

Rachelle Pilares lost her sight at the age of 5. With a Bachelor of Arts degree (major in Communication Arts) from Philippine Women's University, her only work experience apart from on-the-job training, had been doing freelance work as a web content writer.



With the help of Genashtim, she landed a full time job with Service 800 Inc, an American call center company who allowed call center agents to work from home. This was a "real world" job, and all her colleagues were sighted people.

The targets for a call center agent in Service 800 Inc, is to make at least 80 calls in an 8 hours shift, plus 24 interviews. When Rachelle started in February 2011, she only managed to make 18 calls, and only 3 interviews in a shift. It seemed hopeless for her to achieve an increase in productivity of 500% and more.

"Am I able to reach the daily target of 24 interviews? Am I able to make 80 call attempts in a day? Am I able to follow the script all the time? Am I able to make an accurate, smooth and a friendly manner interview without causing delay for the customer's part while moving from one page to another? "....she thought, worried and agonized.

She was told over and over again that she was not performing up to scratch. *"Every time my supervisor seems dissatisfied with my work performance, I would only think that they're only considering my productivity. There's nothing personal - it's just for the company growth. I would also think that this is just a natural phenomenon for every employee like me. I take this job and I must face all the challenges and responsibilities within it. For sure, in the coming days, all of the hardships that came in my way will fade away. I still hope that great improvement would come as each day is passing by for the stability of my good working performance."*

After almost 3 months, Rachelle managed to get to 90 calls, and somewhere between 18 to 24 interviews a day. Now, after more than 2 years, she is able to exceed her targets - more than a hundred calls in a day, and sometimes she reached 32 interviews in her shift.

It is worth examining how she managed to make such a dramatic improvement in her productivity.

"I really want that every day I can make something I can't ever imagine. I want to improve more and I want to learn more. Although there are times I fail, it's still better to keep going and amend the mistakes I've made." Rachelle added.

It is certain that sheer determination, and focus on what she is doing had everything do with it. There can be no distraction. Her shift is 9 hours, with a one hour meal break, and 2 other 15 minute coffee breaks. She has to work non-stop during that time, with no pauses in between. She often takes shorter lunch breaks, and sometimes just forego her coffee breaks. Whilst she

is working at home, it was important that there was no disturbance and distraction from her family. As far as they are concerned, she is considered to be physically in the office, and not at home. Taking personal calls and texting will mean that she will miss her daily targets. And if she consistently missed her targets, she will lose her job.

Apart from this, Rachelle adds that she had to learn to be very good at multi-tasking, and to memorize a lot of the script. It is a challenge to be speaking with the client, take notes, and listening to her screen reader at the same time. She kept familiarizing herself with her task, and strived to be faster. She was determined that every day, she should get better.

Last but not least, in her first year on the job, she filed for sick leave only once. And she also asked Genashtim to give her additional work to fill up 3 evenings a week.

It is too easy for those working from home, to take things easy, and to take things for granted - think of the additional cost and inconvenience if you have to commute to an office. But for the business to thrive, we have to be competitive by global standards. For the PWD, it is additionally easy to think that this is all just too hard. Well it is very hard, but you have to make a significant positive contribution to the business. And the business has to succeed and make money. Otherwise, it will not be sustainable, and you will not be just compromising your career and livelihood, but that of your colleagues.

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