Dear Verizon Team,

As a 20+ year customer and Harvard Business School student studying service operations in [Professor Robert Markey](#)'s [class](#), I'm writing to share how a recent service failure exposed systemic gaps likely costing Verizon millions in unnecessary support costs.

Why This Matters
What should have been a simple hardware replacement became a week-long ordeal costing me client meetings and billable hours. My case alone generated 7+ calls and multiple shipping attempts - multiply this by thousands of customers facing similar issues.

The Pattern (Refurbished iPhone failures)
- June 2023: Hardware failure, paid Asurion $99 (incorrectly told out of warranty)
- June 2025: Apple confirmed manufacturing defect (GPS/FaceID)
- August 2025: Failed again, triggering cascade below
- September 2025: GPS issues returned

Service Breakdown (August 6-9)
- 8/6: Asurion demanded $99 for hardware defect; Verizon promised free replacement
- 8/7: Order never placed; signature waiver never processed
- 8/8: Three calls, three different answers; three-way call with US/India/Philippines
- Result: Missed delivery, wrong color, $52.06 still not credited, refurb phone broke again

Four Systemic Gaps & Fixes
1. Refurbished Quality Control
Problem: Multiple hardware failures verified as defects → Erodes trust, creates downstream service costs
Fix: After one failure, provide new (not refurbished) device
Metric: Track 90-day failure rates; halt batches exceeding threshold

2. Coverage Confusion (Verizon vs. Asurion)
Problem: Nobody knows which service covers what (both customers and support at both cos) → Customers pay unnecessarily; service calls increase cost to Verizon
Fix: Simple rule visible to all: "Hardware defect = Verizon (free). Damage = Asurion ($99)"
Metric: Track coverage-related calls vs. claims completed online

3. Broken Promise-to-Execution
Problem: Verbal promises don't translate to system actions → Failed deliveries, repeat calls, customer frustration, additional Verizon support costs
Fix: Email confirmation before ending call with confirmed action items and shipping tracking IDs
Metric: Eliminate repeat calls for same issue

4. "Temporary" Fee Trap
Problem: $52.06 fees require callback for removal → Creates lose-lose scenarios: Diligent customers waste time calling back (reminder of bad experience), while forgetful customers discover surprise charges (breach of trust). Verizon bears unnecessary support costs and reputation damage.
Fix: Automatically apply charge and credit together: "Fee: $52.06 / Credit: -$52.06"
Metric: Zero fee-related callbacks

The Opportunity
Your frontline reps want to help but lack proper tools. Systemic fixes similar to these would empower them to improve customer experience (and improve topline churn) while reducing operational costs (and improve bottom line profits). Taking this step further could transform frustrating customer stories like mine into positive ones that drive customer loyalty. Done right, this could shift customer support from a cost center to a strategic revenue driver and become a win-win for customers and Verizon worthy of an HBS case study.

I hope this perspective is useful as you continue to improve Verizon's customer experience.

Sincerely,

John Yang-Sammataro