

Qwest

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package exists and instead push more expensive service packages with special features.

"It is ongoing," he said. "We have had a lot of those complaints in our consumer section about people getting charged for Qwest services they did not want or approve. This is a problem not confined to students — it appears to be statewide."

Qwest spokeswoman Barbara Faulhaber said Qwest sales consultants do not have to specifically state the price of a basic line, but employees are required to offer the basic service option.

She added that Qwest employees are prohibited from giving people services they don't request and should cancel unwanted services immediately.

"Typically we ask what their needs are and try to match those needs," she said. "Representatives should walk them through it and ensure they're getting exactly what they wanted."

Jan Margosian, Oregon Department of Justice spokeswoman, said the department is investigating 573 Qwest consumer complaints. Many of those have included allegations that Qwest employees "crammed" — added serv-

ices to customer accounts without approval or misrepresented its services.

"We have a large investigation concerning Qwest and many different aspects of its operations," she said.

The state's Unlawful Trade Practices Act prohibits "false or misleading representation." The Department of Justice can ask a court to fine Qwest up to \$25,000 per violation of basic consumer protection laws. In April, Qwest paid more than \$75,000 to the state to settle other alleged violations.

Meyer's mother has since filed a complaint with PUC, which was passed on to the Department of Justice. It took her two hour-long phone calls with Qwest to cancel the unwanted services and get a refund, he said.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they just do that to everyone — try to give you as much as they can and see if you notice," Meyer said. "My advice to other people is to make sure their bill is reasonable and that they got only what they asked for."

Lorraine-Michelle Faust also experienced problems with the phone company this year. Like Meyer, the senior journalism major ordered a basic line. But a week later she realized her service included features she was unaware of.

"A friend told me they left a mes-

sage on my voice mail — I said 'I don't have voice mail.'" Faust said. "They said 'Yes, you do.' So I called and found out I did. I just wanted a dial tone."

But Faust's difficulties became even greater when she called to fix the problem. The Qwest sales representative told Faust that her address did not exist in the computers and the phone line she had belonged to a business, she said. The representative told her that until she had a "real" address, she could not have her own phone line.

"I'm getting someone else's calls," she said. "It's really frustrating. I have no idea what to do."

She added that many corporations such as Qwest have national headquarters that she believes do not provide efficient local customer service. She's had several customer service problems with Qwest in the past.

"I wanted to boycott them, but I didn't have the choice," she said.

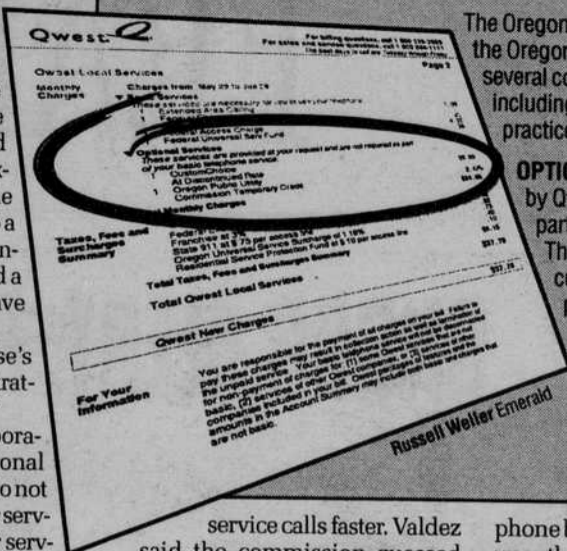
But in the last year, Qwest has made some strides in improving customer service. In response to several complaints about Qwest's sales practices, PUC worked with the phone company in June to develop a six-month plan to answer customer-

Students complain about Qwest's practices

The Oregon Public Utility Commission and the Oregon Dept. of Justice have received several complaints from customers, including students, about the business practices of Qwest Communications.

OPTIONAL SERVICES are provided by Qwest. These charges are not part of basic telephone service. The costs show up on the customer's bill, and must be paid unless the customer cancels the services.

