

Delivering what matters most

In the eyes of the customer, suppliers are only as good as their last transaction. That's why TELUS has made putting customers first its top corporate priority.

The customer experience defines how customers perceive their touchpoints with a company. It is widely recognised as a key measure of a firm's success, is critical to securing long-term loyalty, and essential in encouraging customers to recommend a company to others, or increasing their likelihood to repurchase.

At TELUS, we're listening to our wholesale customers. We know that they expect agility, flexibility and reliability from their wholesale partners; that they need quick and easy access to products and services, enabling them to innovate in their markets; backed by support based on clear channels of communication and strong personal relationships.

And that's why TELUS aims to provide the best client experience in the telecoms industry. We've implemented a number of key initiatives to deliver on this vision and, within the next few years, our objective is to become the most recommended telecoms company by our customers in the markets we serve.

Customer experience expectations

Many companies aim to differentiate themselves by providing a superior customer experience. But there is plenty of empirical evidence to suggest that very few actually achieve this goal. Service providers in the communications sector are not performing well, compared to other industries, in the area of customer experience. Wireless, TV and Internet service providers all ranked poorly on Forrester's Customer Experience Index*, below airlines, banks and credit card providers.

According to Forrester, the relationship between customer experience and loyalty metrics, including the likelihood to recommend or consider another purchase, has proven so strong that customer experience should be first on the list of corporate priorities for any company. A good experience impacts the customer's behaviour in three ways: they are more willing to consider another purchase; they are less likely to switch their business to a competitor; and they are more likely to make a favourable recommendation.

In the wholesale telecoms market, Ovum conducts a regular qualitative Wholesale Customer Survey** to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors important to customers and how their priorities change over time. Their analysis found that a significant gap exists between suppliers' delivery and customers' expectations against key criteria such as quality, lead times, and product and service features. It warned that these trends undermine the wholesale model, particularly for access, making it increasingly difficult for buyers to differentiate and compete in their own markets and resulting in missed opportunity for suppliers.

Defining an exceptional customer experience

Customers judge their experience of a supplier on three levels: how well a supplier's products and services meet their needs;

how easy it is to do business with; and how enjoyable it is to do business with.

TELUS has prioritised a customer experience programme comprised of several strategic customer-centric initiatives designed to ensure we consistently deliver exceptional customer experiences. This focus provides us with a complete picture of what the customer experience actually entails, based on the influence of every employee and external partner on every customer interaction.

There is growing momentum throughout the organisation to put customers first in our culture, our investment priorities and our operational decision-making. This collective commitment to providing an exceptional customer experience represents 50% of our corporate scorecard. The scorecard measures our performance in three essential areas: Customers First and striving for leadership in Likelihood to Recommend, profitable growth and efficiency, and the engagement of the TELUS team.

"There is growing momentum throughout the organisation to put customers first."

Dean Reid, director, customer marketing, TELUS Partner Solutions

A 'customers first' commitment

To help us understand what matters most to our customers, our market intelligence team has developed the Likelihood to Recommend (L2R) framework. As part of this, we survey both our own customers and those of our competitors twice a year, with the results used to shape both our customer experience programme and our wider corporate strategy.

For our wholesale business, TELUS Partner Solutions, the consumer-centric 'Likelihood to Recommend' has been modified to 'Likelihood to Repurchase'. This is in recognition of the fact that wholesale customers base their next purchase decision on their last interaction with a carrier, making customer experience ever more critical to sustaining and growing our business.

A leadership steering team in TELUS Partner Solutions oversees a variety of customer experience initiatives that fall under three broad categories: people, processes and systems. Cross-functional teams from Customer Service, Sales and Marketing then develop metrics to track and report progress, identify areas of opportunity to improve, and work with other TELUS teams to achieve the 'Likelihood to Repurchase' goals. Having identified a specific area to improve, the team then looks at root causes, develops an action plan and implements the solution – all within a tight timeframe.

*The Customer Experience Index, 2012, Forrester Research, Inc., January 23, 2012 **Wholesale Customer Survey 2011, Ovum, September 30, 2011

Ultimately, our customer experience programme enables us to continue to focus on solutions, optimising supply chains, delivering on time what we say we are going to deliver and building on targeted partnerships. We also focus on proactive communications with our customers and regular feedback channels. This is critical to engendering lasting relationships.

Empowering people

Since the beginning of 2012, most of our team members have focussed a minimum 50% of their own annual performance objectives on supporting the customer experience. The aim is to drive accountability and, moving forward, support every member of the TELUS team in understanding their role in achieving our goal of becoming the most recommended company across our markets.

The Customers First Champions (CFC) programme is one of several corporate initiatives in which Partner Solutions participates. It is a recognition programme for customer-facing TELUS team members who go above and beyond in delivering an exceptional experience. This programme enables us to highlight and celebrate customer experience wins, and share examples of what exceptional looks like within our organisation.

