Sony Field Report Examples

Cable Operator:
Time Warner Cable

Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:

- Customers reported they could not view any cable channels after a CableCARD was installed and provisioned in their Digital Cable Ready televisions.
- Customers' televisions functioned normally when the CableCARD was removed.
- Customers reported the MSO informed them the cause of the problem was with the Sony television, and they should contact Sony to arrange to have their sets serviced.
- Customers were told:
    - Your set needs new firmware.
    - We are seeing many problems with Sony televisions; implying that it is a Sony problem.
    - This problem is with Sony products only; we're not seeing problems with other televisions.
    - Sony will not admit their televisions do not work with CableCARDs.
    - Sony had to guess at the CableCARD specification, and got it wrong.

History of Problem:

- Customers contacted Sony beginning January 4, 2006.
- Sony contacted the MSO on January 10, 2006.
- Resolved by MSO January 26, 2006.

Investigation of Problem:
By MSO:

- The MSO tried to re-provision the Cards remotely
- When asked by Sony, the MSO claimed the problem was unique to Sony televisions.
- The MSO eventually contacted Motorola, at Sony's urging, and Motorola was able to resolve the issue by instructing the MSO to reset the application responsible for delivery of the Virtual Channel Map to CableCARDs.

By CableLabs:

- Sony informed CableLabs of the issue but did not request their help in resolving the problem.

By CE Company:

- Sony contacted customers on a list provided by the MSO to investigate the problem. This was not a complete list; Sony, through its customer service center, identified additional customers experiencing similar problems.
- Sony found that customers were unable to tune any channels due to the absence of the Virtual Channel Map. This was verified through the television's service menus.
- Sony notified the MSO of the missing Virtual Channel Map.

Conclusion from Sony:

- The root cause of this problem was not the Sony television. It was a system problem that would have affected all manufacturers' sets. It is possible only Sony televisions were affected during the time this problem existed, but it is highly unlikely.
- Approximately twenty Sony customers were unnecessarily inconvenienced as a consequence of poor customer service
- The MSO made no attempt to investigate this issue until it was escalated within their management ranks.
- MSO staff, rather than troubleshooting the problem for the customer, exhibited a tendency to repeat incorrect conclusions about Cable Ready products and offer a set-top box as a viable remedy to the problem.
- The small number of CableCARDs deployed, relative to the large number of set-top boxes deployed, seems to result in less emphasis on servicing customers with Cable Ready products.
- This problem report describes one of several similar or same issues encountered over the past few months by Sony (not always the same system or MSO). In each instance, Sony must engage the MSO in order to resolve the problem. Often, Sony must dispatch personnel to investigate the issue to prove that a system malfunction or procedural failure is the root cause of the problem.

Proposed Solution for Problem Described:

Common Reliance would have enabled cable operators to mitigate such problems in their own systems without denying service to customers and requiring Sony involvement to resolve the issue.

Cable Operator:
Comcast

Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:

- Customers reported they could not view any cable channels after a CableCARD was installed and provisioned in their Digital Cable Ready televisions.
- Customers' televisions functioned normally when the CableCARD was removed.
- Customers reported the MSO informed them the cause of the problem was with the Sony television, and they should contact Sony to arrange to have their televisions serviced.
- Customers were told:
    - We are seeing many problems with Sony televisions; implying that it is a Sony problem.
    - We are only seeing these problems with Sony sets.
    - I am going to tell you ahead of time, Sony sets never seem to work.

History of Problem:

- Customers contacted Sony beginning December 8, 2005.
- Sony contacted the MSO on February 16, 2006.
- Resolved by MSO February 22, 2006.

Investigation of Problem:
By MSO:

- The MSO tried to re-provision the Cards remotely
- The MSO offered their help to a local Authorized Sony servicer investigating the problem, who in turn passed this offer along to Sony's Corporate Engineering group.
- When asked by Sony, the MSO claimed the problem was unique to Sony televisions.
- The MSO eventually pinpointed the cause of the problem to an equipment failure. They were able to pinpoint the problem with the aid of information provided by Sony. Sony provided a list of affected customers, and the MSO was able to determine that the problem was geographically isolated, and than could look to the equipment serving the affected geographic area.

By CableLabs:

- Not involved.

