



*From the MixCache.com library*

SAMPLE COPY

# Sprint Nextel Corp.

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** The Humble Beginnings: Brown Telephone Company
- **Chapter 2** The United Years: Becoming a Regional Power
- **Chapter 3** Rails, Wires, and Ambitions: Southern Pacific's Entry into Telecom
- **Chapter 4** SPRINT: An Acronym is Born
- **Chapter 5** Deregulation and the Long-Distance Revolution
- **Chapter 6** The GTE Era: Mergers and Market Share
- **Chapter 7** US Sprint: Forging National Reach
- **Chapter 8** The Dawn of Wireless: Sprint Acquires Centel
- **Chapter 9** Laying the Foundation: Early Digital and PCS Networks
- **Chapter 10** Nextel's Genesis: FleetCall and Specialized Mobile Radio
- **Chapter 11** Innovating with iDEN: Nextel's Push-to-Talk Culture
- **Chapter 12** Growing Pains and Market Disruption: Nextel's Rise
- **Chapter 13** The Merger Proposal: Sprint Meets Nextel
- **Chapter 14** Integrating Giants: Challenges and Clashes
- **Chapter 15** Cultures Collide: Navigating Corporate Identities
- **Chapter 16** The Embarq Spin-Off: Focusing on Wireless
- **Chapter 17** Customer Experience and Retention in Tough Times
- **Chapter 18** Shutting Down iDEN: End of an Era
- **Chapter 19** SoftBank Steps In: The Global Stage
- **Chapter 20** Post-Acquisition: New Strategies, New Leadership
- **Chapter 21** Chasing 4G: Clearwire and the Broadband Race
- **Chapter 22** Competing in the Big Four: Sprint's National Role
- **Chapter 23** Innovation, Plans, and the Race to Unlimited
- **Chapter 24** The T-Mobile Merger: A New Chapter in U.S. Telecom
- **Chapter 25** Legacy and Lessons: Sprint Nextel's Enduring Impact

## Introduction

Sprint Nextel Corp.: The Story of An American Company charts the remarkable journey of one of America's pioneering telecommunications companies. This book aims to unravel the complex tapestry of innovation, competition, mergers, and reinvention that defined Sprint Nextel—an entity whose influence on the U.S. communications landscape resonates even after its absorption by a larger rival. Sprint Nextel's story is not simply corporate; it is fundamentally American, filled with bold ideas, entrepreneurial spirit, and the constant push for progress in technology and business.

Emerging from modest beginnings as the Brown Telephone Company in 1899, Sprint's origins are rooted in the effort to connect rural Kansas to a rapidly electrifying nation. Over more than a century, the company navigated seismic shifts in technology and regulation, from the monopoly era of Bell Telephone to the disruptively innovative world of mobile wireless services. Along the way, Sprint morphed from a family-run, local telephone operation into United Telecommunications, and then into a national contender, leveraging mergers and alliances to carve out a significant space in American communications.

The emergence of Nextel Communications, itself a product of entrepreneurial vision and technology-driven disruption, added a new dimension to this story. Nextel's innovative use of "push-to-talk" mobile communications made it a favorite among business and public safety users alike, while its aggressive culture stood in marked contrast to Sprint's more traditional corporate approach. When these two companies opted to merge in 2005, it seemed poised to create a wireless superpower—combining the finest assets, intellectual capital, and networks from both.

Yet, the compelling merger narrative soon collided with reality. The integration of Sprint and Nextel proved challenging, revealing deep incompatibilities between not only their network technologies but also their core cultures. The shifting landscape of competition, the arrival of new technologies, and relentless pressures from larger rivals placed immense strain on the newly formed company. Despite moments of innovation—unlimited wireless plans, bold marketing campaigns, and an early embrace of 4G—Sprint Nextel often struggled to realize the full potential anticipated at the time of merger.

