

11/20/09 - "There's a Map for that..." (part 2)

Ok. Here's the most ridiculous response I've seen in a long time.

AT&T's response to Verizon's brilliant "Map for That" campaign is this: *Make stuff up!*

The core problem with AT&T's response is that anyone who uses AT&T ? myself included ? knows that **it's just not true.**

See the ad below and hear the galling "spin". AT&T has a shoddy, overburdened and unreliable network. Verizon's is the class of the field. Consumer Reports' annual survey of 20 metro centers lists Verizon as number one in ALL markets surveyed. **It's not even close.**

So ? why am I on AT&T? Am I an idiot? Maybe... ? but there are two reasons I tell myself when I drop another call:

- 1. Contract and the cost of breaking the contract (those fees are painful).
- 2. My iPhone.

Note to Steve Jobs: for a super-detailed CEO of the Decade ? this makes your Value Prop less than perfect. However, the "everything else" about the iPhone outweighs the "uggh" of your network (for now).

The message is this: a superior product in several "I3? dimensions can overcome key liabilities.... **to a point.**

Where's **my** breaking point? First ? when and if (I hope When) Verizon gets the iPhone or its successor ? I am beaming up to the good ship Verizon on the same day ? and gladly paying the contract termination fee as a "toll" to get on the better phone highway.

What should AT&T do now? Shouldn't it have the Marketing Right to defend itself?

Well, I think AT&T is doing much the same thing the American auto industry did: worry more about explaining its failures and blaming others (for example, suing Verizon over the ads). Instead, AT&T should focus on the only thing that matters for a cellular network ? allow customers to place and keep calls. In other words ? **DO YOUR**

JOB!

Spinning some data in the face of the truth just *angers* your customers.

From a marketing POV ? tell the story of continuous improvement (if true) ? of program innovation (rollover minutes) ? of device innovation (Verizon's historic weak link) ? and... "we got the iPhone and they don't!"

For now, that works for me...