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CUSTOMER RETENTION STRATEGIES IN TELECOM SERVICE PROVIDERS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT
The landscape of the telecommunication industry in India has been changed drastically since the deregulation of telecommunication sector in early 1990s. Number of service providers has been increased from one, i.e. state monopoly, to more than 70 within a short period of time. With the increased competition telecom service providers find it difficult to retain the existing customers. The customer retention rate refers to the number of customers lost over a period of time. It is normally calculated by the percentage of lost customers versus existing customers over a quarterly or annual period, without tallying new customer acquisitions. While there are obvious benefits to keeping customers loyal and maintaining high customer retention rates, it can be extremely challenging for management to keep retention rates up. For this study the elements of services which lead to customer retention are taken into consideration and analyzed below. 12 statements for retention using 5 point scale are considered for the study.

KEYWORDS: Customer retention, Telecommunication Industry, Information and Communication Technology

INTRODUCTION

A fundamental truth in the business world is that competitors are always looking to steal your customers, and many customers are on the lookout for a better deal. Customer attrition rates range from seven percent annually in some industries with high exit barriers, like banking and insurance, to nearly 40 percent in the mobile phone industry. Slowing the customer "churn" rate by as little as one percent can add millions of dollars to any sizable company's bottom line. As it's a great deal more expensive to acquire customers than to retain them, an effective customer retention strategy is crucial to a company's success.

Mobile phone service is viewed as a commodity by customers all over the world. As is often the case for a new market, cell phone providers have concentrated on customer acquisition at the expense of service quality and retention. This has created a buyer's market where customers are motivated to get the best deal possible during the sign-up or contract phase of their relationship with a carrier. The majority of customers are open to changing carriers to reduce monthly fees, increase their number of minutes, or to receive a better phone. Customer retention has a direct impact on long term customer lifetime value, which is a more profitable avenue for firms that seek to pursue growth and sustainability or those that seek to protect themselves from market shrinkage resulting from a contracting economy .Customer retention is important when loyalty is decreasing and sales cycles are aggravating the business environment. Under these circumstances, losing an important customer to a competitor would impact significantly on the organization’s profitability and growth.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive method is used for the purpose of conducting research. Data is gathered from customers of BSNL and from selected private telecom companies on the basis of convenience sampling method for the purpose of the study.

Source of the data: The proposed research requires both primary and secondary data.

Primary data: The primary data will also be collected from the customers of select telecom companies.

Secondary data: The secondary data is extracted from among different published sources such as TRAI manuals and reports, magazines, voice & data magazine, research articles, cellular operators associations, research articles, books and selected websites.

Sampling Design: Around 250 sample respondents are selected from the population for the purpose of the study. The composition of the respondents includes telecom buyers from BSNL and from selected private telecom companies drawn from Mysore city.

To analyze the data collected from respondents and to prove or disprove hypotheses, various statistical tools and techniques have been applied in this study. For the purpose of processing and analyzing the collected data, statistical tools such as tables, charts are used in this study. Mean, standard deviation and correlation are used for descriptive statistics. Cronbach’s alpha was used for determining the predictive validity and reliability of the questionnaire used in the study. The hypotheses are tested using ANOVA test, Contingency Coefficient, P value and Pearson correlation analysis. The data collected from respondents is analyzed with the help of SPSS.

Section – 1

Demography of the Respondents:

For the purpose of collecting primary data for the study a structured questionnaire containing 12 statements was administered to 250 customers. The responses were sought using 5 point Likert scale.

Table no-1: Demography of the Respondents.

Particular	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	106	42.4
	Female	144	57.6
	Total	**250**	**100%**
Income	Less than 5000	111	44.4
	5000-10000	53	21.2
	10000-15000	48	19.2
	15000-20000	25	10.0
	20000 and above	13	5.2
	Total	**250**	**100%**
Qualification	Post graduate	64	25.6
	Graduate	130	52.0
	College Education	51	20.4
	School Level	5	2.0
	Total	**250**	**100%**
Occupation	Govt. Employees	44	17.6
	Private Employees	65	26.0
	Student	89	35.6
	Housewife	21	8.4
	Searching for job/ Not working	18	7.2
	Retired	9	3.6
	Business	4	1.6
	Total	**250**	**100%**

