

# SIGNAL & NOISE

Verizon Business Techs Speak Out

May 5, 2008 – Please post and share

## VZB TECHS UNITED

Welcome to our third edition of SIGNAL & NOISE! This is news by VzB techs for VzB techs. This is our voice for our union. If you would like to contribute to the conversation, even anonymously, please email [TechsSpeakOut@gmail.com](mailto:TechsSpeakOut@gmail.com)

## UPPER MANAGEMENT REMAINS DEFIANT

VzB has no clue what's in store if Seidenberg doesn't recognize our union based on the card verification process. Verizon's continual disregard for the welfare of VzB employees may impact more than just the wireline side of the business. In response to the upcoming battle, Jeannie Diefenderfer, said on her most recent telecast, "We will ensure that [VzB] employees are well informed about what to do if there's a work stoppage so there is no 'mystery'."

No self-respecting tech would cross a picket line. In Boston, the stigma for crossing a picket line can last a lifetime. The only way out of a very nasty relationship between workers and management is if Verizon negotiates a fair contract and includes VzB workers in it. That's the best choice for the success of our business, our customers, our fellow employees, and our communities. But that's the high road Seidenberg and his management still refuse to take.

## MY CONFRONTATION WITH SEIDENBERG

By David Rogol

Forfeiting three vacation days with my family, I flew to the Annual Verizon Stockholder's Meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska on May 1. The whole point of the trip was to have an opportunity to stand behind the mic during the Q&A period and ask Seidenberg some very pointed questions.

"In our current culture of corporate greed," I said, "where management considers me just another 'body' instead of a 'human being,' I'm convinced that, at Verizon, the only way my family's livelihood will improve is with a union."

A spirited applause then broke out from stockholders and about 30 Nebraskan CWA/IBEW members present. "Mr. Seidenberg," I continued, "I'm here on behalf of the hundreds of Verizon Business techs who are fed up. I'm here on behalf of hundreds of Verizon Business techs demanding a voice at work. Our morale is low. Our frustration is high." Then I posed the following two questions:

- \* "After all we've been through at WorldCom, why, compared to our unionized counterparts, does Verizon continue down the low road compensating us Verizon Business techs with considerably lower pay and lower benefits? What are we, some sort of third class citizens?"
- \* "Why don't you take the high road, put all this increasing animosity behind us, and recognize our union based on the card check process? After all, Verizon allowed a simple card check with customer service reps in 2000. Why not us?"

Looking me straight in the eye, Seidenberg's canned response was as expected. He would like us to obey the law and follow the NLRB process because he doesn't want, "to take the right to a private vote" away from the workers.

After the meeting was over, I wished I offered to have the American Arbitration Association come in and conduct a fair and private election. But I'm sure he'll be reading this report (hint, hint, Ivan). After all, if that's his only concern then LET'S VOTE! Then IBEW Local 2222's Dave Reardon reminded Seidenberg that it is completely within the law for Verizon to recognize us based on a majority sign up card check.

Afterward, many elderly stockholders who find these meetings fun to attend, approached me and were very supportive of our efforts to obtain union recognition. They were disgusted with how disproportionate our wages are in comparison with the CEO's compensation.

The trip was very productive. The board of directors heard our case. My hope is that Verizon will reverse this antagonistic relationship with us, recognize our union, and let us get to work making this company more profitable for us all.



## QUOTABLE QUOTES

"I've never seen so many flags before." – Director John Scocolla on a February 29th visit to the Local OSC in Ryebrook, NY

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*Verizon Business Techs Speak Out*

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS

### Game Time Is Over

"Dear Mr. Seidenberg: I am writing to you to express my frustration with the atmosphere that permeates from Verizon as the result of your anti-Union worker philosophy and hostility to the very employees who have made the company successful...Therefore, effective immediately, the IBEW is adopting a national practice of no cooperation with Verizon. This will include our political assistance on local, state and federal legislation and regulatory issues..."

– Myles J. Calvey, IBEW Local 2222 Business Manager

### VzB VP Lies About Outsourcing

"The center in the Philippines is to serve our Asia-pac customers", said Fred Briggs on his last visit to the Charlton terminal. Shortly thereafter, LD OSC techs began seeing virtually all T1 Mux messages for domestic circuits being written by Pilipino contractors. Additionally, one NJ tech got called in on a weekend and said the maintenance tech who called him was in the Philippines.

### AT&T Gives Employees Free Wireless Plans

While cable company employees receive free cable and Home Depot employees allegedly receive a better discount off their personal Verizon Wireless plans than us Verizon employees, AT&T, according to their career webpage, offers employees "plans with 1,000 and 500 anytime minutes for two phone lines with really cool features and no monthly access fee. Eligibility begins 90 days after your start date."

### Lives of the Rich & Famous

While VzB employees suffer to pay the mortgage and put food on the table, Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg is listed in the April 14th edition of the Wall Street Journal as one of the top paid corporate executives in the United States. Even Republican presidential candidate John McCain commented; "there's a backlash in America today against corporate greed." (WSJ April 12-13, 2008).

## TECHS SPEAK OUT!

### FAST FOOD OR FINE DINING?

"They want to make this a fast food job but we're really fine dining. They treat it like it's a fast food joint. They throw quality for customers down the drain. We're specialists. We have special technical skills."

– Anonymous NY Tech

### FAVORITISM ABOUND

"Be Safe" was all a VzB manager could say as he called the office from home during a nasty northeastern snowstorm earlier this year. That manager and his handful of anti-union techs were privileged to work from home on their company laptops while everyone else had to either risk their safety driving into work or blow a vacation day.

### VZB STIFFS WORKERS ON TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Anyone who has recently traveled on company business comes back to discover a myriad of frustrating hoops to jump through to get reimbursed. One manager refused to pay for his tech's travel time on the plane. "They do not pay while I give up my weekend in the airports," said an anonymous tech. He continued in disgust, "it took me four hours to fill it all out and now I have to redo it all."

### VZB STIFFS INJURED WORKERS

Anyone who has ever had to use the disability plan knows that even though your doctor writes a letter indicating when you'll be able to return to work, Verizon, in cahoots with MetLife, may have a predetermined amount of time for you to be out based on injury statistics. If you follow your doctor's guidance, utilize all your vacation and sick time, and stay out 10 weeks, you may return to work and discover that Verizon only allows 6 weeks. You'll end up unpaid and deeper in the hole all because you followed your doctor's advice during your recovery.

### DO THEY REALLY THINK WE HAVE A SAY?

On March 14th John Killian thanked all employees for reaching "agreements with your managers on our 2008 goals and objectives." Did we really reach agreements? The dictionary says that to agree on something is "to accept or concede something typically after resolving points of disagreement." If anyone really thought they had any say, whatsoever, about their 2008 goals and objectives then please email us. We'd like to use your techniques as a model for the rest of us.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit <http://www.freechoiceatverizon.com>

GOT SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE? Email [TechsSpeakOut@gmail.com](mailto:TechsSpeakOut@gmail.com)