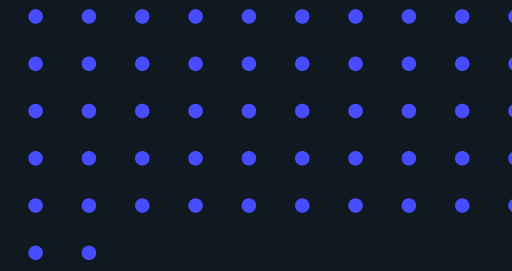


# Ritter Communications Uses NICE Feedback Management to Align Company Approach toward Customer Experience

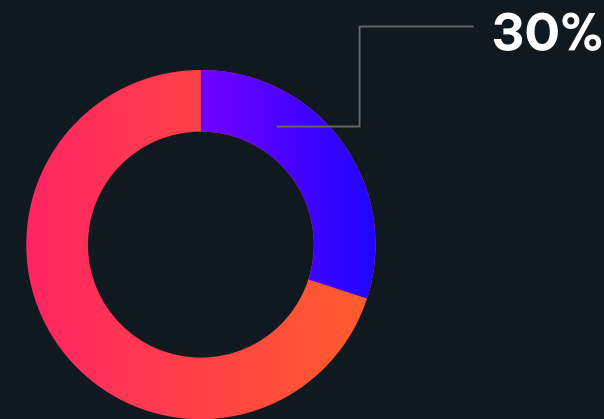
Ritter Communications is a regional telecommunications provider in the mid-south United States that offers business, residential and wholesale internet, phone, video, and cloud services. The company was founded in 1906 and is focused on investing in the communities it serves. Prior to 2015, Ritter had acquired two other regional telecom companies, and was working on integrating all three into a unified Ritter. Merging the acquired companies into one Ritter revealed that a modern customer experience platform, particularly one that could track and analyze the voice of the customer, was needed to keep the company moving forward.



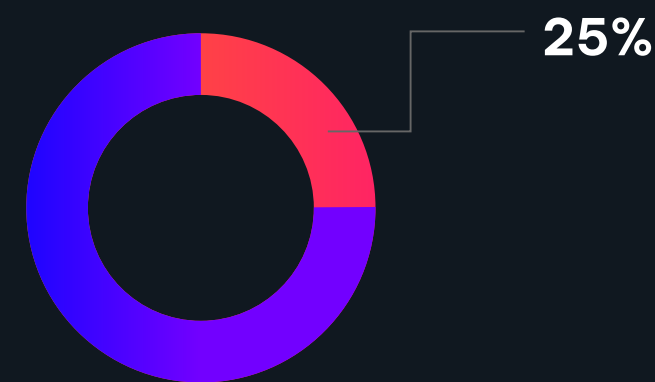
52-POINT INCREASE IN NPS



30% INCREASE IN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



25% INCREASE IN NETWORK PERFORMANCE



## CUSTOMER PROFILE

**ABOUT** Ritter Communications is a regional telecommunications provider in the Mid-South United States that offers business, residential and wholesale internet, phone, video, and cloud services. The company was founded in 1906 and is focused on investing in the communities Ritter Communications serves.

**INDUSTRY** Telecom

**WEBSITE** [www.rittercommunications.com](http://www.rittercommunications.com)

**LOCATION** Arkansas and Tennessee

**SIZE** ~100 users

- GOALS**
- Align goals across the business
  - Understand customer pain points
  - Increase customer satisfaction and loyalty
  - Make business more customer-centric

**PRODUCTS** • [NICE Feedback Management](#)

- FEATURES**
- Unbiased customer feedback across multiple channels
  - Customizable views, simple, interactive dashboards
  - Drive action across departments for optimal business performance



## 01 THE BEFORE

### Difficulty in merging companies, tools, cultures and objectives

The two telecom companies that Ritter acquired each served different territories, had different policies and cultures, used different tools, and delivered services to customers using different technologies. Jeff Kulas joined the team as director of customer care soon after the acquisition and found a tangled, complex set of operations. Departments across the company were siloed, with distinct functions and objectives—in some instances, misaligned. Kulas got right to work focusing on the customer experience (CX) areas of the business, starting with the contact center agents and help desk team. “On smaller teams like the one at Ritter, leaders have to wear many hats; yet, with so much going on, you often only have capacity to focus on your direct area,” he said. Kulas explained that despite “many well-intentioned people working hard,” the singular focus made delivering high-value customer experience inconsistent, difficult and costly. Ultimately, customers began to feel the impact of these challenges too.

