

# To Get The Business, You Must Answer the Phone

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Yellow Pages delivers potential customers to businesses that advertise in the various headings. Yellow Pages does this more effectively than almost any other alternative available to businesses, because roughly 9 out of 10 people that use the Yellow Pages have the intent of making a purchase<sup>1</sup>. The average display ad in Yellow Pages delivers about 850 calls per year, while the average incolumn space ad delivers about 420 calls per year<sup>2</sup>.

## Answer the Phone

In order for a business to realize the fullest value possible from the Yellow Pages, the business must effectively convert calls received from Yellow Pages users to sales. While it seems obvious, the first step toward doing this is to make sure all calls get answered. Based on data collected as part of the 2005 Metered Ad Study, estimates are available for a number of headings of the average percent of calls that are not answered – which means lost business opportunities. Table 1 shows the headings with the best and worst results.

**Table 1a: Headings Best at Answering Calls**

<b>Heading</b>	<b>% of Calls Answered</b>
Advertising Services	99%
Packaging Material	99%
Boxes	99%
Telephone Equip & Systems - Dealers	99%
Direct Mail	98%
Chimney Builders & Repair	98%
Wedding Chapels and Ceremonies	98%
Security Guard and Patrol Service	98%
Duct Cleaning	98%
Air Duct & Vent Cleaning	98%
Septic Tank and Systems - Cleaning	98%
Assisted Living Facilities	98%
Elevator Contractors	98%
Wheelchairs	98%

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<sup>1</sup> Knowledge Networks/Statistical Research Inc.

<sup>2</sup> 2005 Metered Ad Study, CRM Associates. Call volumes vary by heading, size of ad, and ad content.

Attorneys - Social Security & Government Law	98%
Pharmacies	98%
Schools - Business and Vocational	98%
Hotel	98%
Funeral Homes & Directors	97%
Nurses	97%
Windows - Replacement	97%
Boat & Yacht Charters	97%
Nursing Homes	97%
Retaining Walls	97%
Schools - Academic, Colleges and Universities	97%
Auto Dealer-New	97%

**Table 1b: Headings Worst at Answering Calls**

Heading	% of Calls Not Answered
Auto Parts & Supplies Used & Rebuilt	26%
Radiators - Automotive, Sales and Services	22%
Entertainers	22%
Coin Dealers	21%
Draperies & Curtains	20%
Remodeling, Repairing & Building Contractors	20%
Marble-Natural	19%
Picture Frame - Dealers	19%
Auto Smog, Brake & Lamp Inspection & Repair	18%
Asphalt Paving & Seal Coating	17%
Mufflers & Exhaust Systems	17%
Pizza	17%
Auto Air Conditioning	16%
Beauty Supplies & Equipment	16%
Accountant-Certified Public	16%
Physical Therapists	16%
Transmission - Auto	16%
Copy & Duplicating Service	14%
Bicycle Dealers	14%
Physicians & Surgeons - Obstetrics & Gynecology	14%
Spas and Hot Tub - Dealers	14%

On average, roughly 7.3% of calls go unanswered. For an ad that delivers 850 calls a year, this means that about 62 calls per year (5 per month) go unanswered. This directly translates to lost business opportunities.

Some businesses are quite good at answering the phone. **About 27% of businesses, however, fail to answer 10% or more of the calls they receive through the Yellow Pages.** It is critical for these businesses to find better ways of insuring all calls are answered if they are to realize the full benefit of their investment in Yellow Pages advertising. A strong ad does no good if the user cannot successfully reach the business.

## Answer the Phone Quickly

While the highest priority needs to be insuring that all calls are answered, customer service is improved when calls are answered quickly as well. This sends a message to the potential customer that the company wants the caller's business and is focused on providing quick, prompt service.

Table 2 lists the best and worst headings ranked by the percent of calls that are answered in less than 3 rings.

