

BellSouth Roadmap and Personas:

BellSouth earned the JD Power award for Best Customer Service in the Telecommunications Industry in 2002. In 2005, BellSouth's customer satisfaction ratings for DSL customers dropped, puzzling the leadership deeply committed to user research. Through qualitative and quantitative research methods, User Insight developed personas that helped BellSouth clearly view its offerings from distinct customer perspectives. User Insight also created a strategic plan for BellSouth to improve its customer satisfaction ratings.

Client Goals

- Understand factors that contributed to BellSouth's drop in customer satisfaction ratings.
- Synthesize insights from all previous BellSouth research conducted with User Insight.
- Develop a strategic plan for research and product changes that might improve the BellSouth DSL experience.
- Create personas based on user feedback to drive product and service development efforts.

Insights Gained

- A full picture of how different user types, or personas, behave throughout BellSouth's customer lifecycle.
- An understanding of opportunities within BellSouth's customer lifecycle to improve satisfaction ratings and create new products and services.
- A solid explanation of users' expectations for a consistent experience across all of BellSouth's many business units.
- Knowledge of each user type's needs, expectations, and motivations for customer support, ranging from self-service to full service.
- Ideas for customizing customer support by user type.

Our Approach

- Secondary research to create an insightful timeline with the following information:
 - › All product and service research conducted for BellSouth DSL.
 - › When the competition brought competing products and services online.
 - › When the JD Power Award occurred and when the ratings drop report came out.

- Qualitative research to develop and validate user Personas, including:
 - › One-on-one contextual interviews with call center agents in three cities to determine the various types of customer complaints and understand patterns within the customer lifecycle.
 - › Observation of customer support calls with the same agents.
- A comprehensive customer lifecycle, following customers from purchase to installation to service use to either upgrade or disconnect.
- A gap analysis to map BellSouth support tools and services—including their features and functions—to each user type and customer lifecycle stage.
- Quantitative research to validate the customer lifecycle through a 60-user, nine-month panel, where users performed the following:
 - › Evaluation of the entire BellSouth experience—from researching service, to ordering and installation, to use of the product, to support for customer issues.
 - › Weekly logs to document issues at each customer lifecycle stage.
 - › Weekly performance and evaluation tasks appropriate for the customer lifecycle stage.
 - › Monthly evaluation of new product offerings and website designs.
 - › Testing of persuasive content for education and marketing opportunities at each customer lifecycle stage.

Who we talked to

- One-on-one interviews: A total of 25 people representing five persona groups, or user types.
- Call center observations: 40 call center agents for first and second level support.
- Nine-month user panel: 12 users for each of the five persona groups for a total of 60 participants.