

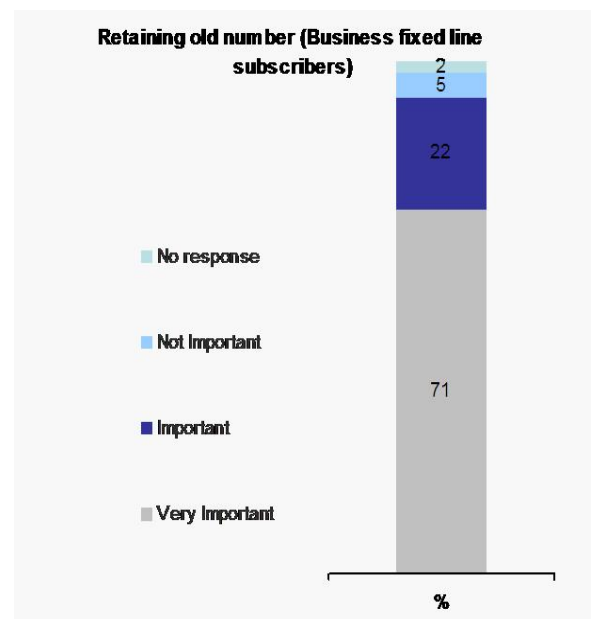
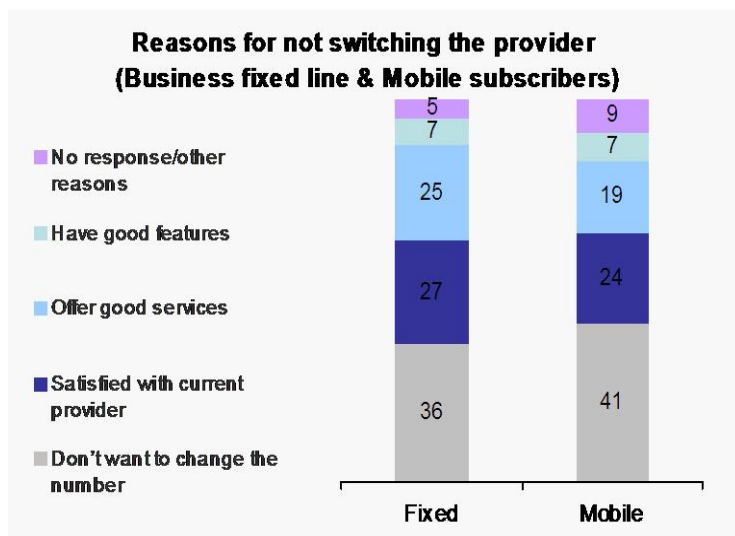
## TRA to Appoint a Consultant to Identify the Best Methodology for Implementing Number Portability

**-- TRA aims to remove barriers that restrict consumers from changing telecommunications service providers--**

Sunday, 9 March 2008

“Retaining a mobile or a fixed line number is an important factor for consumers when changing telecommunications service providers, as revealed by the consumer survey conducted in 2007. TRA aims to create the environment to encourage choice of telecommunications providers with low barriers to consumer in changing from one provider to another. One method of removing a key barrier to change is to allow customers to keep their telephone number through enforcing number portability. Such a facility will encourage operators to offer better prices, quality and services to encourage customer to stay with them. This tender we are launching is to seek international experts to advice TRA on the most cost effective method of implementing number portability and the conditions under which services should be offered”. TRA's General Director Mr. Alan Horne was commenting on the announcement of the tender for the number portability study.

A consumer survey conducted by TRA in 2007 indicated that 93% of business users said that retaining their number is important (71% said essential), whilst 36% indicated that the main reason for not changing their fixed line provider was that they did not want to change their number. The percentage for mobile business users was 41%, and 40% of the residential users said that retaining their number is important.



Number Portability will be available to all mobile and fixed line customers. It will provide them with the facility to switching between operators for better services, as such operators may lower prices and enhance their products offering in order to retain their customers. In addition, operators will have the opportunity to attract new customers in response to additional competitive pressure, which would lead to increased customer satisfaction.

Experience in other parts of the world where number portability has been a standard feature for many years, back up the TRA's assumption. Operators really do try that bit harder to keep their customers after number portability has been introduced. As a result the actual number of people changing suppliers and keeping their number is lower than surveys indicate ahead of such introduction of the facility. For example in Europe the average number of customer using number portability is around 13%.

Interested parties shall submit their proposals to TRA by 13:00 GMT 31 March 2008. Terms of Reference of the number portability study can be viewed on TRA's website [www.tra.org.bh](http://www.tra.org.bh)

### **About TRA**

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) was established by Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2002 promulgating the Telecommunications Law. TRA is an independent body and its duties and powers include, among other things, protecting the interests of subscribers and users and promoting operators effective and fair competition among existing and new licensed. More information regarding TRA can be viewed at [www.tra.org.bh](http://www.tra.org.bh)