**Table 2a: Headings Ranked by % of calls answered <3 rings (Best)**

<b>Heading</b>	<b>% Calls Answered &lt; 3 Rings</b>
Elevator Contractors	100%
Direct Mail	99%
Motels	97%
Telephone Equip & Systems - Dealers	97%
Funeral Homes & Directors	96%
Plumbing Fixtures, Parts & Supls-Retail	96%
Pharmacies	95%
Air Duct & Vent Cleaning	95%
Sewer Cleaners	95%
Water Treatment Systems and Equipment	95%
Market Research & Analysis	95%
Duct Cleaning	95%
Concrete - Ready Mix	95%
Schools - Academic, Colleges and Universities	95%
Hotel	94%
Veterinarian	94%
Apartments	94%
Accountant-Certified Public	94%
Pawnbrokers	93%
Auto Dealer-New	93%
Health Clubs	93%
Employment Agencies	93%
Recreational Vehicles - Dealers	93%
Water Filtration and Purification Equipment	93%
Wheelchairs	93%
Copy & Duplicating Service	93%
Restaurants Menu Guide	92%
Fire & Water Damage & Restoration	92%
Demolition Contractor	92%
Travel Agencies & Bureaus	92%
Airport Transportation Svce	92%
Pizza	92%
Florist - Retail	92%
Cleaners	92%

Veterinary Hospitals & Clinics	92%
Nursing Homes	92%
Child Care	92%
Printers	91%
Tire Dealer - New	91%
Cookies & Crackers	91%
Pianos	91%
Tanning Salons	91%
Water Heaters	91%
Brake Service	91%
Physicians & Surgeons - Plastic, Reconstructive & Cosmetic Surgery	91%
Physicians & Surgeons - Dermatology	91%
Auto Parts & Supplies - New	91%

**Table 2b: Headings Ranked by % of calls answered <3 rings (Worst)**

<b>Heading</b>	<b>% Calls Answered &gt;= 3 Rings</b>
Weight Control Services	45%
Dancing Instruction	44%
Asphalt Paving & Seal Coating	44%
House Cleaning	43%
Foundation Contractors	38%
Lawn Maintenance	38%
Concrete Contractors	38%
Martial Arts Instruction	38%
Shutters	37%
Landscape Contractors	36%
Painting Contractors	35%
Draperies & Curtains	34%
Bathroom Remodeling	34%
Disc Jockeys	34%
Driving Instruction	33%
Windows - Vinyl	31%
Janitor Service	31%
Remodeling, Repairing & Building Contractors	31%
Party Favors Supplies & Service	30%
Audio Visual Equipment & Supplies	30%
Hearing Aids & Assistive Devices	30%
Tree Service	28%
Paving Contractors	28%
Patio Porch & Deck Enclosures	28%
Dentists-Orthodontics (Braces-Straightening)	27%
Roofing Contractors	27%
Retaining Walls	27%
Blinds	26%
Kennels	26%
Gutters & Downspouts	26%
Massage	26%
Stereo Equipment Dealers and Service	26%

Window Tinting	25%
Spas and Hot Tub - Dealers	25%
Entertainers	25%
Wedding Chapels and Ceremonies	25%
Satellite Equipment & Systems	25%
Tile - Ceramic - Contractors & Dealers	25%
Dentist Guide	25%

On average, 84% of calls are answered in less than 3 rings. Headings where more than 25% of calls are answered after more than 3 rings are noted in Table 2b. This group represents about 16% of the heading. Contractors and Home-improvement related businesses tend to be among the businesses that take the longest time before answering the phone.

### Every Call is an Opportunity

The majority of calls from Yellow Pages ads are from unique customers. **On average, 80% of calls received by businesses in a given month are from unique customers.** Headings with the highest percentage of unique customers are listed in Table 3a. Clearly every call counts. Missed calls mean missed business.