## 02 DESIRE TO CHANGE

### Tracing the source of customer frustration

Ritter saw high call volumes from customers who were experiencing billing or service-related issues, with a high frequency of repeat trouble. Repair technicians often had to visit customer homes or businesses multiple times to resolve a single issue. This is both costly for Ritter and aggravating for customers. Kulas began to investigate these issues via customer experience surveys, which received a high rate of response. However, Kulas quickly found something surprising in the results. “The things that were commonly noted as causing frustration with customers were outside my purview in the customer care department,” he said. Many of the issues seemed to trace back to experiences with repair and service.

Customer care agents are uniquely positioned to see first-hand what happens when company objectives



aren't aligned across departments. The agents in the customer care centers weren't the source of frustration, just on the receiving end of customer upset after issues had already happened. “Customer care teams can fight individual fires, but resolving the underlying issues that cause those fires requires a more systematic approach,” Kulas said. As Ritter began to deploy new fiber services, understanding customer challenges and opinions became critical. Ritter needed a way to capture customer feedback systematically, conduct deep dives into call and trouble drivers, and push that information to business leaders for review and correction.

## 03 THE SOLUTION

### Unifying departments under one platform and consistent goals

After reviewing several platform options with Ritter's IT team, Kulas landed on NICE Feedback Management as their solution. Feedback Management included several features of importance to Ritter, including the ability to scale as needed. Ritter initially deployed Feedback Management with just the customer care team as a pilot test. They started small with the goal to gain a better understanding of abstract customer issues and uncover improvement opportunities before expanding to the full team. This initial iteration proved fruitful, arming Kulas with real-world applicable Voice of the Customer data to take to the CEO. That data backed what Kulas had discovered

in previous customer surveys, highlighting the need to rework the repair experience.

Ritter's CEO quickly saw the value, envisioning a future where Ritter was a CX-centric telecom service provider. A new position was created for Kulas, VP of Customer Experience, that would oversee delivery of services across all touchpoints. Ritter then engaged the various departments to create an ongoing task force, map out the entire customer journey, and develop surveys for each touchpoint. This was the first step in syncing all customer touchpoints into a seamless, end-to-end experience. Customer care shifted from “the department that handles complaints” to a critical piece of documenting and enhancing the customer experience. Company-wide NPS goals, in some cases tied to financial incentives, were established for consistency. “We knew we had to double-down to hyper-activate the creativity, cooperation, and personal responsibility of our employees,” Kulas said.

The CX task force also leveraged Feedback Management to create an employee culture survey. Ritter uncovered high-friction hand offs between departments that were causing frustration and variable accountability for outcomes across groups. This insight allowed the company to make specific adjustments to the culture and processes at Ritter. Kulas said that focusing on both internal and external satisfaction was a major driver of holistic transformation at Ritter.





## 04 THE RESULTS

### A major increase in customer satisfaction and business alignment

In the years since Ritter first implemented NICE Feedback Management, the benefits have been continued. While NPS scores helped measure performance over time, Kulas said that wasn't the main objective. "Our focus was on spotlighting the underlying behaviors and business decisions that are key to loyal customers," he said. Results from customer surveys and the culture changes at Ritter have led to enhanced training and feedback processes for repair technicians that specifically address previous customer pain points. The changes have led to a 30% increase in customer satisfaction scores, a 25% increase in enterprise network performance, and a 6-year improvement of 52 points in NPS.

