

And God created dispatchers...

The angel walked in and found the Lord walking around in a small circle and muttering to himself.

"What are you working on now lord?' he asked.

"Well I finished creating a peace officer, now I'm working on a dispatcher"

Since the angel could see nothing in the room, he asked God to tell him about it.

"It's somewhat like the police officer model, it has 5 hands-one for answering the phone, two for typing, one for answering the radio, and one for grabbing a cup of coffee. The arms had to be placed fairly carefully since all the tasks a dispatcher does, have to be done simultaneously. The digestive system is a little complicated, since it runs on coffee, and food that can be delivered, but seldom needs to get up for the rest room. I made the skin tempered duralite covered with Teflon. A dispatcher's hide has to be tough enough to withstand darts from cranky officers, jabs from citizens, and lack of attention by administration, but not show any signs of wear and tear. Unlike a police officer it only needs one pair of eyes, so that left extra room for the ears. There are five sets of ears, one set for the telephone, one for the main radio, two for the other radios it has to monitor, and one to hear everything else going on around it. They fit all right on the head, since it had to be extra large for the brain. The brain has to be enormous so it can remember a full set of 10 codes, phonetic alphabet, at least two hundred different voices, the entire contents of three different SOP manuals, two Teletype manuals, and an NCIC code book. Of course I left enough extra space for it to learn the individual quirks of every different SGT., LT., Shift commander, fire chief, and other supervisor, and the ability to keep them all straight. There also has to be room for it to learn which situations need an officer and which don't, and also the ability to determine in less than two minutes what to do for any given event. There is a built in condenser so it can take an hour long explanation, put it into 30 seconds worth of radio transmission, but still get the whole story across.

Those switches on the front are for the emotions. It has to be able to talk to a mother whose child has just died without pain, a rape victim with empathy, a suicidal person with calmness and reassurance, and abusive drunk without getting angry. When one of the officers yells for help, it can't panic, and when someone doesn't make it, the dispatcher's heart mustn't break. The little soft spot just to the left of the emotion switch is for abandoned animals, frightened children, and little old ladies who are lonely and just want to talk to someone for a few minutes. The dispatcher has to care very much for the officers and firefighters it serves, without getting personally involved with any of them, so I added another switch for that. Plus of course, the dispatcher can't have any of its own issues to worry about while it is on duty, so that last switch turns those off. The patience switch is turned up to high all the time on the CTO model, and I've added an extra fuse to those to those to handle the overload.

A dispatcher has to be able to function efficiently under less than good physical conditions, and be flexible enough to withstand whatever whim the administration comes up with, while still retaining its general shape and form. That warm fuzzy shoulder is, there for officers to use when they gripe, other dispatchers when they hurt, and for those who are shell shocked by a horrible call and just need someone to be there. The voice gave me a little trouble, it has to be clear and easy to understand, calm and even when everyone else is screaming, but still able to convey empathy and caring while remaining totally professional.

It runs for a full 12 hours on very little sleep, requires almost no days off, and gets paid less than an executive secretary.

"The dispatcher sounds wonderful lord", said the angel, "Where is this amazing creation?"

"Well you see," answered the supreme being "Dispatchers are invisible unless they make a mistake. So it's practically impossible to tell when they are run down, worn out or in need of repair. Now that I've created them, I can't see the original model to make enough of them to go around."