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TRAI decision on Unsolicited Commercial Calls (UCC) and Advertisements

We welcome Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's decision on finalising the new guidelines to curb Unsolicited Commercial Calls (UCC). This will certainly help consumers from being disturbed and harassed from the phone calls made by telemarketers. Hassle-free service is what one expects as a consumer and after all it's an issue of one's right to privacy. We are also delighted to see the move towards imposing penalty of Rs.500-Rs.1000 on telemarketers for every unsolicited commercial calls made to subscribers registered with National Do Not Call Registry (NDNC).

We have had a lively debate on the subject in our e-discussion group called "Funcomp Forum", which has been created to have focused and open-ended discussion and interaction on competition and regulatory issues in India. The views presented here were taken from the suggestions and opinions shared on the issue of Unsolicited Commercial Calls.

We felt that an assumption is being made, i.e., having a phone connection automatically means that the person having such connection would be willing to receive unsolicited calls and SMSs. We believe the consumer should have a right to choose rather than something being imposed on him/her. Therefore, consumers who wish to receive such calls and SMSs are the ones who should be in a directory and not the one who do not wish to receive the same.

In our viewpoint those who wish to have anything more should take the trouble of registering and not those who are quite satisfied with formal service and do not wish unsolicited commercial calls and SMSs. We believe that consumer is and should be the centre of the equation and hence all telecom policy initiatives should revolve around him/her. Besides this, TRAI should also take the initiative and a policy decision on the unsolicited messages (SMS) and telemarketing advertisements through cell phones.

Hence, we feel that the policy initiative requires further amendmants and you may please consider the above-mentioned suggestion of inducting National Can Call Registry (NCCR) rather than the National Do Not Call Registry (NDCR).

Looking forward to your valued response, I remain,

Yours sincerely

Pradeep S Mehta
Secretary General