**Table 3a: Headings Ranked by % Unique Customers (Best)**

Heading	% Unique Customers
Truck Renting & Leasing	97%
Bankruptcy Assistance	95%
Cookies & Crackers	95%
Maid & Butler Service	94%
Auto Parts & Supls - Used & Rebuilt	94%
Truck Accessories	94%
Wrecker Service	93%
Recreational Vehicles - Dealers	93%
Air Conditioning Equip Repair	93%
Windows - Replacement	92%
Truck Repair and Service	91%
Chimney Builders & Repair	91%
Window Tinting	91%
Air Duct & Vent Cleaning	91%
Hotel	91%
Optical Goods	91%
Kennels	90%
Auto Parts & Supplies Used & Rebuilt	90%
Foundation Contractors	90%
Janitorial Equipment & Supplies	90%
Satellite & Cable TV Equip & Systems	89%
Halls & Auditoriums	89%
Dentists-Orthodontics (Braces-Straightening)	89%
Musical Instruments - Sales & Rentals	89%

Exercise Equipment	89%
Taxicabs	89%
Fireplace Equipment - Retail	88%
Child Care	88%
Lawn Maintenance	88%
Fence	88%
Insulation Contractors	88%
Sprinklers - Garden and Lawn, Installation and Ser	88%
Wheelchairs	88%

Table 3b lists headings with the highest incidence of repeat calling from customers, i.e., the lowest percentage of unique customers. Note that even for the heading with the lowest percentage (Flood Assistance), a majority of the calls (56%) are still from unique customers.

**Table 3b: Headings Ranked by % Unique Customers (Lowest)**

<b>Heading</b>	<b>% Unique Customers</b>
Flood Assistance	56%
Elevator Contractors	60%
Facial & Skin Care Spas & Salons	63%
Windows - Vinyl	63%
Beauty Supplies & Equipment	65%
Auto Smog, Brake & Lamp Inspection & Repair	65%
Heaters- Sales & Service	67%
Pharmacies	68%
Marble-Natural	68%
Stereo Equipment Dealers and Service	68%
Schools - Academic, Pre-Schools and Kindergarten	68%
Party Favors Supplies & Service	69%
Picture Frame - Dealers	69%
Physical Therapists	69%
Blinds	70%
Assisted Living Facilities	70%
Fire & Water Damage & Restoration	70%
Attorneys - DUI/DWI	70%
Health & Diet Food Products - Retail	70%
Veterinary Hospitals & Clinics	70%
Pawnbrokers	70%

Businesses with lower unique customer percentages tend to be those with a) frequent purchases or visits (such as Pharmacies or Physical Therapists), b) multiple service calls (Elevator Contractors), or c) headings that require extensive shopping prior to a decision being made (Windows, Marble, Stereo Equipment).

The source for the data in this paper is the 2005 Metered Ad Study conducted by CRM Associates. Detailed data for over 8,200 call studies were examined in developing the results listed.

## Appendix: Headings in Alphabetical Order

The Appendix table presents the call characteristics for headings listed in alphabetical order.

Heading	% of Calls Answered	% Calls		Studies
		Answered	% Unique	
		< 3 Rings	Customers	
Accountant-Certified Public	84%	94%	82%	5
Adoption Services	95%	87%	72%	5
Advertising Services	99%	87%	84%	7
Air Conditioning Contractors and Systems	93%	86%	79%	165
Air Conditioning Equip Repair	97%	89%	93%	5
Air Duct & Vent Cleaning	98%	95%	91%	5
Airport Transportation Svce	95%	92%	84%	7
Apartments	96%	94%	86%	14
Appliances-Major Service & Repair	90%	81%	87%	11
Appliances-Major-Dealers	88%	81%	80%	22
Asphalt Paving & Seal Coating	83%	56%	85%	6
Assisted Living Facilities	98%	79%	70%	11
Attorneys	95%	84%	80%	630
Attorneys - Accidents -Personal Injury-Property Damage	95%	85%	79%	46
Attorneys - Bankruptcy Law	94%	84%	82%	22
Attorneys - Criminal Law	96%	82%	73%	40
Attorneys - Divorce, Family	94%	81%	76%	30
Attorneys - DUI/DWI	95%	82%	70%	10
Attorneys - Social Security & Government Law	98%	87%	87%	5
Attorneys - Workers Compensation (Workmen's Compensation)	93%	85%	74%	10
attorneys guide	95%	81%	79%	11
Audio Visual Equipment & Supplies	92%	70%	82%	7
Auto Air Conditioning	84%	85%	87%	6
Auto Body Paint & Repair	90%	87%	78%	112
Auto Dealer-New	97%	93%	85%	190
Auto Dealers - Used	93%	90%	83%	19
Auto Detailing	94%	83%	75%	6
Auto Parts & Supls - Used & Rebuilt	87%	88%	94%	13
Auto Parts & Supplies - New	90%	91%	82%	21
Auto Parts & Supplies Used & Rebuilt	74%	82%	90%	6
Auto Renting & Leasing	91%	88%	85%	13
Auto Repair & Service	89%	86%	80%	219
Auto Smog, Brake & Lamp Inspection & Repair	82%	84%	65%	5
Awnings & Canopies	96%	89%	77%	10
Bail Bond	95%	88%	85%	41
Bankruptcy Assistance	94%	79%	95%	13
Banquet Facilities	93%	80%	80%	38
Bathroom Remodeling	91%	66%	80%	13
Beauty Salons	94%	83%	83%	53
		% Calls		
	% of Calls	Answered	% Unique	

