

Survey: Cell-phone appearance matters

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Cell-phone appearance is as an important a factor in customer satisfaction as are features and capabilities, a new consumer survey said Wednesday.

J.D. Power and Associates annual Mobile Phone Evaluation Study said the physical design of handsets was the top priority of 24 percent of the U.S. customers surveyed compared to 22 percent who named the phone's operation and 20 percent who favored the phone's features.

"As more services are added to the phone, the ability to navigate around the handset in an easy and straight-forward manner becomes paramount," observed Power's Kirk Parsons.

Parsons said consumers like the clam-shell shape of modern phones; however, the design and resulting ease of navigating sophisticated features such as built-in cameras and text-messaging are increasingly important in customer satisfaction.

Other factors identified in the Power study were battery life and the phone's overall durability.

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