



*infogroup*<sup>®</sup>



# Real-Time in the Real-World:

Local Search Driving Need for Faster  
Business Data

# Executive Summary

As mobile adoption has grown, local search and location-based services have exploded, a trend accelerated by the growing amount and depth of business listing data. Tethered to their devices, consumers with shrinking attention spans and dwindling patience have come to expect a stream of accurate and timely information at their fingertips.

Location-based services such as search, navigation, apps, maps, review sites, daily deals and GPS-enabled marketing solutions have proliferated alongside mobile devices and social media. And many of those products are converging, making business data accuracy even more important.

There's just one problem: **The quality and speed of local business listing information isn't keeping up with consumer demand and expectations.**

A survey of almost 1,000 U.S. adults conducted on behalf of Infogroup confirmed that location-based services like search engines, navigation systems and online maps aren't consistently meeting the real-time needs of the increasingly mobile consumer. While these digital tools have become the dominant sources of finding local businesses, the majority of users share a frustration in being led astray on a regular basis.

To gauge the state of real-time business listing data and its impact on the consumer experience, we asked people how they search for local businesses, how frequently they get accurate and inaccurate information from different sources, and how often they expect service providers to update their data. Consumers spoke loud and clear, ranking real-time business listing information a higher priority than instant stock quotes.

That's right: **Consumers would rather know the updated hours of operation for the dry cleaner down the street than the exact value of their portfolio.**

The era of real-time data is here. Let's take a closer look at the consumer experience and expectations before discussing how businesses can catch up with the demand.

# Key Survey Findings



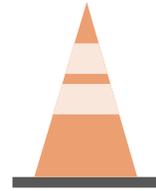
## OUTDATED BUSINESS LISTINGS

More than half (52 percent) of consumers have visited a business or restaurant to find it permanently closed. An almost equal number have gone to a business and found it has moved.



## CONSUMER REACTION

Almost half (44 percent) of consumers have had social outings ruined by outdated business listing information.



## OUTDATED DIRECTIONS

Half of consumers (48 percent) who use standalone GPS or in-car navigation systems are given bad directions at least once a month, with 13 percent saying it happens weekly and 4 percent getting lost daily. Smartphones (40 percent) and online maps (32 percent) provide errors to their users nearly as frequently.



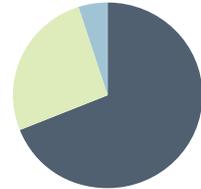
## PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Almost 60 percent of consumers use search engines as their primary source of information on business listing information such as address and phone number. Review sites come in second place at 13 percent. Less than 1 percent use print directories.



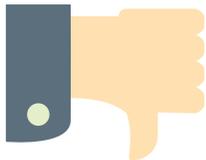
## SEARCH MOST RELIABLE

Consumers say search engines are the most likely to give them correct information about a business (41 percent), while online directories are the most likely to give them outdated data (22 percent).



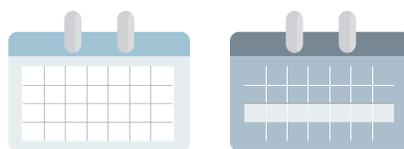
## WHO CONSUMERS BLAME

The majority of respondents (69 percent) blame the app or service when information is out of date. Twenty-six percent blame the business itself, and 5 percent blame the device.



## NO SECOND CHANCES

Three quarters of consumers (77 percent) are unlikely to give a location-based service a second chance after encountering incorrect or outdated information about a business.



## KEEPING DATA UPDATED

The vast majority of consumers (72 percent) expect business listing information to be updated at least weekly, with 17 percent saying they want the data updated in real-time.

