

Calling All Long-Distance Customers

(NAPSA)—These days, getting your money's worth is the rule rather than the exception. One of the easiest ways to save unnecessary costs is to make sure your long-distance calling plan matches your calling needs. However, many people don't realize how simple it can be to find a plan that fits their lifestyle.

Today, with increased industry competition and more provider choices, long-distance companies are offering more than just a telephone connection. Doing some research can ensure you'll find the long-distance plan that stretches your dollar farther and earns you extra perks when you call. Here are five factors to consider so you can get the most out of your plan.

Know your calling pattern.

Review past phone bills to see what types of calls you typically make. Consider when you make calls and where you call. Do you want to be able to call anywhere in the country, anytime you want, or do you prefer to wait until evening hours to call? Remember that many long-distance plans include a monthly fee. So if you make long-distance calls at night and talk less than 30 minutes a month, a standard rate plan may cost less than a discount calling plan. But no one calling plan is meant to fit all callers. Aside from standard and discount calling plans, other options include block-of-time programs.

Bundle up. Many national long-distance providers offer more than just long-distance services. Choosing to bundle options such as Internet and wireless services with your long distance can add up to monthly savings. For instance, some providers, such as Sprint, offer their wireless customers free residential domestic long-distance minutes as a bonus.

Go for the perks. Long-distance providers often offer bonuses with calling plans, such



as airline mileage. Get more value out of your plan by finding out what partnerships long-distance providers have and what perks they offer.

Factor in international calls. International calling is often overlooked when selecting a long-distance calling plan. But if you make more than two international calls a month, an international calling plan can help keep down the cost of calling overseas.

Consider the source. While cost may be a primary factor in selecting a long-distance provider, it is also important to choose a company that is well-recognized within the industry. Make sure the long-distance provider you choose offers reliable service, good customer care, and will be around six months from now.

"It's important to assess your calling patterns to find a plan that will fit your needs," said Jeff Mott, vice president of marketing, Mass Markets Organization at Sprint. "As an integrated communications provider, Sprint encourages customers to consult with us to evaluate all the communications services they use, in addition to long distance, to find out how bundling those services can add up to savings down the road."

For more information about Sprint's services, call (800) 746-3767.