



Vicky Gray faces up to the reality of having to go to work – well, she has to pay for her new Aussie lifestyle somehow...

I was aware that I couldn't carry on my chiropody in Australia, not only because my qualification wasn't recognised, but the actual title 'chiropractor' wasn't even heard of.

Imagine my disbelief when thumbing through the *Yellow Pages* I found no mention of my profession. Instead, after 'chimney sweeps' it went straight to 'chiropractors'. Incidentally, there were only four chimney sweeps – so don't try and base your visa application on that.

I had had a good standing in the community in England, was often approached to sign applications for passports as a professional person; so to suddenly be downgraded to having 'no qualifications', with no chance of doing my job again, unless I was willing to study for several years at university, was not very encouraging.

But, it didn't deter me. I decided I would go forth and try another form of earning money, the change would do me good I thought, and I'm always ready to embark on something new!

I decided to apply for a telemarketing job, selling holidays on the Coast. The hours were great (school-run friendly), it was only five minutes drive from home, the money wasn't bad, and there was lots of potential to make extra cash bonuses too. After a rather casual



Work farce

interview, where the supervisor and her staff were all wearing pyjamas – I was presuming for charity, I was offered a position.

I remember feeling extremely nervous as I entered the office for the first time. For a start, I didn't know what everyone was going to be wearing: were pyjamas an everyday occurrence in this office? So I opted for a casual/smart look, and took an amusing hat in my bag, in case being stupid was a necessity.

THIS COULD BE FUN...

I got there at the appointed time, and found the other staff members to be really helpful. First, I had a couple of forms to fill in, and then 'Billy' gave me the lowdown on how to deal with difficult customers. I was then temporarily placed next to a couple of 'old

Above Selling coastal holidays over the telephone was not as easy as it looked

hands', who looked like they had come straight off the set of a *Tivo Ronnie's* sketch. They could easily have passed for men in heavily applied rouge lipstick and obscurely

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patterned nylon-cum-polyester dresses, but I was shocked and amazed at how naturally gifted they were, as call after call they enticed unsuspecting customers into securing a 'unmissable holiday deal.' I watched them in action, imagining that this could really be fun. About an hour after that, Billy decided it was my turn to have a go



Image: Shutterstock

colleagues had begun to join me, and most of them were there for more of a cigarette break (or smoko as it's joyously known) than lunch.

I watched them appear one by one. There was a sour-looking middle-aged woman with a purple nose, a couple of extremely obese women wearing flamboyant tracksuit bottoms and a chap in his late thirties, who from the side looked quite normal, but when confronted with him face on, appeared to have one eye the size of a peanut and the other of a kitchen clock. My next thought was that maybe I should just make a bolt for

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it. I could see my car beckoning me in the distance, but everyone had already stubbed out their nicotine-induced lunch and had started to make their way back to the office.

In my hesitance, a friendly girl in a wheelchair had rode up to me and seemed keen to accompany me back to our desks. I glanced back over to my car and the last escape to freedom, but decided I couldn't deny this girl conversation and, after a hopelessly embarrassing moment in which I got in one of those open-plan lift affairs with her – to climb two steps – reluctantly went back for the second half of my torturous day.

WATCHING THE CLOCK

Twenty useless phone calls later, I glanced at my watch. Only a horrifying 15 minutes had passed. That meant I had one hour and 45 minutes to go – this was not good.

I concocted a plan that I would go to the bathroom at half hourly intervals, with the hope that I could loose at least 15 minutes that way. The plan worked. It gave me something to aim for, in the same way a twitching alcoholic has to take his recovery one day at a time. By the time 2.30pm arrived, Billy



This extract is taken from *Diggeridoos & Diggeridoon's – A Brit's guide to moving your life Down Under* by Vicky Gray, priced £14.97 and available from Amazon.

beavered over to say I had done superbly well and that he hadn't expected me to make any sales on the first day. He also informed me that all the fun would start tomorrow, when I would make sales. I smiled as much as I could without looking like a dead horse... while in my mind I was repeating his words. "Fun? fun?"

I bade everyone farewell with my last trickle of enthusiasm, and with the usual jolly 'high five' scenario, shouted "See you tomorrow."

"Like hell," I muttered to myself as I vanished out of the door and raced to the car park.

Needless to say, I never returned. I did have one more stomach churning phone call to make the next morning though, to Billy to tell him of my rather sudden departure. Luckily, he was unavailable so I was able to pass the message on and didn't have to use my elaborate excuse that I had been working on throughout the night.

I don't regret my six-hour career as a telemarketing girl, but I do take an extra minute to be a little more compassionate to the folks who do that job now. 🇦🇺

Below Vicky Gray's chiropody skills didn't get her very far in Australia



– that is when the job turned from 'fun-loving place to work' to 'heinous pit of Hell'.

I had never imagined how uncomfortable and cringe-making it is to phone random people from who-knows-where and try and sell them a holiday they quite obviously do not want.

I carried on pursuing person after person, using the daily script that Billy had presented me with and getting absolutely nowhere.

Yet, of course, it is in a highly motivated environment, so you are at liberty to sit there with a permanent cheesy grin even though your cheekbones are starting to twitch with pain, giving 'high fives' to other team members who randomly pass your desk.

At last, lunch time arrived, and not a second too early. I flew outside to get some fresh air, and massage my cramped cheeks back into a regular position as I had been wearing an expression not unlike that of The Joker from *Batman*. Many more of my new work