



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Efficiently Handling Transfers during Phone Calls Is Critical in Driving Wireless Customer Care Performance

T-Mobile Ranks Highest in Wireless Customer Care

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif: 4 February 2009 — On average, wireless carriers that quickly and seamlessly transfer their customers from automated systems to live service representatives during service calls outperform carriers that handle the process less efficiently, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Wireless Customer Care Performance StudySM—Volume 1 released today.

Now in its seventh year, the semi-annual study provides a [detailed report](#) card on how well wireless providers service their customers in three point-of-contact methods: telephone calls with a service representative and/or automated response system (ARS); visits to a retail wireless store; and on the Web. Within each contact method, the study measures satisfaction and processing issues such as problem-resolution efficiency and hold-time duration.

The study finds that 64 percent of customer care contacts are handled through the telephone channel. More than one-half of customers who make a phone call for service are initially prompted by an automated response system and then transferred to a live service representative. Wireless customers who experience this process are less satisfied, on average, than customers who are able to resolve their problem by using only the automated response system or who are directly connected to a service representative.

“As customers are offered increasingly complex phones and service plan options, they tend to rely more on their wireless carrier for support and advice,” said Kirk Parsons, senior director of wireless services at J.D. Power and Associates. “In order to improve or maintain satisfaction levels, carriers should ensure that their automated systems can either quickly answer customer questions or efficiently identify those users who need to speak directly with a representative based on the type of problem they are trying to resolve.”

Customer satisfaction with the time it takes to resolve an issue can vary depending on the problem, according to the study. For example, those customers experiencing billing errors—specifically, incorrect charges—report significantly lower satisfaction ratings with regard to the length of time it takes to resolve the problem compared with all other reasons for contacting customer care. Conversely, problems related to service and equipment receive the highest overall satisfaction scores when it comes to timely resolution.

T-Mobile ranks highest in wireless customer care performance with an index score of 755 on a 1,000-point scale, followed by Verizon Wireless (749) and Alltel (744). In addition to demonstrating strong performance in transferring customers from an automated response system to a live service representative, T-Mobile also performs particularly well in the walk-in and online methods of customer service.

“Much of T-Mobile’s success can be attributed to its ability to reach the customer very quickly,” said Parsons. “More than one-third of T-Mobile subscribers report waiting less than two minutes on hold to speak with a representative. T-Mobile has proved successful when it comes to being prompt, courteous and efficient at identifying and resolving problems in the eyes of its customers.”

The study also finds several key wireless customer care patterns:

- Customers who visit the carrier’s retail store for service inquiries report waiting an average of seven minutes before speaking with a representative and spend about 25 minutes overall in the store. T-Mobile customers report spending less than 19 minutes in stores to resolve their issues.
- Fifty-three percent of wireless customers have contacted the customer care service center for assistance within the past year, marking a six percentage point increase from the same time period in 2008. Additionally, among customers who contacted the service department, 40 percent had an inquiry related to service or equipment, and 39 percent had a billing-related service inquiry.
- The current national economic climate is also affecting the nature of wireless subscriber contacts, as the percentage of contacts regarding the cost of services and products has risen from 21 percent in the 2008 [Volume 2](#) study to 27 percent in the 2009 Volume 1 study.

The 2009 Wireless Customer Care Performance Study—Volume 1 is based on responses from more than 13,000 wireless customers who contacted their carrier’s customer care department within the past year. The study was fielded July through December 2008.

For more information, to read an [article](#), or view [wireless customer care ratings](#), please visit [JDPower.com](#).

