

## Forget the number, just remember the name

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By Mark Fenton-Jones

What's in a name? Plenty if you are a smaller operator seeking ways to get potential customers to remember who you are and where to find you, writes Mark Fenton-Jones.

In Queensland, Southport car financier Paul Byres attributes the clever use of a phone number to increasing his business fourfold in less than a year.

Last December, Byres, the group marketing manager at Motor Finance Wizard, which offers low-cost finance to used-car purchasers through its network of dealerships in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, signed a lease with Telstra PhoneWord for the telephone number 1300CarLoan (1300 227 562). The number was the central piece in an advertising campaign to boost awareness of its car financing service.

"Prior to adopting 1300CarLoan, most of our sales came from people walking into one of the three dealerships we had open at the time," Byres says. He pays about \$4000 a month for the service.

A strong selling point for a phone word service is that it makes it easier for potential customers to remember the brand name. Since December, call numbers increased from 445 a month to a peak of 10,000 in July, settling at about 7500 a month since October. The use of the 1300 phone word has dramatically changed the enquiry mix, and three-quarters now come via the phone number.

The rate of conversion to sales, Byres says, increased threefold in Brisbane and fourfold in Sydney.

MFW's reach has extended beyond the distance that people are prepared to drive to local sale yards.

"We have had customers fly down to Brisbane from places like Mount Isa in order to purchase a car through us," Byres says.

The additional demand led MFW on a path of rapid national expansion. Since the launch of the campaign, the company has opened another three outlets including its first in Melbourne, plus additional ones in Brisbane and Sydney.

Next April MFW plans to float on the Australian Stock Exchange to fund further expansion.