By CE Company:

- Sony contacted a number of affected customers.
- Sony found that customers were unable to tune any channels due to the absence of the Virtual Channel Map. This was verified through the television's service menus.
- Sony notified the MSO of the missing Virtual Channel Map and provided a list of affected customers (with addresses). The MSO pinpointed the problem by correlating it to a specific service area, and then isolating it to a particular piece of equipment.

Conclusion from Sony:

- The root cause of this problem was not the Sony television. It was a system problem that would have affected all manufacturers' sets. It is possible only Sony televisions were affected during the time this problem existed, but it is highly unlikely.
- Approximately fifteen Sony customers were unnecessarily inconvenienced as a consequence of poor customer service.
- The MSO made no attempt to investigate this issue until it was escalated within their management ranks.
- MSO staff, rather than troubleshooting the problem for the customer, exhibited a tendency to repeat incorrect conclusions about Cable Ready products and offer a set-top box as a viable remedy to the problem.
- The small number of CableCARDs deployed, relative to the large number of set-top boxes deployed, seems to result in less emphasis on servicing customers with Cable Ready products.
- This problem report describes one of several similar or same issues encountered over the past few months by Sony (not always the same system or MSO). In each instance, Sony must engage the MSO in order to resolve the problem. Often, Sony must dispatch personnel to investigate the issue to prove that a system malfunction or procedural failure is the root cause of the problem.

Proposed Solution for Problem Described:

- Common Reliance would have enabled cable operators to mitigate such problems in their own systems without denying service to customers and requiring Sony involvement to resolve the issue.

Cable Operator:
CableOne

Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:

- Customers could not watch certain channels after a CableCARD was installed in their television.
- Customers were told by the MSO that the cause of the problem was the Sony television.

History of Problem:

- The MSO contacted Sony on February 24, 2006.
- Sony informed the MSO that the problem was due to the CableCARD not being properly provisioned on February 27, 2006.
- This problem is unresolved as of March 20, 2006.

Investigation of Problem:
By MSO:

- The MSO tried to re-provision the Cards remotely.
- The MSO tried installing and provisioning a new Card.

By CableLabs:

- CableLabs was informed of the problem by Sony. CableLabs contacted Motorola to verify Sony's belief that the CableCARD was not provisioned correctly, and confirmed this to be true.

By CE Company:

- Sony contacted two of the affected customers.
- Sony found that the CableCARD was un-paired for encrypted channels. This means that content marked as encrypted cannot be seen, even though the CableCard is authorized to receive such channels.
- Sony notified the MSO of the improper provisioning of the CableCARD.

Conclusion from Sony:

- The root cause of this problem is not the Sony television. The root cause is believed to be system related. The problem is systemic in nature, as it affects multiple customers.
- At least three Sony customers were unnecessarily inconvenienced as a consequence of poor customer service.
- The MSO made no attempt to investigate this issue, other than contact Sony to suggest the problem was with the customers' televisions, until it was escalated within their management ranks.
- MSO staff, rather than troubleshooting the problem for the customer, exhibited a tendency to repeat incorrect conclusions about Cable Ready products.
- The small number of CableCARDs deployed, relative to the large number of set-top boxes deployed, seems to result in less emphasis on servicing customers with Cable Ready products.
- This problem report describes one of several similar or same issues encountered over the past few months by Sony (not always the same system or MSO). In each

Formatted: Font color: Auto

instance, Sony must engage the MSO in order to resolve the problem. Often, Sony must dispatch personnel to investigate the issue to prove that a system malfunction or procedural failure is the root cause of the problem.

Proposed Solution for Problem Described:

- Common Reliance would have enabled cable operators to mitigate such problems in their own systems without denying service to customers and requiring Sony involvement to resolve the issue.

Cable Operator:
Comcast

Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:

- The customer reported he could not view any cable channels after a CableCARD was installed and provisioned in his Digital Cable Ready Digital Video Recorder (DVR).
- The DVR functioned normally when the CableCARD was removed.
- At the time of the installation, the MSO field technician informed the customer that the problem was with the DVR, and instructed to contact Sony to arrange for service of the product. The CableCard was left with the customer, un-provisioned.
- Upon escalating the matter with the MSO, the customer was told they could not install a CableCARD in a device that was not on the MSOs' approved product list.
- The customer informed the MSO that the product was on the CableLabs list of approved products, but they declined to acknowledge the product, and asked that the CableCard be returned.

