

## **CHARLOTTE SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS NO. 1 IN USING WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY TO GROW BUSINESS AWAY FROM THE OFFICE**

### **AT&T Survey Finds 42 Percent of Small Business Owners Would Have Difficulty Surviving Without Wireless Technologies**

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., Sept. 25, 2007** — Wireless devices are indispensable for today's small business owners, who rely heavily on wireless technology to stay connected to their business and customers while gaining flexibility to step out of the office, become more visible and continue to grow in the market, according to a survey conducted by AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T).

More traditional services, such as high speed Internet, remain most important to Charlotte entrepreneurs and small business owners, with more than three-fourths (76 percent) considering high speed Internet access extremely important. But now nearly one-third (30 percent) of respondents claim they are able to spend much more time away from the office growing their business because of wireless technology, and Charlotte was ranked first among cities surveyed. More than half (51 percent) of Charlotte small business owners surveyed say they rely on wireless technology more than they did two years ago, and more than eight in ten (85 percent) consider mobile or wireless devices important to managing their business activities.

"Wireless technology is a critical tool that allows small business owners to stay in touch with customers, suppliers and staff while on the go," said Carrie MacGillivray, senior analyst, Mobile Enterprise Network Services, IDC. "It is not surprising that small business owners indicate that wireless communications capabilities play a critical role in business success."

Nationally, four in ten (42 percent) of small business owners surveyed said they could not survive — or it would be a major challenge to survive — without wireless technology. This trend will likely increase because more than half (51 percent) said they rely on wireless technology more today than two years ago, and even more (55 percent) said they expect to depend on it even more two years from now.

The increased demands of owning a small business and managing a personal life mirror the concurrent growth in small business owners' reliance on wireless technology. Of the 41 percent of respondents who said they were very likely to conduct business while away from the office, more than half (53 percent) said the success of their business depends on wireless technologies, such as mobile phones, PDAs and PC data cards. Additionally, half (49 percent) said they are optimistic about wireless technology giving their business a competitive advantage, while only 16 percent disagreed with that statement.

Only 15 percent of Charlotte business owners considered wireless PDAs extremely important; that was ranked lowest among cities surveyed. Charlotte also was ranked lowest in current levels of in-house IT support, though Charlotte businesses demonstrated the lowest need among the cities surveyed to increase levels of IT support.

“The concept of WiQ is very relevant today and has bottom-line impact for businesses,” said Jeff Kagan, wireless and telecom industry analyst. “Business owners who understand the value of wireless are more likely to translate technology into applications that create competitive advantages for them in the marketplace.”

“Small businesses are more nimble and flexible than ever before, and they need telecommunications solutions built for them by people who understand their needs,” said John Regan, vice president of Small Business, AT&T. “Today’s small business owners have more choices than ever for wireless handsets, Wi-Fi access points, smartphones and other technologies that help keep them connected even when they’re away from the office — whether that’s traveling to meet with customers or staying connected with their business while away from the office.”

Not surprisingly, different regions vary on the importance and usage of wireless technology. Based on responses to three components — perceived importance of wireless technology; use of wireless technology; and attitude on the impact of wireless technology — a Wireless Quotient, or “WiQ,” was calculated for each of the 10 participating markets.

Each component was weighted in the rankings. For example, actual use of wireless technology was viewed as more important than the perceived importance of the technology.

Charlotte was ranked fourth overall in using high-capacity wireless capabilities, which continue to be adopted by the city's large business market, but some small businesses are simply unaware of the latest integrated services and applications being introduced. The rankings for the 10 market areas are:

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Atlanta   | 6. Bay Area    |
| 2. San Diego | 7. Chicago     |
| 3. Dallas    | 8. Connecticut |
| 4. Charlotte | 9. Oklahoma    |
| 5. Detroit   | 10. Milwaukee  |

“This study confirms for us the idea that wireless technologies are increasingly important to small business owners and that they’re using those technologies more now than they did two years ago. It will no doubt be interesting to see how they’re going to use new technologies in the coming years as they become more familiar with IP-based solutions and managed services for security, hosting and storage,” said Regan. “AT&T is a leader in innovation and has a complete set of communications tools and cost-effective bundles built for today’s — and tomorrow’s — small businesses.”

### **Study Methodology**

The results are based on a telephone survey of 1,000 owners and/or employees responsible for Information Technology (IT) at small businesses in 10 U.S. metropolitan/regional areas. One hundred interviews were completed in each of the 10 markets. The sample of participating companies was drawn from Dunn and Bradstreet’s business list of companies located in each of the 10 areas. Each company was screened to include only those that have between two and 25 employees (full- and part-time). Eight of the 10 metropolitan areas are based on DMAs (Designated Market Areas). The other two markets are the states of Connecticut and Oklahoma. Interviewing was conducted between July 2 and Aug. 10, 2007.

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