

## Article

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### No Competitive Advantage

Our workshop participants frequently cite their “most admired” and “least admired” organizations. Their comments provide an interesting index of consumer experiences. Over time their perspectives about companies have changed radically. Nortel for example, was often cited as most admired. It has since been relegated to the least admired.

In recent years the telecom and cable providers have been in a league apart—very frequently cited as least admired.

The treatment people report receiving at the hands of Bell, Telus, Rogers and others, is in sharp contrast to these companies’ self portrayals. It is inconceivable to me that these companies do not know of the performance gap in their service culture. Therefore, it must be that these organizations believe there is no competitive advantage to excellent service and user-friendly systems.

Lousy service often stems from failed processes. Billing is classic. I receive three bills from a telecom because of their inability to consolidate their accounts. In this case, its perplexing, because the benefits of fixing these processes would go directly to their bottom line, not just to simplify my life. Similarly, improving their dropped-call rates would aid in building their business. People may actually stay on-line and subscribe to additional services. But with no competitive advantages to competing on service, process improvements tend to languish.