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Answered</b>	<b>&lt; 3 Rings</b>	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Studies</b>
Beauty Supplies & Equipment	84%	89%	65%	10
Bicycle Dealers	86%	90%	75%	24
Blinds	91%	74%	70%	12
Boat & Yacht Charters	97%	86%	71%	6
Boat Dealers	89%	87%	76%	10
Boxes	99%	89%	82%	5
Brake Service	89%	91%	73%	9
Buildings	92%	79%	78%	5
Burglar Alarm Systems & Detection Devices	94%	83%	76%	24
Bus Charter - Rental	95%	85%	86%	12
Carpet - Rug Dealers New	93%	83%	81%	81
Carpet & Rug Cleaners	92%	77%	79%	107
Caterers	91%	83%	75%	37
Cellular & PCs - Equipment & Supplies	89%	84%	84%	22
Child Care	93%	92%	88%	24
Chimney Builders & Repair	98%	80%	91%	7
Chiropractors	94%	78%	75%	131
Churches	94%	81%	87%	12
Cleaners	90%	92%	75%	9
Clinics	94%	87%	82%	10
Coin Dealers	79%	88%	77%	6
Computer Dealer	90%	90%	73%	27
Computer Equipment-Service & Repair	93%	83%	78%	23
Computer Networking	95%	80%	81%	11
Concrete - Ready Mix	95%	95%	82%	7
Concrete Contractors	90%	62%	85%	23
Contractors General	92%	83%	82%	20
Cookies & Crackers	87%	91%	95%	14
Coping Machine & Supplies	93%	90%	75%	48
Copy & Duplicating Service	86%	93%	79%	6
Counselors	92%	76%	85%	13
Cranes	96%	90%	79%	6
Dancing Instruction	92%	56%	75%	5
Dating Serv	91%	78%	82%	5
Delivery Service	94%	81%	87%	5
Demolition Contractor	96%	92%	86%	6
Dentist Guide	94%	75%	85%	16
Dentists	94%	80%	79%	394
Dentists-Orthodontics (Braces-Straightening)	94%	73%	89%	8
Direct Mail	98%	99%	84%	12
Disc Jockeys	87%	66%	82%	6
Doors	88%	87%	78%	26
Draperies & Curtains	80%	66%	78%	6
Driving Instruction	93%	67%	77%	10
Duct Cleaning	98%	95%	82%	6
Electric Contractor	92%	83%	85%	78
Elevator Contractors	98%	100%	60%	6
Employment Agencies	97%	93%	86%	18
Entertainers	78%	75%	84%	9