Source: Field survey

The above table shows that out of 250 customers who have responded for the questionnaire consists of 106 male and 144 female respondents who belong to different income levels. Out of 250 respondents 111 are below Rs.5, 000 income per month, 53 respondents are in the income group of Rs.5,000 -Rs10,000, 48 respondents in the range of Rs.10,000-Rs.15,000, 25 respondents in the group Rs15,000-Rs.20,000 and small portion of the respondents that is 13 are in the income category of Rs. 20,000 and more per month. Further, the respondents are of different levels of education. There are 64 postgraduates, 130 graduates, 56 school level educated and non graduates. The respondents includes 109 employees out of which 44 are government employees and 65 private employees , 89 students , 21 housewives and 18 youngsters who are searching for jobs, 9 retired persons and 4 business man. Thus respondents made up of people from different income, education, gender and occupational background.

The respondents for the study are also grouped into the users of mobile phone and landline services. The following table provides details of landline and mobile phone services of different telecom companies used by the respondents for the study.

TableNo-2: Respondents using Landlines and Mobile Phone services:

Particular	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage
Current Landline	No landline	159	63.6
	BSNL	74	29.6
	Airtel	14	5.6
	Reliance	1	0.4
	Tata Indicom	2	0.8
	Total	**250**	**100%**
Current Mobile	BSNL	29	11.6
	Airtel	82	32.8
	Vodafone	64	25.6
	Spics/Idea	75	30.0
	Total	**250**	**100%**

Source: Field survey

The total respondents for the study include 250 customers of mobile phone services and 91 respondents using both landline and mobile phone services. This indicates that out of 250, 159 respondents are not having landline connections. The majority of the landline belongs to BSNL and the majority of mobile phone users are the customers of Airtel.

Purpose of the phone:

For the purpose of identifying the reasons for which mobile phones are used by the respondents an attempt is made to analyze the usage of phone. The following table reveals the different purposes for which the phones are used.

Table No- 3: Purpose of the Phone.

		Yes	NO	Total
Voice calls	F	250	0	250
	%	100	0	100
SMS	F	221	29	250
	%	88.4	11.6	100
MMS	F	54	196	250
	%	21.6	78.4	100
Voicemail	F	32	218	250
	%	12.8	87.2	100
Internet	F	48	202	250
	%	19.2	80.	100
Alerts	F	31	219	250
	%	12.4	87.6	100
Caller tunes	F	30	220	250
	%	12.0	88	100
Music/movie download	F	43	207	250
	%	17.2	82.8	100
Participating in quizzes	F	25	225	250
	%	10	90	100
Wake up calls	F	37	213	250
	%	14.8	85.2	100

Source: Field survey

The above table reveals that mobile phones are used for more than one purpose by the respondents. although all are using the phones for voice calls, the only a small portion of the respondents namely 10% and 90 out of 250 respondents use the phones for participating in quizzes where as a large number that is 221 uses for SMS, 54 for MMS, 48 for internet and 43 for downloading music and movies which is a clear indication that the majority of the respondents are using phones for communication purpose. The total respondents for the study also include those who are using the services of the same telecom company for a long time and those who have changed frequently. Out of 250 customers who have given the response 83 customers have the habit of changing the service providers and 167 are using the services of the same telecom companies for a long time. In order to identify the factors that influence the customer's loyalty towards a particular telecom service provider, respondents who have changed from one service provider to another were asked to indicate their reasons for the change. The following table reveals the reason for the change of service provider.

Table no-4: Reasons for changing the service provider.

Reasons for changing the services		High call tariff	Better service from competitors	Low talk time on recharge	Changes in usage pattern	Poor network coverage	Frequent network disruption	Network congestion	Non availability of recharge coupons	Impolite response from call center executive
SD	F	5	3	4	8	10	9	5	10	10
	%	6	3.6	4.8	9.6	11.6	10.8	6	12	12
SWD	F	5	4	2	8	11	9	15	16	8
	%	6	4.8	2.4	9.6	13.3	10.8	18.1	19.3	9.6
N	F	15	14	24	21	19	21	23	27	19
	%	18.1	16.9	28.9	25.3	22.9	25.3	27.7	32.5	22.9
SWA	F	31	36	30	22	21	25	21	12	24
	%	37.3	43.4	36.1	26.5	25.3	30.1	25.3	14.5	28.9
SA	F	27	26	23	24	22	19	19	18	22
	%	32.5	31.3	27.7	28.9	26.5	22.9	22.9	21.7	26.5
Total	F	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field survey

From the above table, it is evident that the most prominent reasons for changing the service provider are better service promises by the competitors followed by low talk time on recharge and high call tariff which are the cost component of the user's decisions. Only a small proportion of the respondents agree with the point that the reason for change is non availability of the recharge coupons. However, frequent network disruption, network congestion, poor network coverage are responsible for the changes. A considerable part of the respondents who have changed their service provider are due to the changes in their usage pattern.

