

Verizon Experience Insights Research Brief

To provide clear direction and ensure an outcome that will meet your needs, please provide the following:

Project Title:	Dark Patterns nomenclature: Discount, Credit, Free, On Us	Date:	2/21/25
Channel:	VCG Digital Unity		
Requester:	Kristin Terpeza		
Research Objective(s): <i>What do we need to understand as a result of the research?</i>			
<p>The Content Strategy team is currently working on building out a glossary of commonly used terms in offers, with the goal of creating guidelines and suggestions for when specific nomenclature should/shouldn't be used. This glossary will initially be provided to support working teams, with a future goal of discussing with Brandy (Digital Unity) to evangelize further.</p> <p>The glossary is a WIP with several terms that have already been tested via Spot Testing or more formal CMI studies, as well as others that still require further exploration. For this study, the team would like to develop a foundational understanding of current/prospect customers' mental models, perception, and understanding of the terms: bill credit/credit, discount, free, on us, as well as related marketing phrases.</p> <p>To improve offer transparency and customer understanding, we would like to learn:</p> <p>1. Prospect/Customer mental models and understanding of "bill credit/credit"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. How would you describe what a "credit" is?<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Does your description of a "credit" change in the context of an offer?ii. Where would you expect to see verbiage about a "credit" for an offer? (Homepage tile, PDP, etc.)b. If a promo offers "credits," where and how would you expect to have the credit applied? (ex. monthly bill, in cart before they place the order, etc.) If you feel there's more than one way, please mention.<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. What about in the context of purchasing a new phone?ii. How would you expect to know a credit has been successfully applied?c. How would you describe what a "bill credit" is?<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Does your description of a "bill credit" change in the context of an offer?ii. Where would you expect to see verbiage about a "bill credit" for an offer? (Homepage tile, PDP, etc.)d. How would you expect to know a bill credit has been successfully applied?e. To what extent would you consider the terms "credit" and "bill credit" to be related? In what ways?<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. What other terms or phrases, aside from "bill credit," would help you figure out that an offer will give you a credit on your bill? (i.e., Is there another way to say the same thing?)f. Bill credit vs. free Visual: BAU Smartphone Gridwall Left rail > Offers category opened to show BAU subcategory filters: Bill credit, Free, Online only, Trade-in<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. What's the difference between the "Bill credit" and "free" filters?ii. How do you think savings will be applied for each?iii. Instead of "free," would any of these phrases help you better understand that you're going to see phones that credit you back the full value of a			

phone, in the form of multiple bill credits?

- iv. \$0 after bill credits
- v. Free after bill credits
- vi. Money back
- vii. (Write in?)

BAU PDP Available Offers

- viii. Save \$XXX.XX after 36 monthly bill credits.
- ix. Get \$XXX.XX back over 36 months.
- x. Get \$XX.XX/mo back for 36 months.
- xi. (Write in?)

2. Prospect/Customer mental models and understanding of “discount”

- a. How would you describe what a “discount” is?
 - i. In the context of buying a new phone, would your definition of “discount” change or remain the same?
 - ii. In the context of buying a phone accessory, would your definition of “discount” change or remain the same?
 - iii. In the context of purchasing a new phone plan, or adding another line to your current phone plan, would your definition of “discount” change?
 - iv. How can we ask testers about “discount” in the context of occupational, senior and corporate partner/employee discounts?
- b. What steps would you expect to be required to apply a discount? (both generic and occupational/senior/corporate partner/employee discounts) If you feel there's more than one way, please mention.
 - i. How would you expect to know a discount has been successfully applied?
- c. Does “discounted price/pricing” mean the same thing as just saying “discount” or is it different? If different, how so and how would it be applied?
- d. If a company is perceived as a premium brand, do you think the term "discount" is appropriate for their product deals?

Share Verizon top of funnel homepage tile offer, tile badge offer, etc. then the same (as relevant) for Verizon prepaid. Also share Competitor/Comparator examples if any use cases not covered via VZ examples.

3. When we should or shouldn't use certain marketing language for an offer

- a. (Show example of top-of-funnel offer advertising “XX% off”) How do you think you'll most likely apply this offer?
 - i. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to buying a new phone and phone plan?
 - ii. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to a phone case?
- b. (Show example of top-of-funnel offer advertising “\$XXX off”) How do you think you'll most likely apply this offer?
 - i. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to buying a new phone and phone plan?
 - ii. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to a phone case?
- c. (Show example of top-of-funnel offer advertising “Save XX%”) How do you think you'll most likely apply this offer?

- i. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to buying a new phone and phone plan?
 - ii. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to a phone case?
- d. (*Show example of top-of-funnel offer advertising “Save \$XXX”*) How do you think you’ll most likely apply this offer?
 - i. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to buying a new phone and phone plan?
 - ii. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to a phone case?
- e. (*Show example of top-of-funnel offer advertising “Get for only \$XXX”*) How do you think you’ll most likely apply this offer?
 - i. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to buying a new phone and phone plan?
 - ii. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to a phone case?
- f. (*Show example of top-of-funnel offer displaying crossed-out pricing*) When an offer has crossed out pricing with a new price next to it, how do you think you’ll apply this offer?
 - i. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to buying a new phone and phone plan?
 - ii. Would your answer change or remain the same if it was related to a phone case?
- g. (*Show example of top-of-funnel offer displaying “\$XX/mo savings”*) How do you think you’ll most likely apply this offer?

4. When we should or shouldn’t use the word “free” related to an offer

- a. When an offer advertises a product as “Free,” how do you think the offer will be applied to make the product effectively “free”?
 - i. If you feel there could be more than one way, please explain.
- b. (*Show example of “free” being used related to a phone*) Would your previous answer change in the context of getting or upgrading a new phone that’s tied to a phone plan?
- c. How do we ask testers about how they’d feel if something is advertised as being “free” in marketing offer language, but they don’t actually feel it’s free – or once they read the small print? Have you ever come across an offer for a “free” product or service that felt misleading or deceptive? What made it feel that way?

5. When we should or shouldn’t use the phrase “on us” related to an offer

- a. When an offer advertises a product as being “on us,” how do you think you’ll most likely apply that offer? If you feel there could be more than one way, please explain.
- b. Is “on us” different or the same as saying “free”? If different, please explain.

Supporting discovery:

- [VZ, competitor & comparator audit](#)
- [Audit analysis sheet](#) (WIP)
- [Offer glossary](#)

Research Impact(s):

What action(s) will be taken as a result of this research and who will be accountable for delivering these impacts?

Kristin Terpeza will develop nomenclature guidelines that support our customers' understanding of how offers work and are redeemed to better meet their expectations during the Shop experience.

These guidelines will be shared with working teams across VCG Shop and Digital Unity for feedback and refinement.

Target Details:

What target group do we need to understand (e.g. Verizon Wireless customers ages 18-34, Prospects)?

Prospects [and Customers](#)

Timing:

When do results need to be delivered? What is driving the desired timing? If necessary, when will stimulus (products, concepts, etc.) be available?

Apr 15? Creating guidelines from research insights that are ready to support Dark Patterns work that's legally required to launch mid-May 2025 and any other Shop offers work moving forward such as Elvis.

This nomenclature research isn't legally required, but the guidelines would be helpful to ensuring nomenclature understanding and synergy across MA, MAC, CXO, SEO, etc. and raising awareness with DO and other Business partners.

Ties to CXO goal of becoming #1 in customer experience and increasing customer loyalty over the next 2 years.