

# Ease of use trumps price when choosing a cellphone

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Consumers pay more attention to the risk of confusion than they do to cost when they choose their cellphones, smartphones and other mobile devices.

A gadget can be more expensive but if it is easier to use it can still be a winner, according to a survey of 1000 small business owners in SA.

The main factors influencing the buying decision are that the device is easy to use, dependable and of high- quality, the research by World Wide Worx found.

Business owners and decision- makers are swayed by a range of factors before price enters the equation. For 80% of them, ease of use was an important factor, while 79% rated quality as important. Maintenance and reliability were ranked as important by 74% and 72% of the respondents.

Price came in a distant fifth, with just 64% of respondents rating it as important.

The least important criterion for small businesses was their procurement policy, mainly because most small businesses do not have any relevant policies.

The findings explained why many supposedly valuable and useful technologies, tools and applications were not embraced by small enterprises — because they failed to meet the user-friendly test, said World Wide Worx MD Arthur Goldstuck.

“For smaller businesses with limited resources, the business benefits of being in touch with clients and other stakeholders are perhaps even more important than they are for their larger competitors,” said Deon Liebenberg, director for Sub Sahara Africa at Research In Motion, which developed the BlackBerry.

“Yet since they don't have the resources and time to waste on managing, supporting and training for complex solutions, small businesses demand that their mobile devices be reliable and rich in functionality as well as simple to use.”

Marketing campaigns for cellphones in SA have traditionally relied heavily on the power of brands, but the survey showed brand loyalty was no longer key.

Only 55% of respondents rated brand loyalty important, making it largely irrelevant compared to the other factors.

*Source: Business Day*

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