Occupation Vs service providers

Mobile phone usage and the occupation of the customers are interrelated. Therefore an attempt is made to group the respondents on the basis of their occupation and the brand of the mobile services they are using. The following table provides information on occupation and the brand used

Table No 5: Occupation Vs service provider

Occupation		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total
Govt.	F	12	13	11	8	44
	%	41.4%	15.9%	17.2%	10.7%	17.6%
Private	F	6	25	14	20	65
	%	20.7%	30.5%	21.9%	26.7%	26.0%
Student	F	5	24	28	32	89
	%	17.2%	29.3%	43.8%	42.7%	35.6%
House wife	F	4	6	5	6	21
	%	13.8%	7.3%	7.8%	8.0%	8.4%
Not working	F	0	9	2	7	18
	%	.0%	11.0%	3.1%	9.3%	7.2%
Retired	F	1	4	3	1	9
	%	3.4%	4.9%	4.7%	1.3%	3.6%
Business	F	1	1	1	1	4
	%	3.4%	1.2%	1.6%	1.3%	1.6%
Total	F	29	82	64	75	250

The above table highlights the fact that, out of 250 respondents 82 respondents are using Airtel services which includes 13 govt. employees , 25 private employees , 24 students. Whereas Idea is in the second place with 75 respondents consisting of 32 students, 20 private employees and 8 govt. employees. Vodafone is in the third place with 64 respondents comprising 28 students, 14 private employees and 11 govt. employees. BSNL is in the fourth place with 29 respondents made up of 12 govt. employees, 6 private employees and 5 students. Therefore it can be inferred that Airtel is the most preferred brand among all professions.

Qualification Vs Service providers

Table no 6: Qualification Vs Service providers

Qualification		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total
Post graduate	F	9	21	15	19	64
	%	31.0%	25.6%	23.4%	25.3%	25.6%
Graduate	F	10	49	34	37	130
	%	34.5%	59.8%	53.1%	49.3%	52.0%
College level	F	8	10	14	19	51
	%	27.6%	12.2%	21.9%	25.3%	20.4%
School level	F	2	2	1	0	5
	%	6.9%	2.4%	1.6%	.0%	2.0%
Total	F	29	82	64	75	250

Source: Field survey

From the above table, it can be noted that respondents using Airtel services includes a greater percentage of graduates and postgraduates followed by Vodafone and Idea. Whereas respondents using BSNL services includes 34.5% graduates, 31% postgraduates, 27.6% college level and the remaining 6.9% school level.

Income vs. Service Providers

Respondents are grouped on the basis of their level of monthly income in order to identify the relationship between income and brand preference. The following table highlights the respondent's income and brand of their service provider.

Table no 7: Income vs. Service Providers

Income		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total
Less than 5000	F	7	30	34	40	111
	%	24.1%	36.6%	53.1%	53.3%	44.4%
5000-10000	F	7	17	12	17	53
	%	24.1%	20.7%	18.8%	22.7%	21.2%
10000-15000	F	12	18	7	11	48
	%	41.4%	22.0%	10.9%	14.7%	19.2%
15000-20000	F	2	11	8	4	25
	%	6.9%	13.4%	12.5%	5.3%	10.0%
20000 and above	F	1	6	3	3	13
	%	3.4%	7.3%	4.7%	4.0%	5.2%
Total	F	29	82	64	75	250

Source: Field survey

Out of 250 respondents, 40 of them are in the income group less than Rs.5, 000 are using Idea, where as 34 and 30 of this category are using Vodafone and Airtel respectively. In the income category, of Rs.5,000-10,000 per month out of 53 respondents 17 each are using Idea and Airtel, 12 are using Vodafone, 7 are using BSNL . This is an indication that Idea is the most preferred brand among the low income group and Airtel is preferred by middle and higher income group.