Heading	% Calls		% Unique Customers	Studies
	% of Calls Answered	Answered < 3 Rings		
Exercise Equipment	95%	83%	89%	5
Facial & Skin Care Spas & Salons	91%	80%	63%	6
Fence	94%	79%	88%	50
Fire & Water Damage & Restoration	97%	92%	70%	11
Fireplace Equipment - Retail	93%	81%	88%	8
Flood Assistance	92%	80%	56%	6
Floor Laying, Refinishing & Resurfacing	91%	79%	81%	22
Florist - Retail	91%	92%	85%	80
Foundation Contractors	92%	62%	90%	16
Funeral Homes & Directors	97%	96%	80%	20
Furnaces - Heating	92%	86%	85%	50
Furniture	90%	87%	81%	52
Garage Door & Openers-Sales & Repair	95%	83%	76%	66
Gates & Gate Operating Devices	95%	89%	75%	6
Glass - Auto, Plate, Window, Etc	90%	85%	85%	133
Gutters & Downspouts	88%	74%	82%	21
Hair Replacement	93%	87%	77%	7
Halls & Auditoriums	90%	77%	89%	12
Health & Diet Food Products - Retail	87%	76%	70%	5
Health Clubs	96%	93%	74%	23
Hearing Aids & Assistive Devices	89%	70%	72%	28
Heaters- Sales & Service	95%	81%	67%	28
Heating Contractors	95%	88%	86%	97
Home Health Services	91%	79%	82%	11
Home Improvement	90%	80%	75%	61
Hospital Equipment & Supplies-Retail	94%	82%	81%	8
Hotel	98%	94%	91%	32
House Cleaning	90%	57%	73%	13
Insulation Contractors	94%	90%	88%	9
Insurance	93%	86%	81%	216
Internet Services	91%	87%	75%	15
Janitor Service	93%	69%	77%	12
Janitorial Equipment & Supplies	94%	79%	90%	8
Jewelers-Retail	92%	89%	77%	31
Kennels	92%	74%	90%	6
Kitchen Cabinets & Equip Household	87%	85%	73%	39
Landscape Contractors	89%	64%	76%	53
Landscape Equipment & Supplies	96%	84%	79%	8
Lawn Maintenance	91%	62%	88%	11
Lighting Fixtures-Retail	92%	84%	78%	13
Limousine Service	95%	87%	87%	16
Loans	91%	87%	81%	31
Lock & Locksmiths	92%	78%	84%	35
Maid & Butler Service	94%	77%	94%	5
Marble-Natural	81%	89%	68%	7
Market Research & Analysis	95%	95%	81%	7
Martial Arts Instruction	94%	62%	76%	14
Entertainers	78%	75%	84%	9

Heading	% Calls		% Unique Customers	Studies
	% of Calls Answered	Answered < 3 Rings		
Mattresses	93%	85%	79%	9
Medical Equipment Supplies & Repair	96%	90%	82%	19
Mortgages	95%	86%	80%	239
Motels	95%	97%	79%	20
Motorcycle & Motor Scooter Dealers	92%	88%	84%	26
Movers	94%	82%	83%	94
Mufflers & Exhaust Systems	83%	84%	75%	12
Multiple Headings	94%	87%	80%	20
Musical Instruments - Sales & Rentals	94%	87%	89%	12
Nurses	97%	88%	77%	7
Nursing Homes	97%	92%	79%	17
Office Furn & Equip Dealer	97%	87%	80%	37
Optical Goods	91%	89%	91%	18
Optometrists O.D.	95%	88%	76%	37
Packaging Material	99%	90%	75%	7
Painting Contractors	92%	65%	73%	54
Party Favors Supplies & Service	92%	70%	69%	17
Patio Porch & Deck Enclosures	94%	72%	75%	14
Paving Contractors	92%	72%	80%	18
Pawnbrokers	89%	93%	70%	12
Pest Control Service	94%	84%	78%	81
Pharmacies	98%	95%	68%	5
Physical Therapists	84%	85%	69%	21
Physicians & Surgeons	95%	90%	79%	143
Physicians & Surgeons - Dermatology	95%	91%	73%	10
Physicians & Surgeons - Obstetrics & Gynecology	86%	86%	75%	9
Physicians & Surgeons - Plastic, Reconstructive & Cosmetic Surgery	96%	91%	77%	30
Physicians & Surgeons-Podiatrists D.P.M. (Foot)	96%	90%	82%	22
Pianos	96%	91%	77%	5
Picture Frame - Dealers	81%	88%	69%	11
Pizza	83%	92%	79%	37
Plumbers - Contractors	94%	84%	80%	262
Plumbing Drain & Sewer Cleaning	92%	84%	87%	12
Plumbing Fixtures, Parts & Supls-Retail	92%	96%	84%	6
Printers	90%	91%	80%	25
Pumps	94%	85%	79%	5
Radiators - Automotive, Sales and Services	78%	82%	84%	7
Real Estate	94%	84%	78%	76
Recreational Vehicles - Dealers	87%	93%	93%	6
Remodeling, Repairing & Building Contractors	80%	69%	86%	18
Rental Services - Stores and Yards	92%	87%	80%	16
Restaurants	91%	88%	80%	85
Restaurants Dining Guide	93%	84%	76%	22
Restaurants Menu Guide	89%	92%	82%	5
Retaining Walls	97%	73%	83%	6
Retirement and Life Care Communities and Homes	96%	86%	75%	20
Entertainers	78%	75%	84%	9

