

Mobile Telcos Not Helping Confused Customers

Australia's largest mobile telephone companies are leaving customers confused and unsure of their options, according to research released today by Customer Experience Measurement company, Global Reviews.

The study revealed that major telcos left many customers unable to identify a suitable mobile phone plan online, that large numbers of emails receive no response, and that many phone operators did not actively seek to help customers identify the right plan for them.

According to Mr Simon Blair, Contact Centre Benchmarking Manager at Global Reviews, "83% of phone operators did not ask why the customer was actually seeking a mobile phone plan.

"Without this key information, companies simply cannot help customers identify the best option for them."

In addition he said, "Two of the four benchmarked call centres frequently 'pitched' products to customers without asking a single question to determine the most suitable plan".

The research comes at a time when mobile telephony is becoming increasingly competitive. Fixed price caps and prepaid offerings have become popular alternatives, and the increasing number of plans are potentially confusing consumers. In this environment it is vital for telcos to provide even more assistance to consumers.

However, it is not only call centre operators who are providing low service quality. Mr David Goldberg, Email Benchmarking Manager at Global Reviews, said that an alarming 90% of emails to one company received no reply within 5 working days. According to Global Reviews, by this time almost all customers have given up waiting for the response.

And when email replies did arrive, the answers were sometimes very unhelpful. For example, when asked whether you could sign up to a new plan online, one email operator responded by referring the customer to their website – but to locate a store!

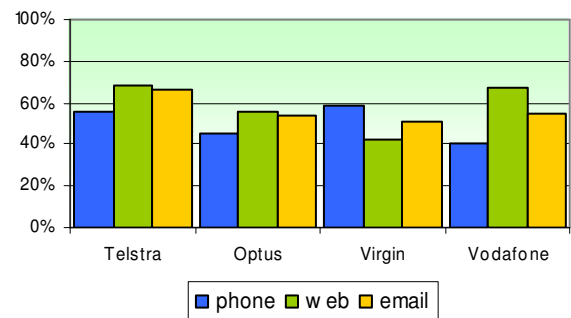
"Companies are simply not using the email channel to help potential customers make an easy buying decision" explained Mr. Goldberg.

Websites were also found lacking, with only one of the four telcos offering an online tool that helps customers choose a suitable plan. Most companies offered plan and pricing options online, but made it complicated for customers to understand which of those options was most suitable.

According to Global Reviews, the door is wide open for a telco to take the lead and create a superior customer service experience – online and over the phone. Based on its experience in other industries, this is likely to have a material effect on sales success.

Overall the study found Telstra MobileNet delivered the best overall experience for prospective customers, with Virgin Mobile rating second, ahead of Vodafone and Optus.

Multi-Channel Customer Experience - Q1 2006



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Global Reviews is a leading Customer Experience measurement and improvement company, with offices in Australia and New Zealand. With clients including ANZ, HSBC, NAB, Medibank, Qantas and Air NZ, the company benchmarks Customer Experience across key communication channels including website, telephone email and branch operations; and subsequently provides actionable recommendations to improve customer acquisition and boost retention. More information about Global Reviews is available at www.globalreviews.com.

For further information, please contact:

Jane Winzer | Corporate Communications Manager
03 9694 2023
jane.winzer@globalreviews.com.au