Table no: 8: Gender Vs Service providers

Gender		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total
Male	F	14	34	26	32	106
	%	48.3%	41.5%	40.6%	42.7%	42.4%
Female	F	15	48	38	43	144
	%	51.7%	58.5%	59.4%	57.3%	57.6%
Total	F	29	82	64	75	250

Source: Field survey

Out of 250 customers who have responded for the study, there are 106 male and 144 female. Among the male respondents 34 of them are using Airtel, 32 are using Idea and 26 of them Vodafone and 14 are using BSNL. Out of the total female respondents 48 are using Airtel, 43 are using Idea, and 38 are using Vodafone and 15 BSNL.

Section-II

CUSTOMER RETENTION

Customer Retention is an act of convincing customers to continue their usage of the services and avoiding defections. Successful customer retention starts with the first contact with the customer and continues throughout the business lifetime. A service provider's ability to attract and retain new customers is not only dependent on the services, but also on its continuous efforts to serve the customers better.

The following 12 factors that are considered as the important variables that determine customer's retention are included in the questionnaire in order to obtain the mobile phone users response on these factors with regard to their specific service providers.

i) My Service Provider keeps me updated
ii) My Service Provider conducts telephone meetings to know the need and problems
iii) Phone connection will not be disconnected without informing me
iv) My Service Provider offers trail version of VAS of my choice
v) SP take personal interest to solve all the complaints
vi) SP waive off the late payment fees on request
vii) I receive wishes from my service provider on special occasions like birthday, wedding anniversary, festivals ,etc
viii) On request they collect the bill at my door step
ix) I have received freebies/gifts from my service provider
x) I get bonus points on usage
xi) I get discounts on my usage
xii) Credit limit can be easily increased.

i) My Service Provider keeps me updated

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	2	2	1	2	7	.256	.132
	%	6.9%	2.4%	1.6%	2.7%	2.8%		
Somewhat disagree	F	0	3	5	5	13		
	%	.0%	3.7%	7.8%	6.7%	5.2%		
Neutral	F	6	17	19	14	56		
	%	20.7%	20.7%	29.7%	18.7%	22.4%		
Somewhat agree	F	14	34	12	24	84		
	%	48.3%	41.5%	18.8%	32.0%	33.6%		
Strongly agree	F	7	26	27	30	90		
	%	24.1%	31.7%	42.2%	40.0%	36.0%		

Source: Field survey

Table 9.My Service Provider keeps me updated

Updating a customer on the service disruption or any change in the account is essential. In case post paid connections, customers can ask for information but the prepaid customers expect the service providers to inform them before activating any services. On the whole, 69.6% of the respondents agree that they are being updated where as only 8% of the respondents do not agree with the opinion. The pattern of responses was found to be similar for BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and P value (CC=0.256: P=0.132).

ii) My Service provider conducts telephone meetings to know the need and problems

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	3	6	8	2	19	.290	.085
	%	10.3%	7.3%	12.5%	2.7%	7.6%		
Somewhat disagree	F	4	2	7	8	21		
	%	13.8%	2.4%	10.9%	10.7%	8.4%		
Neutral	F	10	31	10	23	74		
	%	34.5%	37.8%	15.6%	30.7%	29.6%		
Somewhat agree	F	11	32	29	28	100		
	%	37.9%	39.0%	45.3%	37.3%	40.0%		
Strongly agree	F	1	10	10	14	35		
	%	3.4%	12.2%	15.6%	18.7%	14.0%		

Source: Field survey

Table 10: My Service Provider conducts telephone meetings to know the need and problems

Conducting face to face meeting and telephonic meetings enhances the relationship, helps to understand the customer needs and to listen to the complaints. The above table shows that 69.6% of the respondents agree with the opinion that their service provider conducts meetings and 14% of the respondents do not agree with the opinion. The responses was found to be similar for BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and P value (CC=0.290: p=0.085).

iii) Phone connection will not be disconnected without informing me

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	1	6	4	4	15	.166	.956
	%	3.4%	7.3%	6.3%	5.3%	6.0%		
Somewhat disagree	F	2	5	6	10	23		
	%	6.9%	6.1%	9.4%	13.3%	9.2%		
Neutral	F	8	23	17	19	67		
	%	27.6%	28.0%	26.6%	25.3%	26.8%		
Somewhat agree	F	11	27	20	27	85		
	%	37.9%	32.9%	31.3%	36.0%	34.0%		
Strongly agree	F	7	21	16	15	59		
	%	24.1%	25.6%	25.0%	20.0%	23.6%		