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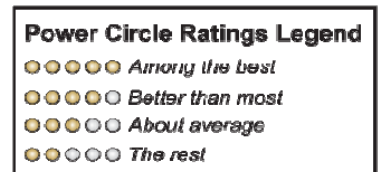
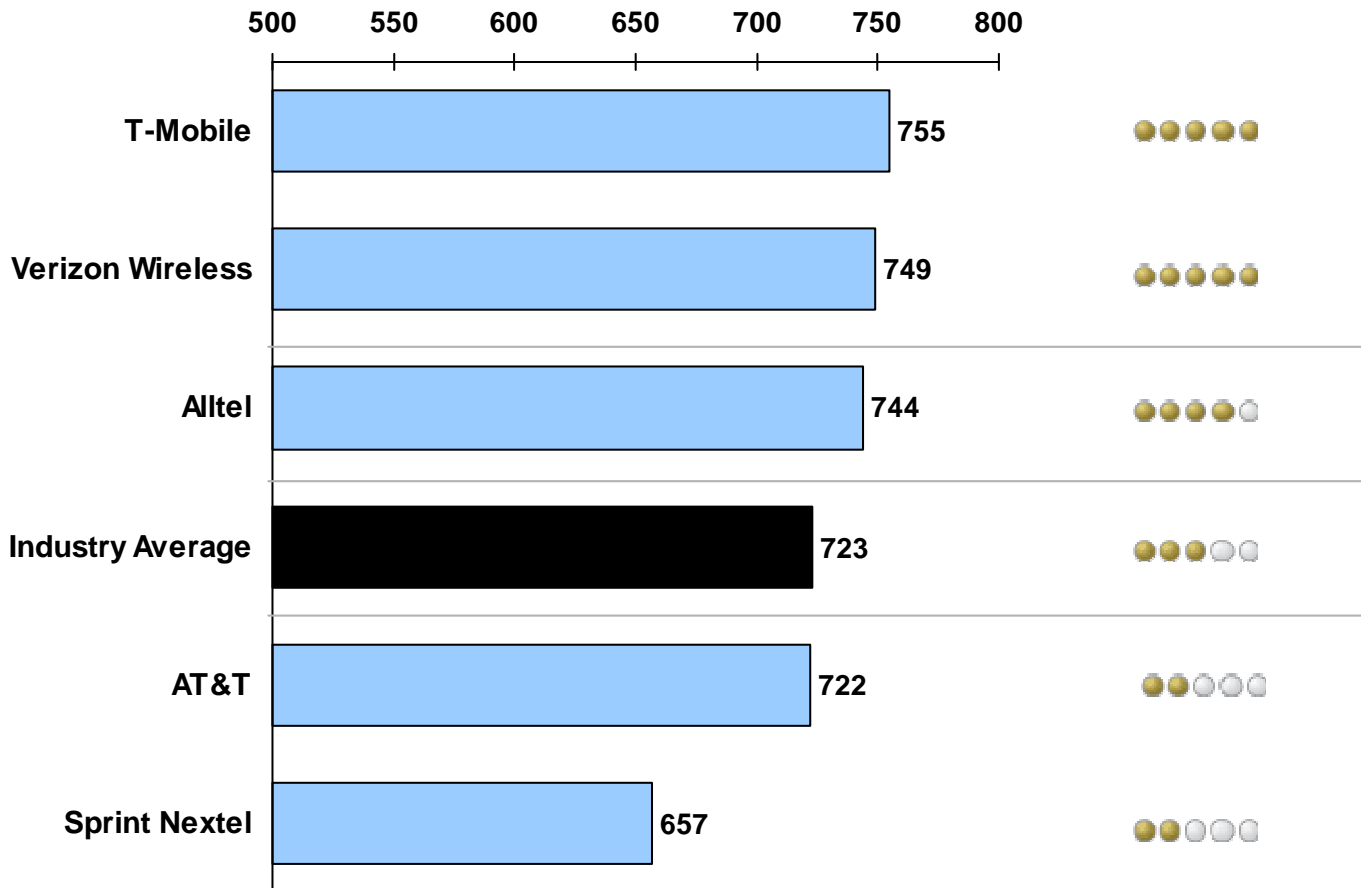
NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Wireless Customer Care Performance StudySM—Volume 1

Overall Customer Care Index Rankings

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

JDPower.com
Power Circle RatingsTM
for consumers:



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2009 Wireless Customer Care Performance StudySM—Volume 1

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