

Sprint junks jargon on wireless bills

By DAVID HAYES
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"Voice airtime summary," that not-so-memorable phrase that has shown up on Sprint wireless bills for years, is no more.

Sprint Corp., which made its mark by promising crystal-clear phone calls, is pledging to do the same thing with the bills it sends out to customers.

The Overland Park telecommunications company Tuesday unveiled a new invoicing system, eliminating industry jargon in an attempt to

make wireless bills simpler.

Thus, "voice airtime summary" Tuesday became "minutes used."

"Our redesigned wireless bill sets a new industry standard when it comes to delivering simple, intuitive and useful information to our customers," said Matthew Ariker, Sprint's vice president for customer management and retention.

The company is planning to send out the first of the new bills this week.

Sprint has been working on the invoice makeover for 11 months.

In general, the company simpli-

fied the design, eliminated jargon and made it easier to see who's using minutes on shared family plans, said Vincent DeSantis, senior director of loyalty marketing for Sprint.

DeSantis said wireless phone bills now often cover more than a single phone line and voice service. More and more families share minutes over multiple lines, and consumers also are using data and multimedia services, he said.

Industry research firm TNS Telecoms estimates that an average wireless household spends about \$75 a month on its wireless service.

"There's a lot more complexity in service offerings for our customers," DeSantis said. "We wanted to make sure we clearly outlined these new types of services."

The new bills include a summary page and an in-depth breakdown. There's more white space and less clutter, DeSantis said.

The redesign is part of the company's continued focus on improving customer service. Customer service complaints have dogged Sprint for several years, and the company has made a series of moves in the last 18 months to im-

prove customer satisfaction.

Sprint also is trying to make the billing process easier by directing calls from new customers to employees trained to work with them.

"The invoice seems like a strange thing to lead the industry in," DeSantis said. However, he said, the bills are "our monthly communication touchpoint with almost every customer."

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