Source: Field survey

Table No. 11: Phone connection will not be disconnected without informing me

Disconnecting the phone without informing the customers or due to non-payment of the bills causes inconvenience to the customers. It is found from the table that 60.8% of the respondents subscribe to the opinion that their phone connection is not disconnected without information and 15% of the respondents do not agree with this. The responses was found to be similar with all service providers which is further confined by a non significance contingency value and p value (CC=.166: P=.956).

iv) My SP offers trail version of VAS of my choice

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	5	6	12	10	33	.199	.588
	%	17.2%	7.4%	18.8%	13.3%	13.3%		
Somewhat disagree	F	2	12	7	7	28		
	%	6.9%	14.8%	10.9%	9.3%	11.2%		
Neutral	F	7	16	17	24	64		
	%	24.1%	19.8%	26.6%	32.0%	25.7%		
Somewhat agree	F	11	31	18	24	84		
	%	37.9%	38.3%	28.1%	32.0%	33.7%		
Strongly agree	F	4	16	10	10	40		
	%	13.8%	20.3%	15.6%	13.3%	16.2%		

Source: Field survey

Table 12: My SP offers trail version of VAS of my choice

Many users are not aware of the VAS provided by their service providers, as it attracts the premium prices customers are reluctant to use it. So offering these value added services with the trial version is an easy way to attract them to opt for these services.

The table shows that majority of the respondents that is 49.9% agree with the opinion that my service provider offers trial version of the value added services of their choice and 25.7% of the sample have the neutral opinion on this and rest of the 24% of the respondents do not agree with this. The responses was found to be similar for BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and p value (CC=0.199: p=0.588).

v) Service Provider takes personal interest to solve all the complaints

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	4	5	6	9	24	.260	.111
	%	13.8%	6.1%	9.4%	12.0%	9.6%		
Somewhat disagree	F	5	7	9	8	29		
	%	17.2%	8.5%	14.1%	10.7%	11.6%		
Neutral	F	14	20	16	15	65		
	%	48.3%	24.4%	25.0%	20.0%	26.0%		
Somewhat agree	F	4	35	24	28	91		
	%	13.8%	42.7%	37.5%	37.3%	36.4%		
Strongly agree	F	2	15	9	15	41		
	%	6.9%	18.3%	14.1%	20.0%	16.4%		

Source: Field survey

Table 13: SP take personal interest to solve all the complaints

Taking the personal interest by the executives of the service provider to solve the problems of the customers is essential to retain them. As it is shown in the table 52.8% respondents agree that the executives take personal interest in solving their problems however 26% of the respondents have neutral opinion and the remaining 20% of the respondents do not agree with this. The pattern of responses was found to be similar with all service providers which is further confined by a non significance contingency value and p value (CC=.260: P=.111).

vi) Service Provider waive off the late payment fees on request

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	2	8	7	3	20	.168	.841
	%	6.9%	9.8%	10.9%	4.0%	8.0%		
Somewhat disagree	F	2	10	9	11	32		
	%	6.9%	12.2%	14.1%	14.7%	12.8%		
Neutral	F	11	28	16	23	78		
	%	37.9%	34.1%	25.0%	30.7%	31.2%		
Somewhat agree	F	11	23	22	23	79		
	%	37.9%	28.0%	34.4%	30.7%	31.6%		
Strongly agree	F	3	13	10	15	41		
	%	10.3%	15.9%	15.6%	20.0%	16.4%		

Source: Field survey

Table 14: Service Provider waive off the late payment fees on request

Many a times due to some unavoidable reasons late payment of bills attracts penalty. By checking the consistency in payment of bills by the customer, waiving off the late payment fees on request makes the customer happy.

The table below shows that a very high number of the respondent: 48% of the respondents agree that their late payment will be waived off on request and 31.2%of respondents are neutral, and the rest 20% of respondents do not agree with this opinion. The responses were similar with the entire service provider which is further confined by a non significance contingency value and p value (CC=.168: P=.841).

vii) I receive wishes from SP on special occasion like B'day, festivals, etc.

