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MOBILE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. HOW EXPANDING INTO WIRELESS IS TAKING ONE TELCO TO NEW HEIGHTS.

Doug Moore, CFO of CREDO Mobile™, tells us how his organization made a unique business model even more powerful by leaping into the wireless business — and as a result is making an even bigger impact on world peace, equality, human rights and the environment.



CREDO
mobile

What was the inspiration behind CREDO Mobile?

“Back in 1985 we had this crazy idea that people could change the world and make it a better place, just by talking on the phone. So we developed a long distance telephone service under the company name of Working Assets™ that gave

Americans a simple way to affect social change by having a portion of their monthly bills go to support progressive causes.

By the year 2000, Working Assets had revenues over \$100 million, and we saw that wireless would be a natural next step for advancing our business and our mission to be an active force in improving our world.

What were your major concerns about entering the wireless market?

At the time, only the major carriers provided consumer wireless services. We saw the vast potential that wireless had for expanding our business, and we were very excited by what we thought it could do for our customers. But in 2000 there were no established wireless resellers in the marketplace — so we would be among the very first to become a Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO). We had a significant amount of experience providing consumers long distance service but knew little about wireless. As a result, we spent a great deal of effort assessing the business opportunity and associated risks.

We knew there would be a lot of challenges. For starters, our unique business model meant that a standard, cookie-cutter wholesale mobile offering would not work for

us. We had to have a mobile solution that supported our core strategy. We were only willing to enter the wireless market if we could provide pricing and a choice in handsets that were on par with major carriers, and customer service that was superior.

To make all of this a reality, we needed a partner who could provide a world-class wireless network and help support our development of solutions for back-office and operations. Most importantly, we had to have the commitment of a wholesale provider to help us develop a competitive wireless product where there was no proven path in the MVNO space.

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Why did you decide to partner with Sprint Wholesale?

When it came to entering the wireless market as a reseller, we considered all of our options. But it was clear to us back in 2000 that while all of the major carriers professed interest in the wholesale market, Sprint was unique in their vision and commitment. Sprint had a clear vision, they had a plan for growth, and they understood the unique challenges of applying new business models to their network. That's why Sprint continues to be the premier wholesale provider that they are today.

“Sprint had a clear vision, they had a plan for growth, and they understood the unique challenges.”

Working Assets had been partnering with Sprint since 1989. Throughout that period, Sprint clearly demonstrated their commitment and capabilities to provide wholesale services and work as a partner to help successfully grow a number of businesses with dramatically different models.

What major challenges did you face in launching CREDO Mobile?

Launching an MVNO presented a range of challenges to be successful. In terms of operational challenges, provisioning and activating handsets on the wireless network was a very significant issue — one that's a challenge for retail organizations, let alone resellers. Sprint was incredibly dedicated and innovative when it came to developing appropriate processes to make handset activation as easy as possible.

“Sprint also helped us build a very attractive portfolio of handsets.”

Since day one, they've also been very active in helping us maintain an attractive portfolio of handsets — and not just the typical device that you'd expect from MVNOs. For example, smart phones have been very important to CREDO from the very start and Sprint has been instrumental in helping us find a path to secure smart phones for our line-up. Sprint was very creative when it came to helping us get these devices at a scale that works for both CREDO and the major manufacturers.

From a market-positioning standpoint, we faced additional challenges. At the very least, our customers expect pricing and technology that's on par with the major carriers. Using that as a starting point, we pursued additional ways to customize our mobile offering and make it truly differentiated to support our mission.

To address this particular challenge, Sprint Wholesale delivered the infrastructure, operational support, and timely data we needed to craft a unique bill. A bill that continues to go far beyond a simple breakdown of monthly charges, acting as a newsletter that helps us build community and keep our CREDO customers actively involved.

What's it like, having Sprint as a partner?

After twenty-plus years together, Sprint really is like family to us. We have worked hard to successfully pursue growth, exceeding both of our expectations.

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Wireless is an incredibly complicated business. The devil is in the details, and Sprint's dedication to working side-by-side with us has been key to our success, whether that's reacting real-time to customer issues, changing a process, or helping us maintain and grow our customer base. Sprint's vision and knowledge of the wireless wholesale business has been a tremendous asset to us.

Overall, I've never seen a telecommunications carrier work harder than Sprint to break through operational, technological and infrastructure barriers. Sprint has been a remarkable partner, enabling us to do what we do best and engage activists while growing our wireless business.

There's no other partner who could have helped us over the past twenty-plus years get to where we are today.

What have you accomplished working together?

We're incredibly proud of where our company is today. Since our inception we've generated over \$65 million in donations to progressive non-profits. Our customers have helped initiate more than 30 million actions in the form of emails, faxes and phone calls to key decision makers who have the power to affect social change. And we have a large, nation-wide base of subscribers that's growing at a rate of over 25% annually.

For more information on Sprint Wholesale, contact your local Sprint representative or visit wholesale.sprint.com.

What's next for CREDO Mobile?

We're always looking for new ways to enrich our offering and increase customer engagement.

For example, we've recently launched Sprint ID, which allows us to create a CREDO Mobile branded interface. So when customers turn on their phones, they don't just get branded wallpaper, they get a CREDO Mobile experience that includes a host of applications, widgets and functionality designed to help them engage in social causes. It lets users follow legislation, relevant news and social media. And it lets them respond in real-time to the causes they care about.

In terms of our business outlook, we see an acceleration of classic mobile metrics including voice minutes and data usage. Every month, we see an increase in our customers' expectation of what their phones can do. And we have a strategy in place now that is going to drive donations to well over \$100 million.

So we are quite optimistic about our future growth and what we can accomplish with our long term partner, Sprint Wholesale.