

APPENDIX A – OFF-SITE ASSOCIATE MEETINGS

Verizon NY associates (CWA and IBEW members) were solicited for input in the service quality review. To ensure that the associates of Verizon NY were given ample opportunity to provide input into the DCI review of service quality, a series of three after-hours off-site meetings were held between members of the craft union and representatives of the DCI consulting team. These meetings were as follows:

- Meeting with representatives of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) in Buffalo on February 17, 2004
- Meeting with representatives of the CWA in Westchester on March 9, 2004
- Meeting with representatives of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the CWA in Syracuse on April 20, 2004

These meetings were arranged and facilitated by representatives of the union and were intended to provide a forum for a free flow of information between Verizon NY associates (union personnel) and members of the DCI consulting team. Associate representatives of many different areas of Verizon NY were in attendance at the meetings, including: Installation and Repair, Cable Maintenance, Construction, Customer Service (call centers), Distribution Resources Center, and Central Office.

All of the meetings followed a similar format with the associates divided up into small groups and instructed to discuss and develop a list of the primary roadblocks that each group felt were impediments to the provision of service quality. After the lists had been developed by the individual groups, the facilitator solicited one impediment from each group, in turn, until a complete list had been identified. Following the development of this master listing of the roadblocks, the facilitator asked that the group to provide guidance to the DCI consultants in identifying documentation or sources that could provide validation or support for the issues that had been identified during the course of the evening's meeting.

The following text presents a listing of the issues that were presented as being the most important by the assembled associates. They are included as they were presented at the meetings, so the listings contain some duplication. It should also be noted that most of the issues were identified at more than one of the meetings that were held, thereby giving the impression that these issues were not simply localized in nature, but present throughout Verizon NY.

These issues are presented in the form of allegations that may or may not have been found to be verifiable by DCI during the course of the project. Those that were found to be valid and verifiable have been addressed in the appropriate sections of this report.

DCI used this information as input to our review process. Although DCI consultants were not able to verify or validate each and every one of the allegations, the individual sections of the report that address the issues in each area are referenced with these issues in the following discussion.

For the sake of clarity, the issues are grouped in the following text by the functional subject matter area to which they are primarily applicable.

INSTALLATION AND REPAIR

- Installations are coded as completed even though dial tone has not been established and are then transferred over as an out-of-service trouble or when the lack of service is called in by the customer. Non-premise visits (NPVs) are especially prone to this problem. In addition NPVs allow Verizon to reduce dispatches as much as possible even though they may adversely affect customer service.
- When an I&R Field Technician (FT) is given a job that, after investigation, must be turned over to a Cable Maintenance FT for completion, the I&R FT gets no credit for the time that s/he spent on the job.
- The Data Validation and Reporting (DaVaR) program incorrectly caused many bad pairs to be listed as good pairs because it only tests for a ground or a short. DAVAR also did not match pairs with the applicable phone number as it was originally intended to do.
- Double dispatching is frequently done for competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) jobs. At due date minus one, a dispatch is done to check on the status of the cable; another dispatch is done on the due date for the actual cutover.
- The new vRepair system has caused the elimination of technician codes on the job information on the CATs, so that the FT can no longer track the past history of the assigned job.
- Digital subscriber loop (DSL) installations cause frequent problems with POTS dial tone.
- In some situations, DSL is installed but the customer is not informed that it has been turned up, yet the customer is being billed for it from the time of installation completion.
- The I&R FTs get a lot of installation orders that are based on using pairs that are defective— sometimes this happens two or three times on the same job.
- The Deferred Work Additions (DWADs) used to be filled out by the FTs and submitted to the Local Managers for input to the Preventive Cable Maintenance (PCM) program. This is not done any more. T-Zone reports are also generally not being used any more.

- The field forces are running a significant amount of 6- and 12-pair wires, rather than resolving the problem in a correct manner with cable, because it is less expensive to do it in that way.
- The CLECs are taking advantage of Verizon NY in that they are using Verizon I&R FTs to provide first response to repair requests for the CLEC customers.
- In relation to wholesale market orders, if a due date is missed for a T-1 line, that order is frequently ignored for a period of time after that, due to the fact that it has already been missed and counted against Verizon NY.
- When Verizon NY has already determined that it will fail to make its regulatory target for a month for a geographic area, management will shift resources away from that area and to other areas where there is still a possibility of making the targets.
- The I&R FTs have been instructed not to put a testable interface (a network interface device or NID) on residences in order to save time and thereby improve their productivity performance statistics.
- Mechanized loop testing cannot detect a high resistance open, such as that which causes static on a line and therefore it will automatically close out the job as the line theoretically tests clean.

These issues have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII – Field Operations*. In addition, DCI performed a detailed review of NPVs and front end close outs (FECOs) in response to these issues.

CABLE MAINTENANCE

- The Cable Maintenance FTs are transferring pairs now more than they used to (code 0401), rather than repairing the problem, due to the pressure for increased productivity.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII – Field Operations*.

