea.

If that doesn't do the trick there's a CD with relaxing music - and an electronic copy of the UNI Call Centre Charter which aims to ensure decent work for customer service professionals wherever they work in the world.

■ Ask for your anti-stress kit and visit www.stoptheboss.org.



Order UNI stress kits and stickers

Aiming for a global standard

About 30 union organisers from the world's customer service industry meet in Nyon, Switzerland on 10-12 October to discuss a global standard for call centres.

They also plan networks of union activists in some of the emerging global players in the industry - including Sitel, Atento and Transcom.

They'll be discussing the latest trends - like outsourcing and offshoring and exchanging best practices on organising.

The aim is to step up the union presence in call centres and help improve the working lives of customer service professionals - including more opportunities for training.



Our poster is downloadable. If you want it personalised with your union logo contact: callcentres@uniglobalunion.org



Patricia Pinxteren has been a CNE shop steward for four years. Her union represents workers at Sitel in Diegem (near Brussels). She identifies stress caused by aggressive clients and the challenges of balancing work with her private life.



Dennis Klopsch is a member of ver.di Germany and works for Arvato. He sees his union's top priority as negotiating a collective agreement. He wants global rules to avoid a race to the bottom in salaries and more information about other companies.