History of Problem:

- Customer contacted Sony on March 7, 2006
- Sony contacted the MSO on March 7, 2006.
- Resolved on March 14, 2006.

Investigation of Problem:
By MSO:

- The MSO declined to investigate the problem because the DVR was not on their approved products list.
- Investigation of the issue began after Sony escalated the matter with the MSO management.
- A set-top box was offered until the problem could be resolved.
- The cause of the problem is unknown. The customer reported to Sony that he had overheard the CableCARD was set up incorrectly on his account.

By CableLabs:

- The MSO asked CableLabs to help investigate the issue wherein the Virtual Channel Map was not delivered to the DVR. CableLabs was to try to reproduce the problem in their lab.

By CE Company:

- Sony contacted the customer to investigate the issue.
- Sony found the customer was unable to tune any channels due to the absence of the Virtual Channel Map. This was determined through the DVRs' service menus.
- This information was provided to the MSO to justify our argument that the problem is not with the DVR and needed to be investigated.

Conclusion from Sony:

- The root cause of this problem was not the Sony DVR. It appears to have been caused by misconfiguration of the CableCARD in the MSO system.

- There was no attempt to resolve this issue until it was escalated within the MSO management ranks.
- One Sony customer was unnecessarily inconvenienced as a consequence of poor customer service.
- MSO staff, rather than troubleshooting the problem for the customer, exhibited a tendency to offer incorrect conclusions about Cable Ready products and offer a set-top box as a viable remedy to the problem.
- The small number of CableCARDs deployed, relative to the large number of set-top boxes deployed, seems to result in less emphasis on servicing customers with Cable Ready products.
- This problem report describes one of several similar or same issues encountered over the past few months by Sony (not always the same system or MSO). In each instance, Sony must engage the MSO in order to resolve the problem. Often, Sony must dispatch personnel to investigate the issue to prove that a system malfunction or procedural failure is the root cause of the problem.

Formatted: Font color: Auto

Proposed Solution for Problem Described:

- Common Reliance would have enabled cable operators to mitigate such problems in their own systems without denying service to customers and requiring Sony involvement to resolve the issue.

Cable Operator:
Time Warner Cable

Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:
- Customers could no longer view specific analog channels that had been available.
- Many channels are local over-the-air and available on most cable systems.
- These channels were converted to the digital tier by the cable operator.
- Customers were told:
    - The channel was no longer available to CableCard customers.
    - CableCard cannot be used for receiving digital channels.
    - The only way to receive digital channels is to lease a set-top box.

History of Problem:
- Customer contacted Sony March 13, 2006.

Investigation of Problem:
By MSO:
- The Cable operator has not returned Sony's calls.

By CableLabs:
- Not involved

By CE Company:
- Sony contacted the customer.
- The root problem is that the Cable Operator uses two channel maps; one for set-top boxes and another for Digital Cable Ready devices.
- Analog channels that have been converted to the digital tier are not available to CableCard customers.

Conclusion from CE Company Perspective:
- This problem is affecting several customers.
- Most customers do not know the actual reason for loss of such channels; many are accepting the Cable Operator's explanation.
- This type of problem is not with Sony televisions. It is a system problem that affects all manufacturers' products.
- Many customers are unnecessarily inconvenienced as a consequence of poor customer service
- The small number of CableCARDs deployed, relative to the large number of STBs deployed, seems to result in less emphasis on servicing customers with Cable Ready products.
- This problem report describes one of several similar or same issues encountered over the past few months by Sony (not always the same system or MSO). In each instance, Sony must engage the MSO in order to resolve the problem. Often, Sony must dispatch personnel to investigate the issue to prove that a system malfunction or procedural failure is the root cause of the problem.

Proposed Solution for Problem Described:
Common Reliance would have enabled cable operators to mitigate such problems in their own systems without denying service to customers and requiring CE company involvement to resolve.

Toshiba Field Issue Examples

- **Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:**

  Customer was unable to watch TV since the Acquiring Channel Map Dialog was appearing approx every 30-45 minutes. This problem is suspected in all SA systems, but with a duty cycle that is on the order of weeks, which makes it difficult to troubleshoot.