As the industry consolidated and global capital flowed in, Sprint Nextel's fate became entwined with international players like SoftBank, who ushered in a period of reinvestment, leadership changes, and renewed ambition. Ultimately, the company's journey came full circle, with its merger into T-Mobile US marking the end of Sprint as an independent force. Its name vanished from storefronts and devices, but its legacy

endures—visible in the competitive landscape, enduring technological innovations, and the millions of customers who once relied on its network every day.

This book invites readers to explore the forces and personalities that shaped Sprint Nextel, to consider the lessons it offers about mergers, strategy, and change in American business, and to reflect on the meaning of corporate legacy in an industry where connectivity itself is the ultimate product. Through triumphs and failures, Sprint Nextel's history is a portrait of American ingenuity and reinvention—its story one worth telling, and remembering.

SAMPLE COPY

## **CHAPTER ONE: The Humble Beginnings: Brown Telephone Company**

The story of Sprint Nextel Corporation, a behemoth of American telecommunications, paradoxically begins not in a bustling metropolis of technological innovation, but in the quiet, agricultural heartland of Abilene, Kansas. It was here, at the twilight of the 19th century, that a resourceful entrepreneur named Cleyson Leroy Brown planted the initial seed of what would grow into a sprawling communications empire. Brown, a man who had faced adversity early in life, losing an arm in a grist mill accident at the age of ten, possessed an undeniable drive and an innate understanding of the future's needs.

Born in February 1872, Brown's early life experiences, including working as a teacher and managing a creamery in Wichita, honed his practical skills and broadened his perspective. In 1898, he ventured into the burgeoning world of utilities, starting Abilene Electric Light Works with his father, converting his father's grist mill into a power source for the town. This initial success in providing electricity to Abilene evidently sparked a new ambition within Brown. Just a year after establishing his electric company, he recognized another pressing need in the community: independent telephone service.

At the time, the telephone industry in the United States was largely dominated by the monolithic Bell Telephone Company. Bell's patents had only recently expired, opening a window for independent operators to emerge and challenge the established giant. It was into this competitive, yet ripe, environment that Cleyson Brown, driven by a desire to bring communication to the underserved rural areas of Kansas, founded the Brown Telephone Company in 1899. The company's charter was officially secured in 1902.

The early days of the Brown Telephone Company were marked by the arduous, hands-on work of stringing lines and establishing connections. Abilene, like many towns embracing this new technology, soon saw its skyline crisscrossed with a web of telephone and electric wires, strung on wooden poles. Brown, ever the innovator, even took the unconventional step of burying many of these lines in the downtown area to reduce the overhead clutter, a practice not common for the era.

The company's initial focus on local service quickly expanded. By 1900, the Brown Telephone Company had installed its first long-distance circuit, a testament to Brown's vision of connecting communities beyond Abilene's immediate vicinity. This early foray into long-distance calling set the stage for the company's future trajectory, laying the

groundwork for its eventual transformation into a major national player.

As the demand for telephone service grew, so too did Brown's enterprise. In 1911, demonstrating a keen business acumen, Cleyson Brown consolidated the Brown Telephone Company with three other independent telephone companies. This strategic merger resulted in the formation of the United Telephone Company. This expansion was not merely about increasing size; it was about building a more robust and interconnected network capable of serving a wider customer base and offering a broader range of services.

The establishment of the United Telephone Company marked a significant step in the evolution of Brown's original venture. It reflected a growing trend of consolidation within the burgeoning telecommunications industry, as smaller, local operators recognized the benefits of combining resources to compete more effectively and expand their reach. This foundational period, rooted in the pragmatic pursuit of connectivity for rural communities, established a core principle that would guide the company through its many metamorphoses: the relentless drive to connect people, no matter the distance. The spirit of innovation and entrepreneurial courage displayed by Cleyson Brown in these humble beginnings would continue to echo through the corridors of the company for over a century.

---

*This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.*

Visit [MixCache.com](https://mixcache.com) to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY