



Hot issues

What telco issues are small businesses experiencing?

A recent [ACCAN survey of 100 small businesses](#) found that 96 of the respondents had experienced at least one issue with their telecommunications services. With many small businesses relying on these services to operate, this is a concerning figure. When services don't deliver, this can mean lost profits and productivity for small businesses.

The top issues experienced by the respondents were issues with: internet speeds, internet congestion during peak times, costs and outages. The most prevalent issue was slow data speed, with 73 respondents reporting this problem.

Many respondents reported multiple issues. Forty-eight respondents said they experienced issues with both slow speeds and congestion at peak times while almost one quarter of respondents said they had experienced all four of the top issues!

The small businesses surveyed were from a range of sectors including: agriculture, professional services, education and training, retail and others.

Resolving issues

Eighty-four of the respondents said that they contacted their provider regarding an issue, but 64 of the respondents said that issues were difficult to resolve. Comments from the survey revealed barriers to getting resolutions relating to telecommunications infrastructure, committing resources to fixing issues and the frustration felt around getting resolutions.

While it's time consuming, it's really important that small businesses raise issues with their service providers. They should document all of the issues experienced and any losses or costs incurred as supporting evidence for their complaint. If they're unable to resolve the complaint with their provider, they should raise their complaint with the [Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman](#) (TIO).

Read our tip sheet on [how to make an effective complaint](#) for more useful tips.

What needs to improve?

Earlier this year, we spoke to the [Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman](#) (ASBFEO), Kate Carnell, who told us that the [number one small business telecommunications issue is accessing services](#). Ms Carnell outlined that small businesses need providers to be responsive to problems so that issues are resolved quickly.

When services are unavailable or not working properly, they can be a barrier to small businesses essentially cutting them off from interacting in the global digital economy. Barriers such as unreliable performance and connections were reflected in the survey results.

As highlighted in [ACCAN's 2015 small business research](#), the results of the survey support a need for providers to offer plans that are flexible and reliable and which include service guarantees for quick fault rectification when things go wrong.