

# Creating Simply the Best Customer Service at T-Mobile USA

*The Role of Rewards and Recognition*



## The Challenge

Too many wireless carriers focus more on generating a large customer base than they do on providing outstanding customer service – and have earned poor reputations as a result.

T-Mobile is different. As one of the fastest-growing wireless service providers, with more than 20 million customers nationwide, T-Mobile promises its customers will Get More® -- more minutes, more features and more service.

In order to deliver on the “service” component of its promise, the company has implemented an extensive and multi-faceted program comprised of a series of equally important, complementary components, including a clear and inspiring vision; hiring; training; alignment of company, departmental and individual goals; world-class facilities; communications; and reward and recognition, among other elements. **This case study provides a detailed glimpse into the contributing role of T-Mobile’s Rewards and Recognition program within Customer Service, which has helped to ensure that T-Mobile’s customer service professionals understand the implied promise of Get More, and are able to deliver on it.**

*“T-Mobile’s Rewards and Recognition program has helped to ensure that T-Mobile’s customer service professionals understand the implied promise of Get More, and are able to deliver on it.”*

Do More  Get More!

## The Plan

The decision to incorporate rewards and recognition into T-Mobile’s customer-service improvement initiative began with research.

The company conducted a thorough analysis of every touch point of its entire customer service operation – including more than 11,000 customer service professionals at 17 call centers around the country. This included analysis of all of the areas and issues that impact customer service, such as recruiting, hiring and training, turnover and attrition rates, employee communications, employee incentives, and recognition and customer service metrics. T-Mobile extensively surveyed and conducted focus groups with employees at all levels to assess their thoughts and beliefs about customer service, and their roles in delivering a world-class service experience. The company also conducted a range of customer surveys and competitive research.



Team Member Brochure



Key Performance Indicators

This analysis formed the basis for a new, nationwide customer service program called *Do More Get More* – a direct extension of T-Mobile’s wildly popular *Get More* brand promise.

In order for this effort to truly enhance T-Mobile’s customer service across the board, every element of the program had to be executed flawlessly. As part of this effort, T-Mobile rigorously evaluated the demographics and psychographics of T-Mobile’s 11,000 customer service professionals to devise an ideal mix of incentive options and activities to best motivate and reward this diverse group.

## Creating Simply the Best Customer Service at T-Mobile USA

In addition, T-Mobile put into place a centralized awards administration system, which it determined would enhance the company's ability to control the numerous component parts of the program, maximize its cost benefits and efficiencies, enable managers to capture and share best practices, and facilitate communications at all levels of the organization.

T-Mobile selected Marketing Innovators to administer the centralized system because of its reputation as a respected incentive/motivation company, and its extensive background in large-scale initiatives.



Program Web site

*Do More Get More* was launched through an array of events that would have done Broadway proud, including call center events, in-center TV monitors, e-mail flashes, team meetings, and banquets. Full communication materials support the program, including brochures, posters and an Intranet site. Further, T-Mobile reinforces the program on an ongoing basis at such high-profile company events as "T-Mobile All Access" and local events such as the "T-Mobile Birthday Bash with Catherine Zeta-Jones."

Rewards were earned using a point system that enabled employees to accrue points based on the achievement of specific goals and performance results. The *Do More Get More* program's reward portfolio is massive, ranging from gift certificates representing more than 100 major retailers to entertainment and travel options designed to

reflect the preferences of T-Mobile's customer-service employees.

The program comprises three distinct levels: **Customer Pacesetter**, **Customer Pro** and **Customer Champion**.

The Customer Pacesetter level enables employees to earn monthly *Do More Get More* points based on meeting or exceeding their monthly target metrics. Each earned point is worth \$1 toward a variety of merchant gift certificates.

The Customer Pro level recognizes the top 10 percent of each eligibility group within each call center with an annual off-site *Do More Get More* banquet. Earners of this award are each invited to bring a guest.

Finally, the Customer Champion level recognizes the top one percent of each eligibility group nationally with an annual *Do More Get More* travel award. This award includes travel for the winner and a guest; in 2005, the destination was San Diego for four days and three nights.

T-Mobile gauges the impact of its program through an ongoing series of audits, focus groups and weekly conference calls to stay on track and improve the program.

### The Results

Since the launch of *Do More Get More*, T-Mobile has been awarded "Highest Ranked Wireless Customer Care Performance" by J.D. Power and Associates for three years in a row (2004 - 2006). T-Mobile achieved this by a significant margin over its nearest competitor, delivering on its promise of "More Service." Significant performance metrics such as quality, accuracy, and productivity were greatly improved. Improvements in employee statistics included decreased attrition and decreased absenteeism.

According to T-Mobile, "*Do More Get More* has truly contributed to taking our customer service professionals to another level. Among the many resources and initiatives that were essential for the program to work, we needed an experienced partner that could build and administer the incentive portion of our program flawlessly, enabling T-Mobile to focus on delivering a world-class customer service experience. Marketing Innovators provided precisely that kind of service and counsel."



Program Awareness Posters