



FOR MORE INFORMATION
Denise DiMeglio 610-228-2102
denise@gregoryfca.com

Xfinity Mobile Takes Customer Satisfaction Lead Among Wireless Carriers, While Samsung Dominates the Smartphone Market, ACSI Data Show

ANN ARBOR, Mich., (May 18, 2021) – The onset of COVID-19 placed high demands on the wireless phone service industry as cell phones and wireless networks became the lifeline for people to stay connected to loved ones and the workplace. Amid this pressure, customer satisfaction with wireless service overall remains steady at a score of 74 (out of 100), according to the [American Customer Satisfaction Index \(ACSI®\) Wireless Phone Service and Cell Phone Study 2020-2021](#).

Mobile network operators (MNOs) are unchanged year over year with an ACSI score of 73, while full-service mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) decline for a second year, falling 2.7% to 73. Satisfaction with value MVNOs continues to slide as well, down 2.6%, yet still outpaces the other wireless categories with an ACSI score of 75. After a slight jump last year, customer satisfaction with cell phones inches back 1.3% to a score of 79.

“When you consider how much consumers relied on wireless this past year, the relative stability of the industry is a win,” said David VanAmburg, Managing Director at the ACSI. “Sure, customer satisfaction with value MVNOs and full-service MVNOs has subsided a bit, but not enough to create a stir. Where things start to get interesting, however, is the cell phone space. Let’s just say the iPhone is no longer the apple of the consumer’s eye.”

Samsung takes the cell phone crown from Apple and earns 5 highest model ratings

Samsung, unchanged at an ACSI score of 81, claims first place among cell phone manufacturers. Last year’s leader Apple falls 2% to 80, landing in a three-way tie for second with Lenovo’s Motorola (up 4%) and Google, which makes its industry debut. Meanwhile, LG slides 3% to 77. The group of smaller companies sit in last place, dropping 3% to 73.

Among brands, Samsung asserts its newfound dominance, nabbing the five highest model ratings. Samsung’s Galaxy Note10+, Galaxy S10+, and Galaxy S20+ tie for America’s favorite smartphone with ACSI scores of 85.

Samsung's Galaxy S20 and Galaxy A20 are next at 84 and 83, respectively. Five models earn ACSI scores of 82: Samsung's Galaxy S10 and Apple's iPhone 11 Pro, iPhone 11 Pro Max, iPhone X, and iPhone XS Max.

AT&T and Verizon usurp T-Mobile in MNO category

AT&T (up 1%) and Verizon (unchanged) share the top spot in the MNO category with ACSI scores of 74.

After leading all MNOs last year, T-Mobile, which completed its merger with Sprint in 2020, tumbles into second place, down 5% to 72. According to ACSI data, mergers usually negatively impact customer satisfaction. Given T-Mobile's sudden fall from grace, it appears we're now witnessing the implications of the carrier's union with a former MNO bottom dweller.

This leaves U.S. Cellular in last place, dropping 3% to a score of 69.

Verizon nabs best-in-class network quality again

On top of measuring customer satisfaction for mobile network operators, ACSI presents a unique rating of network quality based on customer evaluations of call quality (clarity and strength), call reliability (dropped calls), network coverage, and data speed.

Despite slipping 1%, Verizon stays in first place among MNOs with a network quality score of 79. AT&T remains second, unchanged at 77, followed by T-Mobile, which sinks 4% to 74. U.S. Cellular finishes last, dropping 3% to a score of 72.

Customers with plans ranging from \$501 to \$1,000 are most satisfied

As part of the ACSI survey, respondents are asked how much they spend each month for their wireless phone service. This information, combined with the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty data, indicates which customer segments would benefit most from an improved customer experience.

Per ACSI data, wireless companies provide the greatest satisfaction to customers who spend \$501 to \$1,000 per month. Customers who spend \$26 to \$50 per month are also quite satisfied and the most loyal.

The most dissatisfied customers spend \$251 to \$500 per month, while the least loyal customers spend more than \$1,000 per month.

Xfinity Mobile leads full-service MVNOs and all other carriers

Despite slipping 1%, Xfinity Mobile still leads full-service MVNOs with a customer satisfaction score of 78. Xfinity Mobile now also ranks first across all three wireless categories.

Two full-service MVNOs tie for second place at 75: Cricket Wireless (down 1%) and newcomer Spectrum Mobile. Metro by T-Mobile is next, unchanged at 74, followed by Boost Mobile, which slumps 4% to the bottom of the category with a score of 71.

Consumer Cellular tops value MVNOs but takes a massive tumble

Consumer Cellular stays in first place among value MVNOs with an ACSI score of 77, but its lead is dwindling after plummeting 7% year over year. With this decline, Consumer Cellular forfeits its title as the wireless customer satisfaction leader.

Straight Talk Wireless comes in second place again yet sinks 3% to 76. Total Wireless premieres in third place with an ACSI score of 75, tying Tracfone, which falls 1% year over year.

SafeLink Wireless is next, up 3% to 73, followed by two newcomers, Simple Mobile and Walmart Family Mobile, which debut at 71 and 69, respectively. Q Link Wireless rises 3% to 68, while Assurance Wireless makes its first appearance in the Index in last place with an ACSI score of 67.

The [ACSI Wireless Phone Service and Cell Phone Study 2020-2021](#) is based on interviews with 21,189 customers, chosen at random and contacted via email between April 1, 2020, and March 29, 2021. Follow the ACSI on [LinkedIn](#) and Twitter at [@theACSI](#).

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About the ACSI

The [American Customer Satisfaction Index](#) (ACSI®) has been a national economic indicator for 25 years. It measures and analyzes customer satisfaction with more than 400 companies in 46 industries and 10 economic sectors, including various services of federal and local government agencies. Reported on a scale of 0 to 100, scores are based on data from interviews with roughly 500,000 customers annually. For more information, visit www.theacsi.org.

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