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	9	9	10	9	37	.199	.586
	%	31.0%	11.0%	15.6%	12.0%	14.8%		
Somewhat disagree	F	3	7	4	6	20		
	%	10.3%	8.5%	6.3%	8.0%	8.0%		
Neutral	F	7	20	18	22	67		
	%	24.1%	24.4%	28.1%	29.3%	26.8%		
Somewhat agree	F	6	27	16	19	68		
	%	20.7%	32.9%	25.0%	25.3%	27.2%		
Strongly agree	F	4	19	16	19	58		
	%	13.8%	23.2%	25.0%	25.3%	23.2%		

Source: Field survey

Table 15: I receive wishes from SP on special occasion like B'day, festivals, etc.

Customers love to be appreciated and to receive wishes and discounts on special occasions. Gift is not wishing the customer but to thank him for being loyal. The above table reveals that more than half of the respondents (50.4%) have positive opinion and agree the statement, 26.8% of the sample are neutral followed by 20% of the sample have disagreement with the statement. The pattern of responses was found to be similar BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and p value (CC=0.199 p=0.586). It can also be inferred that private companies are more open to these kind of relationship based marketing than BSNL.

viii) On request they collect the bill at door step

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	8	13	12	13	46	.247	.180
	%	27.6%	15.9%	18.8%	17.3%	18.4%		
Somewhat disagree	F	3	2	4	11	20		
	%	10.3%	2.4%	6.3%	14.7%	8.0%		
Neutral	F	9	23	20	17	69		
	%	31.0%	28.0%	31.3%	22.7%	27.6%		
Somewhat agree	F	8	27	17	25	77		
	%	27.6%	32.9%	26.6%	33.3%	30.8%		
Strongly agree	F	1	17	11	9	38		
	%	3.4%	20.7%	17.2%	12.0%	15.2%		

Source: Field survey

Table 16: On request they collect the bill at door step

Collecting the bill at the door step of the customer is the option available with the many service providers to retain them, on request of the customer the company sends executives to the doorsteps of the customer to collect the bill. The table shows that the majority of the respondents, 56% of the respondents agree with the opinion that their bills are collected at their doorstep, 27.6% of the samples have the neutral opinion and rest of the 24% of respondents disagree with this. The pattern of responses was found to be similar for BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and p value (CC=0.247: p=0.180). On the whole the majority sample had a positive opinion towards the service. From the table it can be inferred that all the private companies are practicing this method of collecting the bill at the door step of the customers on request but it is not practiced in BSNL.

ix) I have received the freebies and gifts from my Service Provider

Response		Mobile service providers					CC Value	'P' Value
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total		
Strongly Disagree	F	6	14	16	14	50	.232	.283
	%	20.7%	17.1%	25.0%	18.7%	20.0%		
Somewhat disagree	F	7	7	6	13	33		
	%	24.1%	8.5%	9.4%	17.3%	13.2%		
Neutral	F	9	19	15	15	58		
	%	31.0%	23.2%	23.4%	20.0%	23.2%		
Somewhat agree	F	7	25	17	20	69		
	%	24.1%	30.5%	26.6%	26.7%	27.6%		
Strongly agree	F	0	17	10	13	40		
	%	.0%	20.7%	15.6%	17.3%	16.0%		

Source: Field survey

Table 17: I have received the freebies and gifts from my Service Provider

The table shows that the majority of the respondents 43.6% of the respondents agree with the opinion that they have received freebies from their service provider , 23.2% of the sample have the neutral opinion on the statement and rest of the 32% of the sample have disagree with the opinion. The responses was found to be similar for BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and p value (CC=0.232: p=0.283). From the above table, It can also be inferred that BSNL is not giving out any freebies, Free offers-shirts to the customers, which is more in Airtel (20.7%).

x) **I get bonus points on usage**

Response		Mobile service providers					CC	'P'
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total	Value	Value
Strongly Disagree	F	10	14	14	13	51	.195	.827
	%	34.5%	17.1%	21.9%	17.3%	20.4%		
Somewhat disagree	F	4	12	6	10	32		
	%	13.8%	14.6%	9.4%	13.3%	12.8%		
Neutral	F	4	17	14	18	53		
	%	13.8%	20.7%	21.9%	24.0%	21.2%		
Somewhat agree	F	9	23	20	24	76		
	%	31.0%	28.0%	31.3%	32.0%	30.4%		
Strongly agree	F	2	15	10	10	37		
	%	6.9%	18.3%	15.6%	13.3%	14.8%		

