



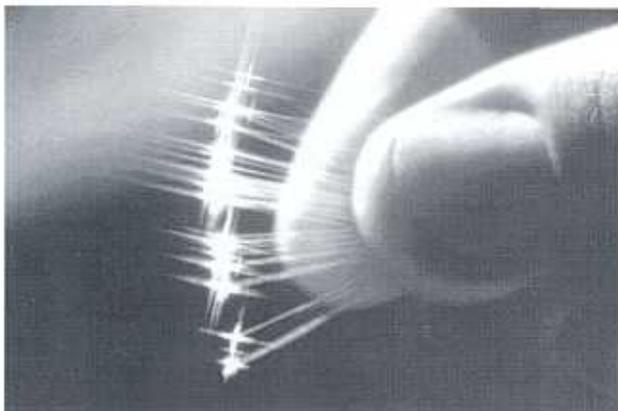
# Award Winner <sup>2000</sup>

## SPRINT National Consumer Organization Operations



In 1899, Cleyson L. Brown founded the Brown Telephone Company, which quickly became a viable alternative to Bell, rapidly launching to local markets in Kansas and beyond. Following the Depression years, the company reorganized as United Utilities, growing to become the second-largest non-Bell telephone company in America by the 1950s. By the mid-1980s the company announced its bold plan to enter the deregulated long distance market. Domestic long distance service officially launched in 1986 under the Sprint brand name, with the nation's first 100% digital, fiber-optic network as the centerpiece of the plan.

Today, Sprint is a global communications company – at the forefront of integrating long distance, local and wireless communications services and one of the largest carriers of Internet traffic. Sprint built and operates the United States' first nationwide all-digital, fiber-optic network and is a leader in advanced data communications services. With annual revenues of more than \$20 billion and serving more than 20 million business and residential customers, Sprint has more than 81,000 employees nationwide. The company maintains its world headquarters in Kansas City.



Sprint's National Consumer Organization (NCO) provides global voice and data communications services to nearly 11 million customer accounts in the U.S. NCO Operations is comprised of approximately 3,000 employees nationwide and is responsible for supporting NCO through receivables management (credit, fraud, early warning and collections), order processing and completion, vendor operations, customer service, Global Connection Services (operator services), and emerging market operations (currently Integrated On-Demand Network (ION) operations). NCO Operations utilizes customer touch points to sell additional services to existing Sprint customers. Customer service is provided in eight different languages and operator services in 11 languages.

In 1998, Customer Service began selling products in addition to servicing customers. After just two years, it is the fifth largest sales channel in NCO.

Sprint's internal quality assessment program instituted in 1994, utilizes the Baldrige criteria and has allowed NCO Operations to gain valuable feedback concerning its core processes. In 1995, NCO Operations submitted its first Missouri Quality Award application to further its progress towards becoming a world-class organization. Over the past five years, NCO Operations has continued its commitment to quality standards and has been recognized for service excellence several times over the last five years winning three Yankee Group and five J.D. Power and Associates, Inc. awards.

The leadership team utilizes a management-by-fact philosophy to guide them in decision making. During the annual strategic planning process, metrics are adjusted to match current strategic and tactical

initiatives. Each month, metrics from the associate level on up through the executive level, are reviewed in Operational Review meetings to determine progress, relevance to the initiatives and to aid in the creation of action plans.

Teamwork and matrix management are commonplace throughout NCO. Through successful process management, key projects are prioritized and monitored from end to end. This includes project identification and prioritization, monthly committee meetings and review boards.

Culture is a primary focus in NCO Operations. "Fun in the Workplace" is integrated into daily activities and predominates each site from the call centers to staff locations and executive offices. For example, it is not unheard of for a call center manager to deliver food to associates dressed as a chicken or for the executives to open a conference meeting by performing a line dance. The Global Connection Services group has been featured in a local FOX4 news piece and was quoted in a recent "People" magazine article centered around fun at work.

NCO Operations follows its vision to have fun working while delivering the ideal customer experience in consumer communications. Its core values serve to guide the organization.



These are:

- Unbending Integrity
- Respect for Each Other
- Doing the Right Thing
- Continuous Learning by Doing
- Having Fun

Part of creating a positive culture is communication, which is also key to the successful implementation of key strategic initiatives. The leadership team incorporates a variety of approaches to communicate with all levels of employees. These include staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, executive site visits, brown bag lunches, leadership conferences, and conference calls to name a few. Each is an opportunity to learn and share with each other working together to further the success of the organization.

As the marketplace changes and consumer long distance moves away from a stand-alone business, NCO has evolved into an organization committed to providing the total customer solution through its wireless "Broadband Direct" and Sprint ION products. As this evolution occurs, NCO Operations has experienced continuous internal change. Although the core functions remain stable, the change in product lines and strategic direction requires the Operations group to remain nimble and flexible. Through commitment to the Baldrige criteria and a strong understanding of quality standards, NCO Operations has continued its high level of success.

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