

Title:

Which Wireless Plan And Phone Should I Buy

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Summary:

"Which cell phone should I buy" is a question a lot of people ask, but it is one that doesn't have an easy or simple answer. That's because there are so many cell phone choices and plans available today, and different people have different needs and different reasons for wanting to get a cell phone.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

"Which cell phone should I buy" is a question a lot of people ask, but it is one that doesn't have an easy or simple answer. That's because there are so many cell phone choices and plans available today, and different people have different needs and different reasons for wanting to get a cell phone.

If someone is looking for a cell phone to carry just for emergencies or if their vehicle breaks down, a basic phone with a low cost plan is all that is needed. A prepaid phone with minutes that do not expire quickly is another good choice. On the other hand, if someone wants to have a phone to use as their primary mode of communication and also wants to be able to store information in it, a combination cell phone and PDA might be the best choice. A calling plan that includes a significant number of calling minutes that can be used any time would probably also be a good choice for that person.

The first step in buying a wireless phone and calling plan is to get out a piece of paper and a pen. Write down the reasons why you are going to purchase a cell phone along with what you are going to use it for. Think about how many minutes a month you will probably be using the phone. If you plan on using the phone often you will want a plan that has a lot of "anytime" minutes, not just minutes that can be used at night and on weekends.

Where is the phone going to be used? Will you be using it primarily in the area you live and work or do you travel frequently? If you travel frequently and plan to take your phone with you, a plan that gives you nationwide coverage is a good choice. If you travel out of the country frequently, look for a phone that can be used internationally. If you plan to use the phone extensively in your home area, look for a local or regional plan that offers a lot of minutes during the times you plan on using the phone.

If you want to be connected with your spouse and children, a family plan is a good choice. Look for a family plan that lets family members talk to each other as much as they want without using any of their plan minutes. Look for specials on phones. Wireless companies often offer specials deals when purchasing a family plan (and other plans as well). It is sometimes possible to get phones for the entire family for very little money or even free with a contract commitment to keep the service for a certain period of time, usually two years if you want to get the best deal.

Some people want to be able to have short and quick conversations. For those people a push-to-talk phone may be a great idea because it allows quick conversations that do not count against a person's plan minutes. One caveat; the other person or people you want to have a conversation with also have to have a phone with push-to-talk capability in order for a push-to-talk conversation to be held.

If the ability to text message is important check to see how much text messaging is going to add to the cost of your plan each month. Text messaging is most popular with teens. Many adults however would rather call someone than try to type a text message into a cell phone that has tiny keys, and most cell phones do. If you do a lot of text messaging, a stylus (the type used with PDA's) can make typing messages much easier.

One of the most important considerations is your budget. How much can you afford to spend each month? Even low cost plans can start to get costly if a lot of additional features are added to the basic plan such as text messaging, picture messaging, Internet access, and any of the myriad of downloads that are available from ring tones to games to the latest news and sports scores.

Optional insurance on a phone also adds to monthly costs. Depending on the wireless company you use, the monthly phone insurance cost is approximately four to six dollars. Insurance may be a good idea if the phone isn't always going to be handled with care or if it is a picture phone, because one hard fall on concrete can ruin the picture-taking capabilities of a picture phone.

Take time to consider how many minutes you will realistically use. Although the charges for going over plan minutes can be costly (usually at least 40 cents a minute with the exception of some plans that allow for overages and charge a reasonable fee), most people don't ever get even close to using all their minutes each month. If you are not sure how many minutes you will use, choose a mid-range plan and closely track your minute usage for three months. Then adjust your plan accordingly.

If you are not a person that wants to commit to a one or two year contract, a pay as you go plan is probably the best option. There is no long term commitment and most of the major wireless carriers now offer a pay as you go package.

Another big consideration is coverage. Some of the major carriers do not have good coverage in some areas so also check with the local and regional companies in your area to see what their coverage areas are. Probably the best way to find out how good the coverage is in your area is to talk to family and friends who already have cell phones. Ask them what their reception is like and if there are any areas where it is so poor that conversations are nearly impossible. Also ask how often they have dropped calls. Those pieces of information will give you a good idea of how good the coverage really is in your area.

Once you decide on a company, a plan, a phone, and your contract is signed; use the fifteen or thirty day return period that many companies now offer to use your new phone in all the areas you will most often use your phone. If the phone does not work well in those areas, do not be afraid to return the phone and try a different carrier. Be aware that even though coverage areas are quickly getting more expansive, there are still areas that do not have very good coverage no matter which carrier is chosen.

There are lots of phone choices available. Many plans offer decent quality phones for a nominal cost or for free with the contract commitment. Phones can be free or cost several hundred dollars. Shop around. Try out phones. Get a phone that you like and can easily use. Many people overbuy on their phone. They want all the latest features and gadgets but hardly ever use them. For instance, picture phones are very popular right now but most people who have a picture phone hardly ever use it. Do not let an overzealous salesperson talk you into the latest and greatest phone unless that is what you want.

In the end, the choices are yours to make. By doing some planning, research, and by shopping around before buying, you will be able to make an informed decision based on your needs, wants, and budget; and will have a plan and phone you are comfortable with.