CONSTRUCTION (CXM)

- The CXM FTs are frustrated with situations that involve them starting a job and then being pulled off without finishing to start another job.
- PCM jobs are often “band-aids” that replace sections rather than the whole runs that need to be replaced.
- The CXM group has lost a lot of employees and those that remain are spending much of their time doing work for the I&R group.

- The CXM FTs are not trained properly in I&R work before they are loaned to assist the I&R group, and therefore are often not capable of performing a quality job. The productivity and quality of the CXM FTs are not covered under the Service Excellence Plan (SEP) guidelines.
- Funding is generally not available for performing maintenance projects to improve the outside plant, other than for small PCM projects. Additionally, there are numerous situations of cable that has been hanging for five to seven years that has never been cut in. Replacement of these known deteriorated plant facilities could save a lot of dispatches.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII – Field Operations*.

INSTALLATION ORDER CLOSEOUTS AND FRONT END CLOSEOUTS

- Line tests are inconsistent – It is possible that testing equipment parameters have been set higher so that higher resistance still turns up as Test OK or Trouble Not Found.
- In some instances, managers give the clerks a printout of telephone numbers and tell the clerks that the troubles are Test OK, so that the ticket can be closed out – if the problem has been resolved, why not give it to a tester?
- Installation service orders are sometimes closed out complete, but without providing dial tone to the customers to meet the requirements of the service standards.
- FECOs are situations where the computer tests the line and closes out the job because it tests okay, despite the fact that the line is bad. The employee codes on the trouble ticket have been deleted, so that the installer cannot see who worked on the job previously.
- Once due dates on job tickets have been missed, the customer is left hanging for days because there will be no additional demerits given.
- Installations are FECOed and then turned into repairs to show that the required dates for installation have been met. Also, cut throughs that should have been done automatically are sent out as repairs. Additionally, the customer is being billed from the time of closeout, despite the fact that they may not have had service during this time.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII – Field Operations*. In addition, DCI performed a detailed review of NPVs and FECOs in response to these issues.

TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CRAFT EMPLOYEES

- Training in the past was conducted at three levels: formal training schools, experienced managers training the workers, and on-the-job training. Now there are no formal training schools and not many experienced managers. Thus, the entire burden is thrown onto workers who have to install and/or repair equipment with little or no training. Moreover, the productivity program (SEP) penalizes experienced workers who try to train other workers.
- Verizon NY puts a new piece of equipment into the network, but does not give the I&M FTs the proper training in its usage and maintenance.
- Training opportunities for craft in the last few years have been infrequent and a quick survey of the craft in attendance at the meeting revealed that very few had received training in the past two years. For example, only two out of 70 craft in one garage that was cited had been trained in E911.
- There is a lack of proper training for FTs, due primarily to a reduction in the number of formalized classes that are offered to FTs and in the number of internal trainers that are available. There are currently very few internal training classes that are offered other than defensive driving and first aid. Additionally, due to a reduction in the number of very experienced Local Managers that are on staff, the level of the on-the-job training that is done has been reduced significantly.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter III - Organization and Executive Management* and *Chapter IV - Field Operations*.

LACK OF COORDINATION AMONG FUNCTIONAL DEPARTMENTS

- Management does not adequately coordinate the numbers of Central Office Technicians (COTs), FTs, testers, etc. FTs are constantly being put on hold when they try to contact other departments.
- The work force is improperly utilized – i.e., using the CXM forces to supplement the I&M group.
- There are commonly hold times of 40 to 60 minutes at the Special Circuits Test Center just to provide them with the FT's pager number. The FTs then have to wait additional time for a callback.
- There are regular problems with the staffing of COs and support centers on weekends and holidays.
- The Engineering group does not pre-verify jobs. This causes the need for a lot of field rework to be performed by the CXM group.

- There is a general lack of responsiveness from the LDMC with hold times that can amount to 10 to 55 minutes for the FTs. Also, the LDMC is not staffed on weekends, which has a negative effect on the ability of the FTs to complete assigned jobs on weekends, as the LDMC Facilities Specialists are the only ones who can release cable for use.
- The engineering records and plats are frequently incomplete or inaccurate. In several cases that were cited, the engineering records were several years behind in relation to updates that have been made to the network.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter III - Organization and Executive Management* and *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

HAZARDOUS AND DETERIORATED OUTSIDE PLANT CONDITIONS

- Cuts in investment and workforce have resulted in the deterioration of Verizon NY's outside plant.
- Numerous examples were cited in relation to defective poles and cross boxes that have been turned in as problems but nothing has been done about repairing them. Also problems were referenced with numerous cables that have been hung but not cut in.
- In 2002 representative of the union took more than 1,000 pictures of bad plant conditions in the Westchester area. A comparison of these pictures with pictures of the same facilities taken in 2004 reveals that very little improvement has been achieved in the physical plant.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter III - Organization and Executive Management* and *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

UNION/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

- Production is emphasized by Verizon NY management over quality of work.
- The customer is not cared for any more – Verizon NY management is only focusing on performance statistics.
- Inexperience on the part of some of the managers causes them to mishandle jobs and emergency situations.
- Because of the top-down management style that is employed in Verizon NY, the contribution made by the FTs is discounted and not valued by management. Due to the early retirement offerings of the last few years, a large number of very experienced craft have left the company, reducing the amount of in-house technical expertise that is available.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter III - Organization and Executive Management* and *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