- **History of Problem:**
  - 1st reported 5/6/2005 from Call Center/Service to DPDC
  - 2/24/05 – dcrissues group report that 1.49p1 helps the problem, but sometimes it still occurs.

- **Investigation of Problem:**
  - **By MSO:**
  - Initially - MSO investigated problems and was communicating the issues to our Call center at the division level. Also noted that another manufacturer was having problems there as well.
  - 6/7/05 – Informed by Corporate that official policy was to reproduce at CableLabs then we would be supported on-site.
  - 6/20/05 – Testing was performed at the MSO site.
  - 6/21/05 – Split channels were removed from the channel map to temporarily allow the CableCard to function without restarting every 30-45 minutes.

  - **By CableLabs:**
  - 6/7/05 – CableLabs requested information on how to reproduce and technical details of the problem..
  - 6/7/05 to 6/14/05 – CableLabs tries to reproduce in their lab.
  - 6/14/05 – CableLabs suggests that we go on-site to further investigate the problem.
  - 6/20/05 – Help organize and was present at the MSO location for testing and reproduction of the problem. Convinced Scientific Atlanta that they should investigate the problem.

  - **By CE Company:**
    6/1/05 - Sent 2 Engineers and 1 Service Engineer to Dealer Location. Duplicated the problem and captured log files. Examined log files and determined that CableCard was internally resetting. CableCard set TC ID to 0 causing communications error on Host. This caused the communications to fail and Host device would reset CableCard and restart all communications. Thus displaying the dialog box for channel map acquisition. We also learned that another manufacturer was having similar problems at this same location.

- 6/20/05 – Sent 2 Software Engineers back to Syracuse. Another Vendor was also present to examine the same issue. The problem was easily reproduced at the MSO head-end location. SA was requested to check the problem further.
- 6/21/05 – Problem was determined to be internal to the SA CableCard. Engineers returned back home.
- 9/30/05 – Still no way to verify the fix on our internal headend, since we received no instructions on how to reproduce. The only location that easily reproduced the issue was Syracuse.

- **By Scientific Atlanta:**
- 6/21/05 – SA engineers arrive on-site. Problem was reproduced and determined to be the CableCard generating an exception and rebooting internally.
- 7/22/05 – SA sent two test cards for testing, but not entered into our CA system, so we were unable to test.
- 12/9/2005 – SA to release 1.49p1 to address this issue.

- **Conclusion from CE Company Perspective:**

  Overall, this was a good example of overall Cable/CE cooperation. However since the Cable MSO did not rely on the proper operation of the CableCard for their normal operations only the CE customers were inconvenienced and were disappointed in the operation of CableCard. It still took several weeks to convince Scientific Atlanta that they had a field issue. Also it showed that testing at CableLabs is not a guarantee that every device will work in every real world scenario. It also demonstrated that some MSO's corporate policies assume that the Host device must be at fault.

- **Problem description from CUSTOMER perspective:**

  Customer is informed by the Cable Company that their TV is not compatible with the local cable system, because it is not on "the list". This has been reported quite often and in every case was incorrect. However, it instills disappointment and dissatisfaction with the manufacturer of the Host Device.

- **History of Problem:**
  - 1st reported 1/5/2006 from Call Center/Service to DPDC

- **Investigation of Problem:**
  - **By MSO:**
  - 1/5/2006 – Charter in Oregon informs our Customer that our TV set is not on the supported list. Advises our Call Center that is company policy to not install Cable Cards in Host Devices that are not on the list. However the list is probably out of date.
  - **By CableLabs:**
  - 1/9/2006 – CableLabs fixes the omission of the 72MZ195 from the certification list.
  - **By CE Company:**
    1/5/2006 – Sent link for updated list on the CableLabs website. The list is difficult to find.
    1/6/2006 – Informed that the 72MX195 was not on the list. Inquired to CableLabs.
    1/9/2006 – Informed by CableLabs that it was omitted by error and will be corrected in the next list.

- **Conclusion from CE Company Perspective:**

  The MSO practice of using a certification list has many problems including making sure that everyone has the latest version of the list. Also, as in our case the list was in error and omitted a model that was certified. Also this practice tends to undermine the confidence in our products. We would not put a Cable Card slot on any Televisions that are not Cable Card compatible.