Cost savings have also been immense for Ritter. The company previously had seven brick-and-mortar sites where customers could get support. Kulas said these sites were often "escalation" points, with customers coming into the offices when other avenues had failed. Thanks to the improvements and progress since implementing Feedback Management, Ritter has been able to close four of the seven sites, with savings in staffing and real estate space. "This has helped bring departments together and understand that a negative or positive customer experience is not the responsibility of one single department," Kulas said. In addition to the customer care team and help desk, managers of every single department at Ritter utilize Feedback Management.

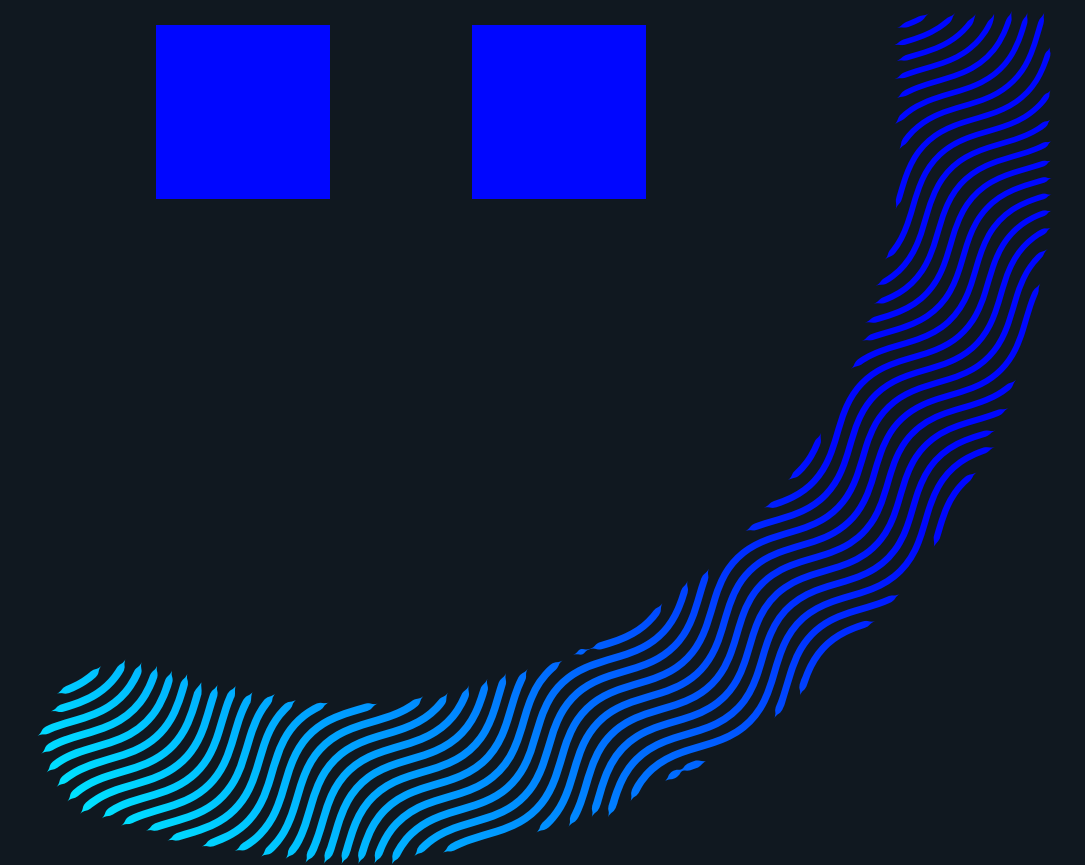
## 05 THE FUTURE

### Improving e-commerce experience

Ritter recently launched an e-commerce experience for their commercial customers, which Kulas said represents a new era for the company. "We've had a lot of traffic to the site, but currently can't extract why customers don't complete an order, for example," he said. The team plans to utilize Feedback Management to begin exploring that question, along with others, and ultimately create solutions based on the customers' needs. The e-commerce platform will be added to Ritter's master customer journey map, with specific surveys and metrics to track. "We'll be able to use the custom follow-up features of the system for this specific touchpoint as well, to connect with survey respondents and address unresolved concerns," Kulas said.

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JEFF KULAS  
VP OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE  
RITTER COMMUNICATIONS



## About NICE

With NICE (Nasdaq: NICE), it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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