



# Sprint Puts the Accent on Customer Care

The American telecommunications company contracted Teleperformance USA to reduce both hold times for its thousands of subscribers and its churn rate.

- *Sprint Nextel Corporation* is one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world.
- With 55 million subscribers, *Sprint Nextel* operates the third largest wireless telecommunications network in the United States, behind Verizon Wireless and AT&T. Sprint makes up a portion of the Internet backbone and also operates the second largest wireless broadband network in the United States.
- *Sprint Nextel* offers a comprehensive range of wireless and wireline communications services, bringing the freedom of mobility to consumers.



### **The Customer Is Always Right**

In 2003 Sprint outsourced its customer care operations to Teleperformance USA. The Telco's priorities were to reduce the time consumers are on hold before they speak to a phone representative and to reduce the billing errors that often lead to customers' canceling their subscriptions. Sprint also wanted to lower its high churn rate.

### **The Ends Justify the Means**

The Sprint Care project was launched with two sites, Salt Lake City and Pocatello. The customer relationship operations outsourcing project has grown to 12 Care sites and one Telesales Operation—over 5,000 phone reps, with a support team of approximately 500 people—located in the United States, in Canada, and in the Philippines. 2.5 million customer contacts are handled monthly on the Sprint account. Teleperformance USA manages Sprint's end-user customer service experience, in other words general care, billing, and collections/payment arrangements. Staff also service multiple other lines of business—business care, activations, telesales, and technical support.

### **Process Expertise**

To meet Sprint's customer satisfaction requirements, Teleperformance

USA recruits new agents on a non-stop basis—in the past four months, 2,000 phone reps have been hired for four of the 13 Sprint sites. The recruiting process includes extensive advertising, referral programs, and job fairs. To be hired, each candidate must pass basic typing tests and a customer service skills assessment, and must undergo intensive interviews. Training for consumer customer service is 160 hours (four weeks) plus 80 hours in a Learning Lab environment, led by phone reps' trainers and learning lab supervisors. In lab, the support ratio is one supervisor for five phone representatives. Reps may also attend an additional training session of one week for business care and technical support.

### **Coaching**

Teleperformance USA additionally understood that achievement

of the customer satisfaction objectives also depended on phone reps' loyalty. Its aim in 2007 was therefore to increase the agent retention rate and to stabilize the attrition rate at around ten percent. With this in mind, managers adopted the TOPS approach (see the Epson case study) at all sites in the US—this involves performance management sessions, connections meetings, the Apple of Our Eye program, the Service From the Heart program, a focus on agent behaviors and customer perception, and so on.

### **Being the Best**

Teleperformance USA was awarded the Sprint Supplier of the Year award for three years running. Its aim now is to continuously improve monthly results in order to become Sprint's number one service provider in terms of customer satisfaction.