OTHER

- Incorrect data is entered into the system to close out jobs and make it look like the job was completed on time. Also reports have been "back timed" to give the appearance of having made the established target date.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings. However, DCI did not perform a detailed investigation of information reporting systems.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT PROVISION

- The field forces have experienced a continuing lack of adequate tools, test equipment, safety equipment, and cell phones.
- Tools, test equipment, cell phones, batteries, and safety equipment are not being supplied due to budgetary restrictions.
- The Craft Access Terminals (CATs) have a wide variety of problems including significant battery life problems.
- There is a shortage of tools and many of the field operations vehicles are in poor condition.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

SEP PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- The SEP penalizes workers for doing a quality job and forces them to do the quickest fix.
- The SEP drives poor quality because the emphasis is on completing the maximum number of jobs. If, for example, a cable splicer finds five bad pairs, s/he is only allowed to repair the one cable pair that is listed on his or her ticket.
- The FTs only get job completion credit for routine tickets and get no work credit for helper tickets.
- The SEP target numbers can only increase and never are allowed to decrease.
- The SEP drives performance at the expense of quality of the work performed.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

SAFETY ISSUES AND PROGRAMS

- Verizon is not removing lead cable that has been replaced with new cable; rather, it is left hanging on the poles. The same situation exists for poles that have been replaced (double woods). Any CXM jobs that can be done for less money by putting it off or canceling it are handled this way.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings contained in *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

CUSTOMER SERVICE/CALL CENTERS

- New installation customers are given due dates beyond five days, but they are coded as a customer request; thus Verizon NY avoids the five-day installation objective guideline and has longer time to meet installation appointments. Lack of workforce causes these due dates to be moved further into the future so that the company can have more time to meet installation commitments.
- Customer Service Representatives try to offer the longest possible installation period and then get the customer to agree to it. In this way it is listed as a customer request.
- The Customer Service Representatives are required to up-sell DSL and other such services. The representatives can be disciplined for not performing enough up-selling.
- If a customer does not complain, then Verizon NY will frequently get a three-week-out installation commitment. If the customer agrees to such a date, then the installation ticket is given a "customer accepted" coding, which means that the VIP five-day installation standard is not applicable. However, if the customer protests, then they will usually get a five-day commitment date.
- For installation jobs the Green Light date is frequently two to four weeks out. Also Verizon "packs" the installation orders to show them as complete for a non-premise visit, even though it is not complete. The MLTs that are performed are frequently inaccurate, but the results are used to incorrectly close out service orders anyway. It is very difficult for a customer to get a dispatch assigned when the line tests okay.
- The Customer Service Representatives are required to up-sell additional services to all customers, even those calling for a repair. "No customer leaves the line without a package" is the operative expression that is used. Such up-selling was recounted to include the selling of inside wire maintenance plans to residents of nursing homes (who have no inside wiring to maintain).

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI's findings in the area of business offices contained in *Chapter VI - Customer Services*. In addition, DCI performed a detailed review of coding of installation orders as to the inclusion or exclusion in the service metrics.

DISPATCH FUNCTION/DRCS

- The field operations forces have large amounts of windshield time due to the geographical inefficiency of the automated dispatch system.
- The DRC has listed jobs that come in after 4:00 P.M. as “no access” to put the job off for a day without taking a hit.
- In the scrubbing process, a condition of static on the line will test okay and is therefore closed out as good. Frequently the customers are not informed of such closeouts. Also the CATs will automatically reject the jobs during the MLT testing portion of the download.
- Testing is done on the dead load (jobs that have not been dispatched). These jobs are subsequently tested every hour. The live load (jobs that have been dispatched) are also being tested continuously and if the line tests as okay it is taken away from the FT even if s/he has already completed the work.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI’s findings contained in *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.

CENTRAL OFFICE OPERATIONS

- Troubles have been experienced in the switches due to lack of routine maintenance being performed.
- There is not enough support from the COs for the FTs.
- The COTs generally do not get a ticket for providing assistance to the FTs and, therefore, they do not get job credit for these efforts.
- There is a significant lack of internal support for the field forces, especially in the central offices (COs). For example in Westchester, the FT needs to call Long Island to get a CO ticket to get help in the CO, and then has to page the COT to come into the CO (in the case of an unmanned CO). So some managers have instructed the FTs to close these jobs out to a Code 5, which is CO Trouble.
- Direct Access Test Unit (DATUs) works only over copper and only works on installed lines. It will not work on pair gain or open lines. Therefore DATU is not a viable replacement for the COTs.
- There is a lack of adequate staffing in the COs, which makes communication with the COs difficult for the FTs.
- Unmanned COs result in the FTs having to wait unproductively and make multiple phone calls to get support. This is particularly a problem in more rural areas and on weekends when the FTs are working.

These allegations have been incorporated for consideration in DCI’s findings contained in *Chapter VII - Field Operations*.