

The rivalry of the mobile handset industry in SA

The mobile handset industry in South Africa received an overall satisfaction score from its customers of 73.3 out of 100. This was revealed by the South African Customer Satisfaction Index (SAcsi) released today, 21 October 2014.



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The handset manufacturers measured were Apple, Samsung, Nokia, Blackberry and a category of "other brands" based on market share. Apple, Samsung and "other brands" are the industry leaders, Nokia scored on par with the industry and Blackberry scored significantly lower than the industry average, reflecting the company's decline worldwide.

"Samsung has improved its customer satisfaction since last year and it has done so in other markets as well. In the USA, Apple sells nearly twice the number of smart phones than Samsung, yet Samsung came out on top this year in one critical metric-customer satisfaction. In South Africa Samsung shares the customer satisfaction leadership position with Apple and other brands," says Professor Adré Schreuder, founder and chair of SAcsi.

Blackberry's overall satisfaction score has declined further since last year and it is now recording one of the lowest scores we have seen for customer satisfaction in South Africa. Prof. Schreuder believes that Apple has a reputation for good quality but its product refresh cycles seem really long when new Android phones seem to be released much more often.

Customers are questioning the amount of added value

"The lower overall industry score is driven by lower perceived value - handsets are getting more expensive and customers are questioning the amount of added value they get from next generation phones. They appear to be wondering if it is warranted to pay much higher prices for very similar functionality," he says.

Schreuder adds that there is a growing understanding among customers that smart phones are data-hungry, whereas previously they tended to blame the networks for high data charges. "The main complaints customers specified centred on battery life, freezing operating systems and high data usage," he explains.

The Net Promoter Score (which indicates whether customers would recommend a particular handset) is rising for Samsung

and declining slightly for Apple, which Schreuder says could also be due to market factors, such as releases of new handsets. "As such, this might change when the new Apple iPhone 6 is launched here," he says, adding that Blackberry and Nokia's net promoter scores are falling.

SACSI holds a licence with the [American Customer Satisfaction Index \(ACSI\)](#) and forms part of a growing number of ACSI-licensed partner countries worldwide, which allows South Africa to compare its industries' customer satisfaction with this global community.

Relative to the international ACSI, the United Kingdom is the international benchmark with a score of 78 out of 100 followed closely by United States (76). Customer satisfaction with South Africa's mobile handsets industry ranks fourth internationally behind Turkey (74).

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