In addition, we run 'own.it' sessions – a process improvement methodology. These small focus groups are formed of frontline team members, who undertake brainstorming activities targeting specific customer 'pain points' to help drive rapid resolution through 90-day initiatives. 'own.it' sessions have so far engaged more than 750 team members and have led to the successful implementation of process improvements in support of strengthening our clients' likelihood to recommend our products and services.

With 'own.it' targets firmly embedded across the organisation, results are tracked at the corporate level and we can see that process improvements are making a real difference for team member engagement and across our business. 'own.it' has also raised our international profile, having been recognised at the Global Process Excellence Awards for the past two years.

Improving processes

TELUS is also committed to driving improvements in processes and systems. We established our Process Improvement Centre of Excellence (PICOE) in 2009, and have since given it a corporate-wide mandate. We also take a holistic approach to process excellence, employing various methodologies such as Lean Six Sigma, and continue to strengthen our change management and project management capabilities.

Within TELUS Partner Solutions specifically, there have been many process-focussed activities to have benefited wholesale partners. With Firm Order Commit and Due Date Met, for example, we are working to ensure that we deliver when we say we will deliver, for every order. This includes ensuring equipment is available, schedules are accurate, and that completion of the order is achieved as promised.

Meanwhile, a Direct to Firm process has recently been introduced that reduces the average wholesale order interval on fibre solutions where construction is involved. In procurement, we are driving improvements in terms of equipment visibility, availability and forecasting. We are also focussing our efforts in areas such as on-boarding new customers, products and internal resources.

TELUS Partner Solutions also conducts a Customer Value Measurement (CVM) survey once a year (Figure 1). The CVM survey poses various questions that help measure our customers' loyalty and how they feel about the quality of our services and products. It allows us to draw comparisons between how we are performing against other telcos, and to identify what we are doing well and where we need to focus and improve. A transactional survey is also being piloted, focussed on gathering customer feedback immediately after the delivery of complex services, while health card surveys report regularly on all operational customer touchpoints with TELUS, enabling us to quickly identify issues that arise and implement further actions to realise rapid improvements.



At TELUS, we put YOU first

Figure 1: 2012 Customer Value Measure (CVM) Scorecard

Source: Ipsos for TELUS

Streamlining systems

Our brand promise, the future is friendly®, is more than a tagline – it's the cornerstone of everything we do. It encompasses both what we do (future) and how we do it (friendly). Fulfilling our brand promise means taking complex technology and making it simple and relevant for our team members and our customers. This approach is reflected in the way we develop our support systems.

TELUS Service Request (TSR) for example, is a web-based tool that has made it easy for our customers to manage high volume transactions with us, for example, to manage billing disputes from logging through to resolution. There are currently 75 wholesale customers and 235 wholesale users benefitting from TSR on a daily basis. In the next year, this will be expanded to include order management and contract management.

Similarly, our customer-facing pricing tool provides customers with self-serve access, enabling them to obtain faster quotes. Several customers have used our API to integrate with their own pricing tools to further streamline the end-to-end process. We are seeing a steady increase in usage, with just over half of our wholesale customer base leveraging the self-serve capabilities.

Delivering demonstrable results


Market and brand reputation have quickly risen up the list of decision-making criteria in recent years, because wholesale buyers demand product and service excellence to enable them to differentiate, innovate and compete effectively in increasingly competitive markets.

We are making tremendous progress as we listen to and work directly with our most important partners – our customers. Through the TELUS customer experience programme and TELUS Partner Solutions' CFC, we are empowering our staff with the skills and resources necessary for fostering authentic partnerships with customers, as well as ensuring Client Service Representatives and Assurance technicians consistently treat client issues and requests promptly and professionally.

As shown in Figure 1, steady yet significant gains have been made over the last few years in several key areas, including

customer service, assurance, sales rep performance, product quality and billing. Our progress has been such that 87% of TELUS Partner Solutions customers surveyed said they were likely to repurchase from TELUS, up from 72% the previous year. Further highlights include our Deliver as Promised metrics. Due Dates Met now stands at 95%, which has resulted in fewer escalations, while Reduction in Cycle time on newer complex services has almost been halved.

The interdependent nature of the wholesale value chain means the majority of purchasing decisions are based on buyers' past experience and suppliers' market reputation. At TELUS, we do what we say we will do, when we say we will do it, for the price we said we'd do it for. We also make it hassle-free for customers to get, and stay, connected to their world. Above all, we are recognised for our dependability, trustworthiness and being easy to do business with.

As stated in our 'Customers First Declaration': "Our employees are deeply motivated to consistently delight our customers. We know that getting better means making sure we're listening to our customers. That's why we're embracing new ideas that will make their experience better. We're on a journey to build on customer trust by being clear, helpful and dependable. In other words, at TELUS, we put customers first." 



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