

Walkie-Talkies Now Heard From Construction Sites To College Campuses

(NAPSA)—Chirp...Chirp...the distinctive sound of mobile phone walkie-talkie service, also known as push-to-talk, which enables users to instantly connect with someone by pushing a button, is moving from construction sites to college campuses.

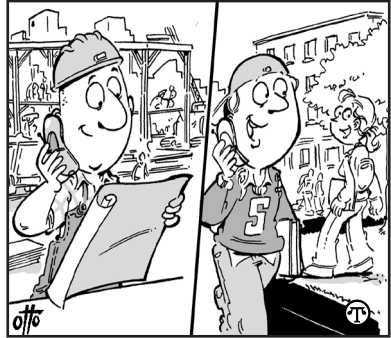
Traditionally, mobile phone walkie-talkie has been a favorite feature among contractors, public safety personnel and transportation workers, but the service is growing in popularity among young people due in part to its availability as a prepaid service, which appeals to cost-conscious consumers.

Push-To-Talk

Boost Mobile is the only wireless service provider to make Sprint's national push-to-talk technology available as a pay-as-you-go feature to the youth segment. Since 2002, the company has promoted walkie-talkie technology as a cool and easy alternative for young people to instantly connect with friends.

The approach appears to be paying off. In a recent survey, Boost customers—the majority of which are under the age of 26—indicated that 93 percent say they use Boost walkie-talkie and 70 percent said they use it daily.

"We were as surprised as anyone to see walkie-talkie service take off in the youth segment," said Neil Lindsay, vice president of product management for Boost Mobile. More than just an affordable means of unlimited communication, the walkie-talkie has become a cultural phenomenon among the company's 4.3 million customers. They recognize the value of using walkie-talkie service to form a virtual calling cir-



The push-to-talk and pay-as-you-go features are popular among younger consumers.

cle—the more friends that are a part of the chirp crowd, the greater the value.”

The major wireless carriers have taken note of the growing walkie-talkie popularity among consumers and aim to offer similar services to compete. The carriers hope the market will expand further and are increasing their focus on push-to-talk offerings as a way to increase revenue while tapping into the more youthful demographic.

Push To Send Pictures

This move has prompted Boost Mobile to enhance its service by marketing Push-to-X capabilities that enable its customers to bring the convenience of “push” to multiple applications, including push-to-send voice messages to any e-mail and push-to-send pictures or contact info.

Still, the number of mobile phone walkie-talkie users remains small. In 2007, there were approximately 26 million subscribers using the most popular push-to-talk technology in the world, and Boost has more than 4 million of those customers in the U.S.