

# Service more important than price, survey finds

## Survey suggests that we're generally happy with BDA's phone, Internet service

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Reliable service is more important than price when it comes to telecommunications, say islanders.

A survey showed 57 per cent of respondents ranked reliable service as the most important thing to consider when choosing a telecoms provider, with price coming second at 31 per cent.

Three-quarters of respondents have an Internet connection at home — and two-thirds of them are satisfied with the service.

North Rock Communications commissioned the survey, which was carried out by Research.bm.

According to the poll, North Rock rated higher than its competitors; it was rated the highest in the "company you trust" category (28 per cent), while at 3 per cent, Transact scored the lowest.

They also ranked the highest in terms of "best rates" (25 per cent), "innovative services" (27 per cent), and "excellent customer service" (27 per cent).

Asked about the motivation behind commissioning the survey, Che Barker, marketing manager for North Rock, said it was an attempt to help inform the govern-

ment about the state of the telecom industry, and to give consumers a voice.

"We really just wanted to take a look at what the consumer was thinking because [rivals] were saying this and that about the customer, but no-one was giving data," he said.

Two-thirds of those surveyed agreed with each of the following statements: "The Bermuda government should encourage and support majority Bermudian ownership companies;" "It is important to have internationally owned telecommunications companies on the island," and; "We have enough telecoms companies (cellphone, long distance and Internet) in Bermuda to give customers a variety of choice."

On average, respondents rated overall services of all four telecoms (cable, land line, Internet, mobile phone) as "good." Just over one-third of respondents rated cable services as fair or poor.

"One of the main things we wanted to find out from this survey ... we wanted to make sure that we were offering good customer service," Mr. Barker said. "What it really shows is that the market is doing well ... and people seem happy with the

market right now."

The survey was conducted in May of this year, and its findings were given to the Ministry of Telecommunications and E-Commerce as part of its consultations with telecoms firms as the government mulls reforms to the industry.

The survey and its findings were not made public until yesterday.

Asked how the survey relates to the ongoing debate in the press among telecoms industry rivals, Mr. Barker said, "This really speaks to what's going on right now."

Forty-one per cent of respondents were between the ages of 36 and 55 years old. Thirty-one per cent were 56 years and older, and another 25 per cent were between the ages of 18 and 35.

Almost two-thirds of respondents were female, and 85 per cent of those surveyed were Bermudian.

The survey was conducted by Research.bm for North Rock Communications to evaluate the perceptions of Bermudian residents regarding the telecoms industry.

The survey was conducted by phone with 404 randomly selected Bermudian residents. It did not indicate a margin of error. ■