Source: Field survey

Table 18: I get bonus points on usage

To promote more usage, reward/bonus points are given to the customers. On accumulation of the bonus point's customer can redeem those points against the discounts.
The table shows that the majority of the respondents that is 45.2% agree that they get bonus points on usage, where as 21.2% of the sample has the neutral opinion and rest of the 32% of the respondents do not agree with this. The pattern of responses was found to be similar for BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone and Idea which is further confirmed by a non significant contingency coefficient value and p value (CC=0.195: p=0.827). From the table it is noted that giving freebies and gifts is more practiced in Airtel and less practiced in BSNL.

xi) I get discounts on my usage

Response		Mobile service providers					CC	'P'
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total	Value	Value
Strongly Disagree	F	10	17	15	13	55	.195	.626
	%	34.5%	20.7%	23.4%	17.3%	22.0%		
Somewhat disagree	F	3	7	7	12	29		
	%	10.3%	8.5%	10.9%	16.0%	11.6%		
Neutral	F	8	16	16	16	56		
	%	27.6%	19.5%	25.0%	21.3%	22.4%		
Somewhat agree	F	5	28	15	19	67		
	%	17.2%	34.1%	23.4%	25.3%	26.8%		
Strongly agree	F	3	14	11	15	43		
	%	10.3%	17.1%	17.2%	20.0%	17.2%		

Source: Field survey

Table 19: I get discounts on my usage

Many service providers offer discounts on call usage or VAS usage to promote bulk usage of the services by the customer. The heavy users are given with free calls or messages or even discounts in the billed amount to retain customers. From the table, it has been noticed that, 27.5% of BSNL, 51.2% of Airtel, 40.6% of Vodafone, 45.3% of Idea respondents agree with the opinion that they get discounts on their usage. The responses was found to be similar with all service providers which is further confined by a non significance contingency value and p value (CC=.195: P=.626).

xii) Credit limit can be easily increased

Response		Mobile service providers					CC	'P'
		BSNL	Airtel	Vodafone	Idea	Total	Value	Value
Strongly Disagree	F	9	18	14	15	56	.220	.386
	%	31.0%	22.0%	21.9%	20.0%	22.4%		
Somewhat disagree	F	1	8	6	8	23		
	%	3.4%	9.8%	9.4%	10.7%	9.2%		
Neutral	F	3	15	15	18	51		
	%	10.3%	18.3%	23.4%	24.0%	20.4%		
Somewhat agree	F	14	25	14	22	75		
	%	48.3%	30.5%	21.9%	29.3%	30.0%		
Strongly agree	F	2	16	15	12	45		
	%	6.9%	19.5%	23.4%	16.0%	18.0%		

Source: Field survey

Table 20: Credit limit can be easily increased

Credit limit is the credit worthiness of the customers; it is only applicable in the post-paid customers. By seeing the history and usage pattern of the customer it can be increased by the service providers.
The figure shows that a very high number of the respondent: 48% of the respondents agree that their credit limit can be increased where as 30% of the respondents do not agree with this. The responses were similar with the entire service provider which is further confined by a non significance contingency value and p value (CC=.220: P=.386). It gives a clear indication that majority of the respondents have positive opinion towards the service. It is noted that Credit limit can be easily increased with Vodafone and less with BSNL.

Table 21: ANOVA Test Statistics: Customer Retention Vs Service providers.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Groups	744.701	3	248.234	2.093	.102
Within Groups	29063.709	245	118.627		
Total	29808.410	248			

Table 22: Descriptive statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
249	12.00	60.00	40.3012	10.96336

For the purpose of confirming, the opinions of the customers on 12 different elements of customer retention discussed through the tables 9 to 20 an attempt is made to conduct Anova test. Customers opinions on all 12 factors which leads to customer retention, and P value >0.05 which indicates that there is no difference in their opinion irrespective of the service providers. , Anova test shows that, f value is 2.093 and sig 0.102, which again confirms that there is no significance among the retention programs of the service providers as perceived by the users of difference service providers. The mean value of 40.30 confirms that all the respondents have positive opinion towards the services therefore, it can be inferred that, all the service providers are practicing retention programs and all the customers are enjoying the benefits of this program

Table 23: ANOVA table: Customer retention Vs income

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Groups	137.302	4	34.326	.282	.889
Within Groups	29671.108	244	121.603		
Total	29808.410	248			

Table 24: Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Less than 5000	110	40.5091	12.28764
5000-10000	53	40.0943	9.14260
10000-15000	48	41.2292	10.45403
15000-20000	25	39.0800	10.44398
20000 and above	14	38.3077	9.62968
Total	250	40.3012	10.96336

Opinions of the customers of different income groups are analyzed to see whether there is any difference in customer's views of various service providers. The Anova test confirms that, there is no significant difference among the users depending on their income (F value = 0.282 sig=0.889) also the mean value confirms that there is a positive opinion towards all the statements.

