

THE TELL-TALE EAR

A sound investment.

BY ALEX SHVARTSMAN

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: Telltale Marketing Employees mailing list
Subject: Misdirected broadcast

We seem to be having an equipment malfunction. I can hear bits broadcast from the Grand Cayman Casino and Erectile Dysfunction marketing campaigns while at the office. Somebody get on top of this.

James Finch

PS It's a little annoying on repeat. At least now we know how the recipients feel. Haha.

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: IT@telltalemarketing.com
Subject: Leak?

Apparently only I can hear the ads, not the whole company. They're playing on a loop and driving me up the wall. Whose bright idea was this? The stuff is supposed to be broadcast in the streets, not in my office. Get it fixed. Pronto.

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: IT@telltalemarketing.com
Subject: RE: Leak?

What do you mean you can't figure it out? I'm telling you, I hear our commercials. ALL THE TIME. I even hear them at home now; can't get a good night's rest. Somebody must be doing this maliciously, and when I figure out who, heads are going to roll.

Do whatever it is you do to make this stop. Come on people, what am I paying you for?

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: drseannguyen@ntkmetical.com
Subject: Appointment

Dear Dr Nguyen,
 I run Telltale Marketing, the company that produces the hypersonic sound commercials. Over the past several days I've been hearing our ads, at increasing frequency and volume.

At first I resisted the suggestion that this might be a psychological issue, but my IT people are swearing up and down that the problem isn't technical in nature, so I'm beginning to worry. May I come in for an evaluation at your earliest convenience?

Sincerely,
 James Finch

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: drseannguyen@ntkmetical.com
Subject: RE: Appointment
 I'm sorry to hear that you aren't able to fit me



in. Also, I appreciate your feedback about the hypersonic ads, but I assure you that your assertion about us breaking the law is entirely false. We broadcast them only in public spaces and only between the hours of 8 a.m. and 11 p.m., in accordance with FCC regulations. It's just like playing an advertisement on a radio or posting up a billboard.

This is absolutely not an invasion of privacy. We get a bum rap in all the other media, but only because they're jealous. A technology that beams sound directly into people's ears is far more effective than their outdated methods. It's much easier to tune out ads on TV and radio than to ignore our product, and the advertisers know it.

Also, I completely agree, broadcasting the pornographic website commercials where young children can hear them is completely inappropriate. We don't do that. It's those upstarts at Electronic EAR. They have no class.

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: SandraFinch@ufopub.com
Subject: Tonight

Finally found a shrink who'll see me. Going to her office after work, so don't wait with dinner.

I can't believe it was so hard to find a doctor. As soon as they learn who I am, they want nothing to do with me. One even went as far as to call me a spammer and say that I deserve this. Didn't they take some sort of an oath to help people? Geez.

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From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: legal@telltalemarketing.com
Subject: Exposure

I've been seeing a psychologist twice a week about my hearing-the-ads problem, but it's only getting worse. The noise is loud and incessant. I haven't had a decent night of sleep in weeks. Dr Harris says that it's all in my head, my guilty subconscious torturing me over "forcing your ads on people who don't want to hear them". According to Dr Harris I might only get better if I admit to some of the shadier stuff that the company has done, to get it off my chest. It's nuts, I know. I dismissed the idea initially, but I may literally be losing my mind. I can't stand it any more and am willing to try anything.

If I go through with this, how bad is it going to be, for me or for the company?

From: ceo@telltalemarketing.com
To: SandraFinch@ufopub.com.com
Subject: Update

The minimum security facility they're holding me in isn't so bad. Food is tolerable, and the other inmates are white-collar types, mostly from the financial sector. I even get to use the computer for 15 minutes a day.

But the most important thing is: it worked. I told them about beaming ads into people's homes, advertising knock-off pills that weren't approved by the FDA, and the bribes we paid to make the regulators look the other way. And once I admitted these things, the cursed noise in my head finally stopped.

I may be in here for a couple of years, but I tell you, it was worth it.

From: AgentWellsley@fbi.gov
To: Director.ConsumerFraudDivision@fbi.gov
Subject: Finch

It worked like a charm.

After getting blasted with a taste of his own medicine for a couple of weeks straight, Finch sang like a canary (pardon the pun). He confessed to some stuff we didn't even know about. My team is disassembling the broadcast equipment as we speak. We're going to be moving Operation Poe on to our next target tomorrow.

Tell agent Harris to expect a call from the president of Electronic EAR some time soon. ■

Alex Shvartsman is a writer and game designer from Brooklyn, New York. Read more of his fiction at www.alexshvartsman.com.

JACEY