OTHER COMPLAINTS from students include difficulty in cancelling services, difficulty contacting customer service and problems getting refunds.



service calls faster. Valdez said the commission guessed that longer sales pitches were slowing down response times.

Qwest was also one of the phone companies in compliance with an agreement in Marion County Circuit Court in April — which demanded that long-distance service providers throughout the country cease misleading business practices.

In a press release that same month, Oregon's Attorney General Hardy Myers warned consumers to read

phone bills carefully and to check for unauthorized charges or changes.

Margosian said students who have experienced any problems with Qwest services or believe they've been wrongly billed are encouraged to file a complaint with the Oregon Department of Justice online at www.doj.state.or.us, or call its toll free hotline at (877) 877-9392.

Beata Mostafavi is the student activities editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at beatamostafavi@dailymerald.com.

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Nike

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Gassama said corporations started releasing responsibility reports during the anti-apartheid protests of the mid-1980s, when protesters demanded that companies such as Reebok, Coca-Cola and IBM divest funds from South Africa. Since the anti-apartheid protests, he said, many corporate watchdogs and non-governmental organizations have used the court of public opinion to shame multinational corporations into becoming better public citizens.

"They have used the moral arena and the legal arena as a public relations tool for getting straight at the consumer," Gassama said. "This is the only disciplinary force left to regulate the conduct of multinational corporations."

Whether or not Nike is a tardy participant in the corporate citizen game, public shaming is a natural fact of capitalism, Business Professor Mark Phelps said. "Within the theory of capitalism, this is exactly what is supposed to be going on," said Phelps, who is the Tykeson senior instructor of international business, law and social responsibility. "Social pressure tells companies how

they should be behaving."

Over the past few years, this shaming has taken a new form, as corporate watchdogs and media groups have exposed a series of documented environmental law violations at Nike's contracted factories. In 1997, the Transnational Resource & Action Center found and released a secret audit of a Nike facility in Vietnam. In October 2000, the British Broadcasting Corporation aired a story about a Nike-contracted factory in Cambodia using child labor.

Some monitoring groups are beginning to see changes in the way the company does business. Scott Nova, executive director of the Worker Rights Consortium, a labor watchdog group, said he was impressed by Nike's conduct during a worker management standoff at a factory in Mexico. Nova said workers at the Modemex factory in Atlitico, Mexico, were permitted to form an independent union because of Nike's pressure on management.

"There is no doubt in my mind that this would not have happened without the intervention of Nike and Reebok," Nova said.

John Liebhardt is the higher education editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at johnliebhardt@dailymerald.com.

Investigation

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jacker Mohamed Atta's visits to Spain in January and July. Atta spent several days in a resort town south of Barcelona and was suspected of meeting with Islamic extremists.

Atta also met in Spain with a Tunisian man now in Spanish custody who is believed to have been sent from Afghanistan to supervise Osama bin Laden's terrorist operations in Europe, Spanish authorities said.

Ashcroft told reporters Sunday that a crop-dusting plot to disperse toxic substances on U.S. targets might have been averted by grounding the planes and alerting commercial sprayers to safeguard their equipment.

"We felt that there was some pretty serious information — the president, I think related this the other night — that there had been very significant interest (by terror-

ists) expressed in crop dusting," Ashcroft told reporters. "We took steps to alert the industry."

The FBI warned last Thursday that another terrorist attack may occur in the United States or overseas "over the next several days" and that the public and law enforcement officials should remain on the "highest alert" for suspicious activity.

Although several days have now passed, the warning remains in place, an FBI official said Monday.

The FBI is also looking for a pilot, believed to be Saudi Arabian, who in August bought two small planes at an airport near Fort Campbell, Ky., where the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment is stationed, officials said. The 160th is expected to play a key role in any Special Forces campaign to locate Taliban and al-Qaida leaders.

— Knight Ridder correspondent Kevin Murphy contributed to this report

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