

Election Day: Credo Mobile Users Vote with Their Wallets

Andrew Berg

It's election day and many are out casting their votes at polling stations across the country. It may come as a surprise that many have also been pushing a political agenda via their choice of wireless carrier.

Credo Mobile is a MNVO on Sprint's network, the revenue of which goes to support a progressive political action group called Credo Action.

The company solicits to a progressive base, asking in its marketing materials whether individuals are happy with their current wireless carrier supporting conservative groups like the Tea Party. Potential customers are then incentivized to switch. Credo offers money towards offsetting the fees typically associated with breaking a carrier contract early.

On its website, Credo strongly criticizes big money lobbying in Washington, saying Credo blazes a different path.

"We fight for progressive social change with 3 million of our activist friends at Credo Action. No lobbyists, no back-door meetings, no candidate contributions. Just ordinary Americans, galvanized to speak truth to power," the company states.

Credo Action supports organizations like Planned Parenthood, as well as policy issues like health care reform, and blocking the build out of the Keystone XL pipeline, among many others.

Haruko Kurata, vice president of product at Credo Mobile, says the point of Credo has never been to be the biggest carrier. "But we do want people on our side and supporting the causes we choose to support," Kurata said in an interview with Wireless Week.

When asked whether building a business model around a political agenda was limiting, Kurata says it's been enough to support the company's existence in the precarious MVNO market for over a decade.

"The progressive activists are a niche, but we believe it's enough," Kurata said.

Credo pushes its message and calls for donations in everything it sends. Customers even get information on candidates and causes directly on their monthly bills.

"As a service it is a differentiator," Kurata said.

In the past, Credo has been critical of conservative Super PACs like Citizens United,

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Published on Wireless Week (<http://www.wirelessweek.com>)

but this year Credo has one of its own. "Take down the Tea Party Ten," is its slogan, which refers to 10 Tea Party candidates that Credo has identified as enemies of their progressive agenda.

Kurata says the decision to create a Super PAC of its own was simply a matter of everyone playing by the same rules.

On the wireless side, Credo continues to evolve with new offerings and new devices. Just this week, the company announced that calls made from the United States to Mexico and Canada will be included in all voice plans at no extra charge starting mid-November.

"We try to offer parity in our service...We try to make as competitive an offering as the tier ones," Kurata said.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/24/2015 - 11:08pm):

<http://www.wirelessweek.com/news/2012/11/election-day-credo-mobile-users-vote-their-wallets>