

As a consumer, I find much of the discussion around the ATT/T-Mobile merger as marketing by ATT. I do not know how much money is being spent on upgrading their network or how the merger will synergize this or optimize that. I can only speak from my personal experience. I switched to ATT because of the iPhone.

I used to have ATT back in the late 1990s and their customer service was awful. I switched to Verizon and was pretty happy with their coverage until I moved to New England. In their "Zone 1" market, my service was awful and after months of multiple dropped calls daily and 4 replacement phones, I switched to Helio. At the time Helio had the best rate package that included unlimited talk, text and web for \$99/month. Eventually, Sprint bought Helio and had the same lower deal. This deal dropped further to \$79/month for unlimited everything. The only other carrier with a better deal was T-Mobile and I was not sure of their coverage, though I liked their phones.

If it was not for Sprint (and Helio) and T-Mobile, ATT and Verizon would not have dropped their prices to unlimited talking for \$79/month. I still had to pay for texting and data/downloads. My monthly bill with unlimited everything on ATT is \$114/month plus taxes and fees or \$125/month. This is still a significant expense in this economy. I recently had to drop my unlimited plan in order to save some costs. It is hard to justify spending hard-earned money when the COMPETITION is cheaper.

Furthermore, I am tired of paying a premium price with ATT, and NOT RECEIVING PREMIUM SERVICE.

I work in the DC area and live in Maryland. I also travel to Virginia and West Virginia for work. This is what I get from a company that is willing to spend \$39B to buy T-Mobile but refuses to improve its current service:

There are multiple dead zones (no cell coverage) throughout the greater DC area.

There are also more areas where data/internet (3G) is terrible.

I often have to go to the FDA in Silver Spring. I have no service once I enter the building. I have spoken with people there and was told that Verizon has a node on the campus so they get reception. ATT was offered the opportunity to install a node but declined. I do not know the truth and I do not care. All I know is that I cannot use my ATT phone there.

I get spotty phone coverage from DC all the way to Charlottesville.

There is poor coverage throughout West Virginia.

I can barely get any data access out of Union Station.

There are dead zones on 295 to and from DC.

I get spotty coverage when visiting my parents in Florida.

All this from a company that claims it is connecting me to my world, everywhere I live and work.

I understand that ATT is claiming that this merger will resolve these service problems but I am not convinced. Why was my Sprint service better than ATT's and Verizon's? I had a Verizon phone for work and a Blackberry with ATT service, so I was able to compare service throughout New England and Sprint was most often better. Again, I switched for the iPhone and later realized that the service is what matters.

On top of this poor phone service, my experience with ATT customer service, is not the high-quality customer service they claim is their heritage. I experienced poor customer service years ago and as recent as this week had extremely poor customer service. Their agent accused me of making mistakes later shown (upon further investigation) to be incorrect. When I asked for his name and employee number or way to reference him, he refused to give me any information. This is high-quality customer service?!

I love my iPhone and my friends love theirs but we all like the iPhone despite ATT. If this merger goes through, I am convinced that the prices will continue to creep up.

If you truly want competition, and insist that this merger must go through, then simply require Apple to make their iPhone available on ALL NETWORKS, including Sprint, MetroPCS, et.al. Then we will see how competition is truly supposed to work in America.