Table 25: ANOVA test statistics: Customer retention Vs occupation

Govt. Employees	44	37.7273	9.46809	1.42737
Private Employees	65	41.9231	11.45140	1.42037
Student	89	40.5955	10.80900	1.14575
Housewife	21	38.8571	16.20273	3.53573
Searching for job/ Networking	17	42.2353	6.92396	1.67931
Retired	9	39.6667	6.18466	2.06155
Business	5	36.5000	10.27943	5.13971
Total	250	40.3012	10.96336	.69477

Table 26: descriptive statistics:

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Between Groups	638.999	6	106.500	.884	.508
Within Groups	29169.411	243	120.535		
Total	29808.410	249			

All the factors of customer retention programs are tested against the different occupation of the users to check whether their opinions vary with their occupation. The Anova test confirms that there is no significant difference among the users depending on their occupation (F value =0.884, sig=0.508). Mean value from the table 5.3.34 confirms that there is a positive opinion towards the services.

FINDINGS

Customer Retention

Retaining the existing customers than finding a new customer is easier for the companies. All the service providers irrespective of public or private following retention strategies. The respondents of various service providers feel that their service provider trying to keep the customers with them. All the customers are enjoying the benefits out of retention strategies like, keeping them updated, trying to find their changing needs, various trial offers of VAS, waiving of late payment fees, solving complaints faster, not disconnecting the service, giving gifts and freebies to customers , giving out bonus points and discounts for heavy users etc.

- Airtel keeps customers more updated compare other players where as Vodafone stands last.
- Vodafone conducts more face to face meeting or telephonic meetings to enhance the relationships with the customers which are less practiced in BSNL.
- More customers of BSNL are of the opinion that their phone connection will not be disconnected without informing them where as it not so with Idea.
- Idea offers more free trials of value added services compare to others where as Vodafone gives less free trials.
- More number of Airtel customers feel that, their service provider takes personal care to solve the complaints where as it is least with BSNL.
- Late payment fees can be waived off in Idea where as less number of customers feel that their late payment fees can be waived off in Airtel.
- Airtel sends out more wishes to its customers on special occasions like birthday, wedding anniversary and festivals where as it is less practiced in BSNL.
- Bill collection at the door step is practiced more in Airtel and least in BSNL.
- Airtel gives out more freebies to its customers where it is less practiced in BSNL.
- Vodafone gives bonus points and it is less practiced in BSNL.
- Airtel gives out more discounts on voice calls and other value added services, whereas it is less practiced in BSNL.
- Credit limit given to the customers is more with BSNL and credit limit is given both Idea and Vodafone is less.

The opinions on the retention programs of the telecom companies found to be similar across different occupation and income levels for all the service providers

CONCLUSION

The mobile phone industry is highly competitive as its customers have many options and offerings are hard to differentiate. Companies that want to grow their businesses must continue to invest aggressively in customer acquisition programs, as well as implement new and creative initiatives to retain their existing ones. It is challenging for enterprises to listen to their customers' issues and respond appropriately and on a timely basis. Quality assurance programs enhanced with speech analytics can give a company a competitive advantage by allowing them to identify and resolve customer issues quickly, before they become expensive problems. Speech analytics combined with an appropriate customer churn model can become the centerpiece of a program to identify "at-risk" customers and reach out to them to repair the relationship before they leave.

The mobile phone industry has matured to the point where companies have to take immediate steps to shift their emphasis from pure customer acquisition and facilities growth to product enhancement and customer centricity. Unfortunately, mobile phone providers have traditionally been decentralized and cannot afford to invest the time and resources required to shift their resources to a centralized servicing culture and infrastructure. Instead, the mobile companies must use technical innovation to build a customer centric culture and infrastructure. Instead, the mobile companies must use technical innovation to build a customer-centric culture, while continuing to invest in growth. A well-developed speech analytics implementation accompanied by senior management support and best practices can give a company a strategic advantage, even in the most competitive markets.

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