Heading	% Calls		% Unique Customers	Studies
	% of Calls Answered	< 3 Rings		
Rubbish and Garbage Removal	93%	78%	84%	19
Satellite & Cable TV Equip & Systems	92%	76%	89%	5
Satellite Equipment & Systems	91%	75%	83%	10
Schools - Academic, Colleges and Universities	97%	95%	75%	13
Schools - Academic, Pre-Schools and Kindergarten	93%	76%	68%	9
Schools - Business and Vocational	98%	90%	72%	10
Security Control Equipment and Systems	96%	85%	85%	31
Security Guard and Patrol Service	98%	77%	78%	6
Septic Tank and Systems - Cleaning	98%	86%	86%	6
Septic Tanks and Systems	90%	79%	82%	7
Sewer Cleaners	96%	95%	81%	15
Shower Doors and Bathtub Enclosures	96%	83%	77%	5
Shutters	93%	63%	81%	15
Siding Contractors	92%	81%	84%	39
Signs	95%	84%	78%	36
Spas - Beauty	96%	85%	78%	5
Spas and Hot Tub - Dealers	86%	75%	75%	19
Sprinklers - Garden and Lawn, Installation and Ser	90%	76%	88%	10
Stereo Equipment Dealers and Service	88%	74%	68%	9
Storage - Household and Commercial	94%	77%	76%	102
Swimming Pool Contractors and Dealers	90%	81%	79%	35
Tanning Salons	90%	91%	80%	14
Tax Return Preparation	96%	81%	78%	8
Taxicabs	96%	90%	89%	6
Telecommunication Equipment & Supplies-Dealers	95%	90%	73%	8
Telephone Equip & Systems - Dealers	99%	97%	84%	23
Television Dealers & Service	89%	88%	71%	7
Tile - Ceramic - Contractors & Dealers	87%	75%	77%	18
Tire Dealer - New	88%	91%	84%	46
Toilets-Portable	94%	87%	76%	9
Towing - Automotive	92%	86%	79%	43
Transmission - Auto	84%	84%	81%	51
Travel Agencies & Bureaus	95%	92%	83%	14
Tree Service	93%	72%	72%	24
Trophies	88%	89%	78%	6
Truck Accessories	90%	89%	94%	22
Truck Renting & Leasing	96%	89%	97%	9
Truck Repair and Service	95%	87%	91%	5
T-Shirts	97%	86%	77%	6
Veterinarian	97%	94%	86%	47
Veterinary Hospitals & Clinics	95%	92%	70%	25
Video Taping and Production Services	93%	79%	83%	9
Water Damage Emergency Services	92%	87%	73%	10
Water Filtration and Purification Equipment	94%	93%	83%	6
Water Heaters	95%	91%	71%	7
Water Treatment Systems and Equipment	95%	95%	77%	5
Waterproofing Contractors	94%	82%	80%	11
Entertainers	78%	75%	84%	9

<b>Heading</b>	<b>% of Calls Answered</b>	<b>% Calls Answered &lt; 3 Rings</b>	<b>% Unique Customers</b>	<b>Studies</b>
Wedding Guide	92%	84%	74%	7
Weight Control Services	89%	55%	75%	10
Wheelchair Lifts and Ramps	90%	81%	86%	5
Wheelchairs	98%	93%	88%	6
Window Tinting	93%	75%	91%	10
Windows	91%	85%	83%	64
Windows - Aluminum and Metal	90%	77%	75%	19
Windows - Replacement	97%	89%	92%	10
Windows - Vinyl	88%	69%	63%	10
Wrecker Service	95%	88%	93%	5