

# Verizon Expands on iPhone Lessons

BY BRAD SMITH

**W**hen a company is preparing for what will be its most successful product launch ever, it pays to plan ahead. Ajay Waghay, chief information officer for Verizon Wireless, knows that from first-hand experience with the carrier's launch this year of the iPhone.

Verizon Wireless sold more iPhones in the first two hours of its launch Feb. 3 than any first-day launch in its history.

Waghay said the phased launch went off without a hitch, proving the value of the extensive planning his team had done. Now, Verizon Wireless is expanding the lessons learned, especially in optimizing and streamlining the customer experience, with two

new tools for its users. One is a mobile version of its customer Web interface, MyVerizon, and a data widget on handsets that lets customers know how much and what kind of data they are using.

Waghay said in an interview at CTIA Wireless 2011 that the MyVerizon mobile interface and data widget are part of the operator's intent to streamline point-of-sale systems and other customer touchpoints. Verizon Wireless took the top 20 customer touchpoints and focused on streamlining them so users could get answers or make changes to their service and devices more easily.

The MyVerizon mobile inter-



Waghay

face includes icons for the bill, plan, device and customer profile. Touching one of those icons displays the top 20 choices based on broad customer usage data.

The data widget on the home screen includes a summary of data usage but touch-

ing the icon drills down into what kind of data, such as text messages or email.

Initially, the new data widget and MyVerizon mobile are available primarily for Research In Motion (RIM) and Android devices but will be available later for other platforms, including the iPhone, Brew, Windows and Palm operating systems.

Verizon Wireless also has a set-

up wizard on handsets that allows customers to set up account preferences like billing options and a backup assistant. Subscribers can use the latter to store contacts and, as an option later this year, content like photos.

The self-help features help the operator deflect calls that might otherwise go to a customer care center, leaving those people more time to handle more complex questions. With 94 million customers, that can make a big difference.

Ultimately, Waghay said, the mobile tools are designed to improve the customer experience, which leads to customer retention. Verizon Wireless has been at or near the top in that category for years, so Waghay's efforts are paying off. ●

## GWS Wraps Up Network Tests

**G**lobal Wireless Solutions (GWS) completed its final performance testing of the four major wireless national carriers inside the Orange County Convention Center on Wednesday morning as the networks remained loaded with traffic with all those (us?) cell-phone toting convention attendees.

Voice network testing showed that Verizon Wireless occupied the top spot on Wednesday, followed by AT&T, Sprint and T-Mobile USA. Cumulatively, over the three-day testing marathon, AT&T and Verizon maintained the fewest call failures, with Sprint and T-Mobile behind, GWS engineers report.

On the data side, indoor throughput tests of both AT&T's and T-Mobile's HSPA+ networks yielded the same consistent performance seen on previous days. Sprint's EV-DO network, however,

still strained on the download, but the upload improved from Tuesday's near dial-up speeds. T-Mobile provided the fewest task failures on Wednesday, and Verizon's LTE network gained in consistency and performance.

The GWS van repeated its mobile performance testing along the roadways and parking lots surrounding the convention center. AT&T, MetroPCS, T-Mobile and Verizon successfully completed all voice calls, but MetroPCS had one blocked call. The Verizon LTE network continued its performance with consistent download and upload throughputs. T-Mobile and AT&T throughput followed behind Verizon. GWS says, Clearwire still struggled the most to handle the load with multiple task failures. The Sprint and Verizon EV-DO networks also came in behind T-Mobile and AT&T. ●

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