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Mobile 411 offers sales opportunity: Survey

By Mickey Alam Khan

February 8, 2008



Craig Hagopian is executive vice president and chief marketing officer of V-Enable

A new study claims that typical mobile 411 users are consumers on-the-go who want and expect accurate results immediately.

While a typical Internet user can spend hours browsing and searching for news and sports or accessing entertainment or social networks, the mobile directory assistance user typically is one with an intent to buy. Thus said V-Enable, a mobile voice search and directory assistance provider that delivers the Mobile411

service.

"Although mobile directory assistance is a \$9 billion annual industry, very little thought-leadership has been conducted in the space," said Craig Hagopian, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of V-Enable, San Diego.

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V-Enable commissioned the survey from Local Mobile Search, a unit of [Opus Research](#).

The survey asked respondents to give their top reasons for using directory assistance. Enquiries about a business product or service garnered a 40.1 percent response and business hours or business location 48.9 percent.

In other findings, nearly 50 percent of mobile directory assistance users want maps and directions to businesses, and more than two-thirds of calls to directory assistance are made from cars.

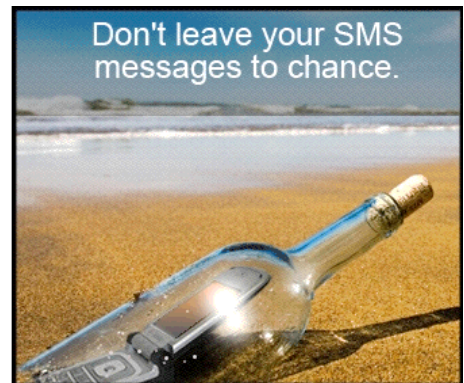
"These findings demonstrate that WAP-based 411 or even voice-enabled services may be a great area for mobile marketers to participate as our findings show these people are those with intent to buy [and] looking for places and directions," Mr. Hagopian said.

Interestingly, more than 50 percent of those responding underestimated the actual cost of mobile directory assistance

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charges. One-fifth of that group even thought it was free and another 18 percent didn't know the cost and a similar number were unaware of free 411 services.

More than 5.4 billion directory assistance calls were made in the United States, accounting for 10,272 calls a minute, per CDC data cited by V-Enable. Consumers make many such calls en route to conduct a transaction, so they represent an active channel of consumers who want to buy in local markets.

Increasing advertising on mobile devices makes 411 an ideal channel to reach in-market qualified buyers.

"Mobile marketers should pay attention to mobile 411 publishers as these opportunities could generate higher click-through rate and conversions for commerce," Mr. Hagopian said.

"Basically, in addition to the paid revenues of mobile 411, mobile advertising is clearly an uncharted opportunity as well for local advertising," he said.

Editor in Chief Mickey Alam Khan covers advertising agencies, associations, research, and column submissions. Reach him at mickey@mobilemarketer.com.

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