

The Active Consumer

Smart Wireless Shopping: It's The Network

(NAPSA)—When shopping for a new wireless phone, some may start out thinking what's important is the "cool" factor: "What color phone can I get?" Or, "What phone do my friends like?" There are also more practical considerations, including whether the phone can take pictures, play music, get videos and the accessories that can be used with it. While these factors can be important, one consideration should be at the top of the list: reliability. After all, what good is a trendy phone if you can't send, receive and stay connected to your calls?

Wireless users count on phones to stay connected: You call friends and family to share special news or just to say hi; you call Mom on your way home from work to catch up; you coordinate schedules and after-work errands; you may even get updates on the news and weather on your wireless handset. It's the network your wireless phone runs on that connects your calls and ensures you stay connected throughout the duration of your call.

So how to evaluate a company's commitment?

- First, look at its financial commitment to update and expand the network. This number will have a direct effect on your wireless phone's ability to make and receive calls with clear reception, while also influencing your ability to send and receive text and picture messages, and download games and ring tones. For example, Verizon Wireless has invested more than \$40 billion over the last seven years to increase the coverage and capacity of its national network and to add new services.

- Second, ask how the company tests its network to ensure that



calls go through. Verizon Wireless employs real life "test men and women" who test network performance, call quality and data network performance of their network and their competitors', traveling nearly 1 million miles annually in specially equipped vehicles. The information that's collected helps engineers plan the company's annual network improvement program, including placement of new cell sites and expansion of existing call capabilities in growing communities.

So the next time you purchase a wireless phone, remember to think about the network. Your carrier's wireless network will determine whether your calls will be able to connect in emergency and disaster situations; whether you can make conference calls on the road; or if you are able to call or send messages to friends and family members on holidays and special days of the year when there is increased call volume.

Compared to other national networks, voice calls on the Verizon Wireless network are more likely to connect and stay connected for the duration of the call. To learn more, you can visit www.verizonwireless.com.