



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Interaction with Agents May Significantly Elevate Satisfaction with the Wireless Customer Care Experience

T-Mobile Ranks Highest in Wireless Customer Care Performance for Second Consecutive Time

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif: 3 February 2011 — Customer service issues that are personally handled by a service representative, either over the phone or at a retail store, are significantly more satisfying to customers than are automated response interactions, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Wireless Customer Care Performance StudySM—Volume 1 released today.

Now in its ninth year, the semiannual study provides a detailed report card on how well wireless carriers service their customers in three contact methods: telephone calls with customer service representatives (CSR) and/or automated response systems (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.

Overall, among customers who speak with a service representative without going through an automated response system, the customer care index score averages 774 on a 1,000-point scale, well above the industry average score of 739. Among customers who use other methods of contact, satisfaction is considerably lower:

Overall Customer Care Index Scores Based on Contact Method *(on a 1,000-point scale)*

Contact method	Index score
Telephone call with customer service representative	774
Industry average	739
Retail store	755
Automated response system*	704
Web-based contact	684

*Includes ARS/CSR and ARS only channels

The study finds that one of the main factors contributing to this performance disparity is the quality of the response provided. A service representative—either over the phone or in person—can answer both initial and follow-up questions from customers and clarify answers. This kind of flexibility is very limited in both ARS and Web-based contacts.

“As more companies encourage customers to contact them on the Web to save operating costs, they run the risk of increased customer churn if the number of contacts needed to resolve a complaint or issue rises,” said Kirk Parsons, senior director of wireless services at J.D. Power and Associates. “Switching intent is four times as high among those who rate their wireless carrier below average in customer care, so the challenge for wireless carriers is to offer an easy and efficient customer care transaction experience.”

The majority (51%) of telephone contacts are resolved primarily via a service representative. The study also finds that customers are most satisfied with their experience when they can reach a customer service representative quickly and spend only a brief period of time using automated systems to resolve their problem.

“While customers tend to be more satisfied when they can reach a service representative quickly, heavy reliance on live representatives is much more costly for wireless carriers,” said Parsons. “If wireless carriers can drive improvements in satisfaction with non-human interaction channels, overall customer care performance scores will improve dramatically by making the process more intuitive and efficient, and likely so in a much more cost-effective manner.”

T-Mobile ranks highest in [wireless customer care performance](#) for a second consecutive time with an overall score of 758. T-Mobile performs particularly well in phone contacts that originate in the ARS channel and are then transferred to a live service representative, and through phone calls made directly to a CSR. Verizon Wireless follows in the overall rankings with a score of 743 and performs well among customers who contact their service representative directly and among customers who contact their carrier online.

The study also finds several key wireless customer care patterns:

- Overall, 36 percent of wireless customers contact their carrier due to service and equipment-related issues, while 32 percent contact for general billing issues; 28 percent for incorrect charges; 23 percent for call quality; and 21 percent for price or cost.
- Wireless customers who indicate that they have had a positive care experience are more loyal and are, therefore, less likely to switch carriers in the future, on average. Among customers who indicate they “definitely will not switch” carriers in the next 12 months, customer care index scores average 810, compared with just 566 among those who say they “definitely will switch”—a difference of 244 points.
- Although the vast majority (88%) of customers get through to their carrier on their first try, 12% of customers are misdirected or put on hold for too long and must make more than one contact. The average wireless customer spends 6.24 minutes on hold when trying to reach their carrier via phone—a substantial increase from 5.27 minutes just six months ago.

The 2011 Wireless Customer Care Performance Study—Volume 1 is based on responses from 9,755 wireless customers who contacted their carrier’s customer care department within the past six months. The study was fielded from July through December 2010.

