

Frontier cut churn on its highest-risk customers. **With no discounts.**

A relationship-first retention program, built on Salesforce, proven against a clean holdout.

THE PROBLEM

Telecom treats churn as a pricing problem. When a high-value customer looks like they are leaving, the industry reflex is a save offer: a discount, a credit, a retention promotion. It is fast, it is measurable, and it costs margin every single time.

Frontier's customer communications and retention team tested a range of save offers directly on their highest-risk cohort. The offers did not simply underperform. They increased churn. A save offer sent to someone already halfway out the door reminds them of the reason they were leaving and does nothing about it, because the actual source of churn is a broken relationship, not a price. A coupon does not fix a relationship.

THE APPROACH

So the team removed the financial lever entirely and rebuilt the relationship instead. The Empathy Engine is a four-stage system for treating retention as what it actually is.

- LISTEN.** Pull together the signals already present. Behavior, service history, engagement, lifecycle stage. (Data 360)
- INTERPRET.** Determine what a given moment means, and how that meaning changes from one customer to the next. (Data 360)
- RESPOND.** Deliver the right thing at the right moment: reassurance, relevance, a reason to stay that is not a coupon. (Marketing Cloud Engagement)
- LEARN.** Use every result to sharpen timing and language. (Einstein)

Frontier did not automate empathy. They built the infrastructure to act on it, at scale.

THE CONTROLLED TEST

Frontier drew a pool of its highest-risk customers and randomly assigned them. One group received the Empathy Engine: five emails over six weeks. A concurrent holdout received nothing at all. No discounts, no credits, no save offers, no outreach.

The holdout was deliberately the larger of the two. Every offer the team had previously tested on this cohort had made churn worse, so they were not willing to expose the business at scale before they knew whether relationship-first contact would do the same.

THE RESULTS

12%

relative churn reduction vs. the holdout

Zero

discounts, credits, or save offers used

Two-year low

lowest monthly churn in two years

Protected

margin and customer lifetime value

WHY IT MATTERS

The tools any of us are proud of are only as good as the question we point them at. Frontier's team stopped asking what they could give a customer to keep them, and started asking what that customer actually needed. Empathy is not the soft layer added after the technology is built. Connected to your data and your measurement, it becomes a capability. A measurable one.

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The Empathy Engine: A Two-Year Churn Low Without Discounts · Dreamforce 2026 · Wednesday, September 16, 3:00pm

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