

## Outbound Future & New Legislation

The dust is settling on the U.S. Do Not Call Registry. The US Direct Marketing Association claims that the telemarketing industry (they estimate employs about 4 million Americans), will see revenue fall by between 25% and 50%, not to mention the loss of as many as half the contact centre jobs.

What started as a one-size-fits-all, quick fix solution for people who were simply inconvenienced and annoyed by the volume of unsolicited calls they were receiving, has now ended in a tempest in the nation's contact centres.

In Australia, the Australian Direct Marketing Association seems to be the primary industry driver holding their collective "fingers in the dike", lobbying government and rallying other industry bodies to work together to create and implement a long-term strategy toward more disciplined self-regulation. The hope is these changes will lessen the chances of increasingly stringent government intervention and perhaps even federal legislation.

They've held forums and are presently completing focus groups and individual interviews with a wide range of industry leaders to scope the anticipated effect from the new regulations (already in effect in NSW and about to come into affect in Victoria).

As in the USA, the issue of some industries being able to slip around the legislation through exceptions, such as charities, political parties and surveyors, is also being explored by the likes of Telstra (who consider themselves to be simply a service provider) and organisations who want an exception for calling their own customers. It is for certain, that other segments of the industry (such as charities and surveyors, for instance) will also be doing their own lobbying.

The two biggest constraints I see to prevent the industry's voice being heard by legislators and consumers are:

1. Lack of funding
2. Apathy with disbelief

### **1. Lack of Funding**

At present, ADMA estimate they require about \$40K to fund the strategy, as well as the costs for continuing research. Will those involved within the industry dig deep to see this situation handled well? Only time will tell.

### **2. Apathy with Disbelief**

It staggers the imagination that you can engage in conversation with an industry representative, bring up the timely topic of restrictive legislation and find this deadly combination at work – sort of like falling asleep at the wheel of your car!

***Read about the author, Darlene D. Richard, at [www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm](http://www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm)***