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

About J.D. Power and Associates

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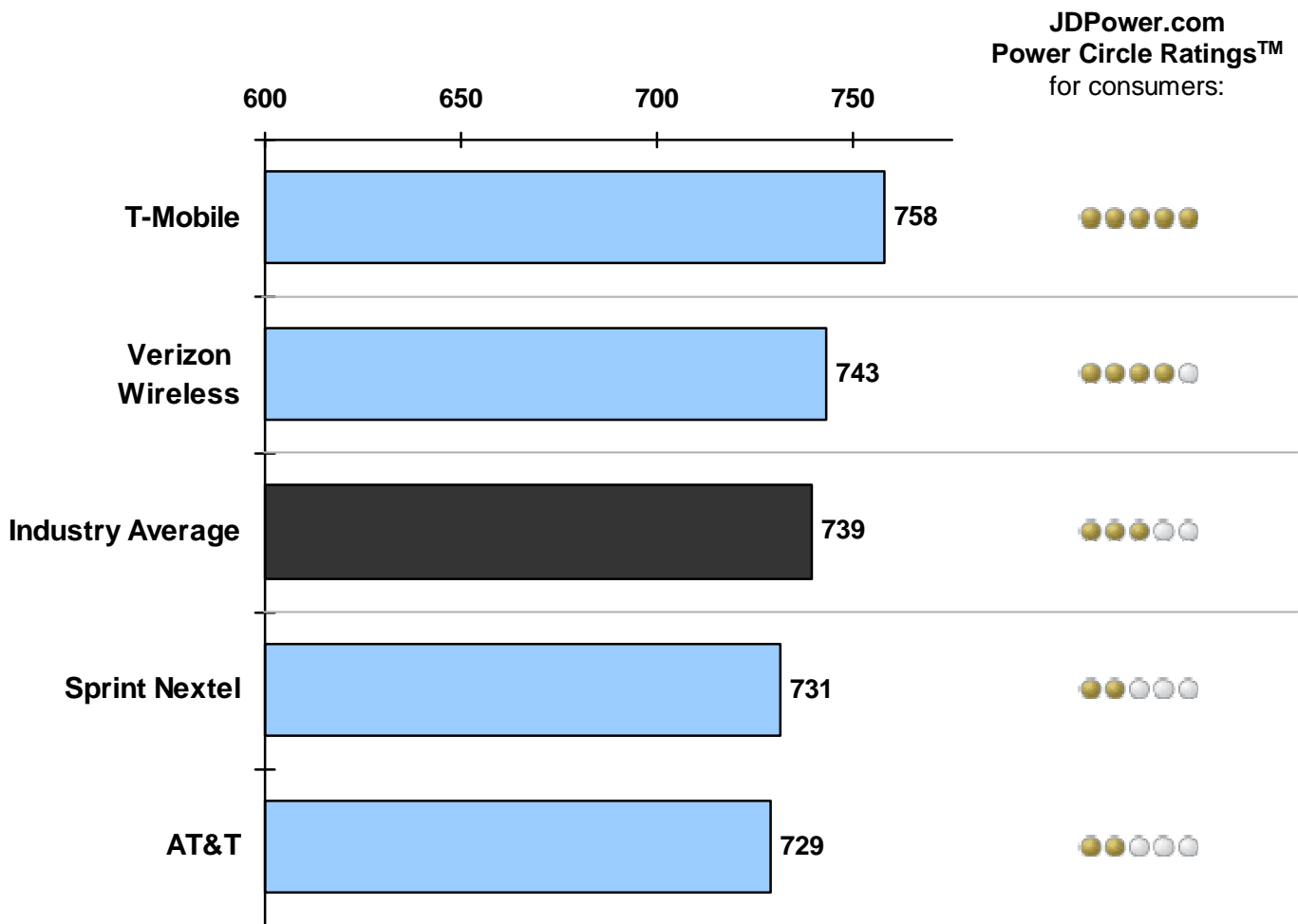
NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates

2011 U.S. Wireless Customer Care Performance StudySM— Volume 1

Overall Customer Care Index Rankings

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2011 U.S. Wireless Customer Care Performance StudySM—Volume 1

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