# Introduction

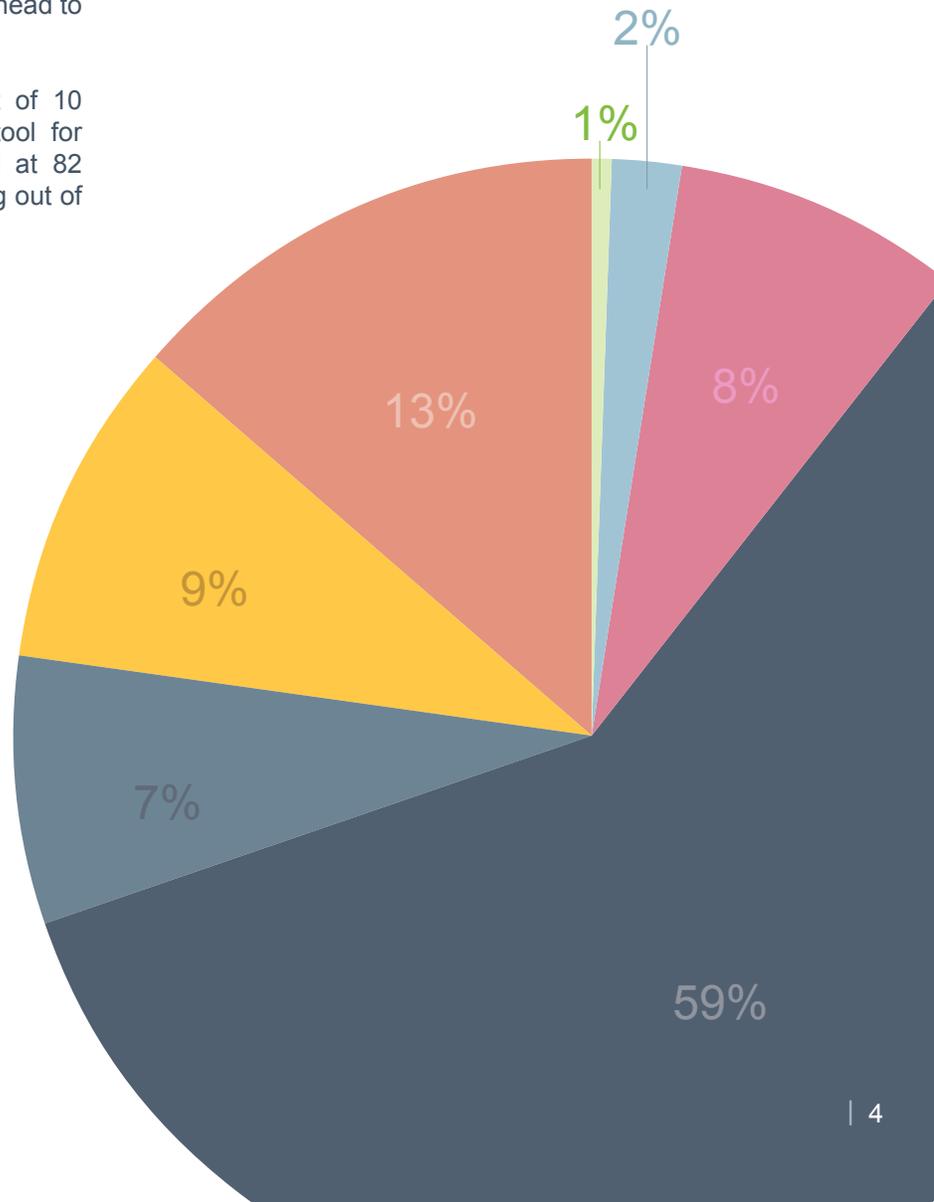
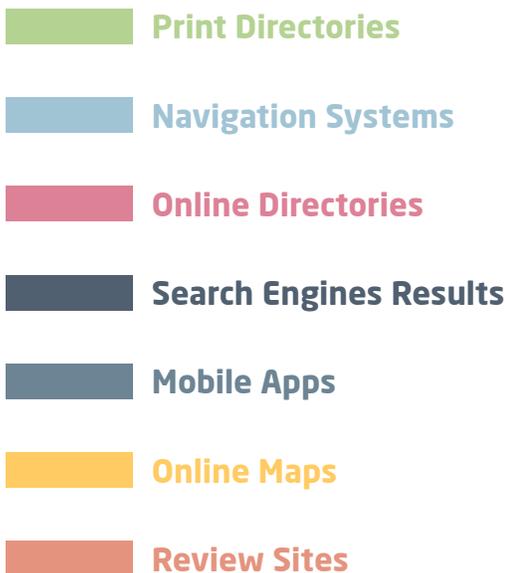
According to [comScore](#), more than half of mobile subscribers own a smartphone.<sup>1</sup> The number of print Yellow Pages, meanwhile, is [declining](#) by the billions each year as consumers turn to the web and mobile devices to find local businesses.<sup>2</sup>

Searching for local businesses has become a big business. According to a [survey](#) by MDG Advertising, 60 percent of consumers use Google at least once a month to find a local business and 57 percent conduct mobile searches at least once a week. By 2015, 30 percent of all search volume will have local intent.<sup>3</sup>

**Let's follow how the typical consumer plans an outing.** The average person heads first to a search engine for information (59 percent) and will pull the necessary info (such as address and phone number) from the results page. Review sites such as Yelp are second most common, with 13 percent of users habitually turning to review sites for basic business information. Less than 1 percent head to print directories.

When it comes to plotting out a route, nine out of 10 consumers use online maps, the most popular tool for getting directions. Smartphones aren't far behind at 82 percent, while navigation systems seem to be falling out of favor at 60 percent.

## WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF BUSINESS INFORMATION?



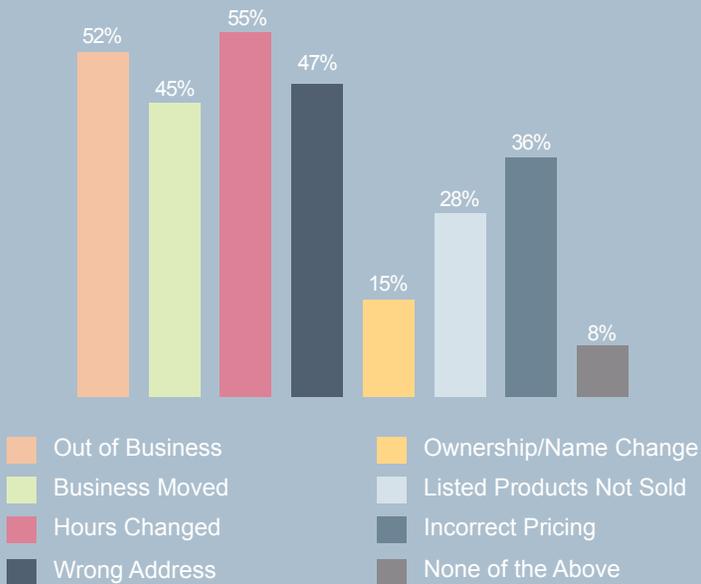
**But as search, mobile, local and social converge, consumers expect to receive much more than just simple driving directions.** In addition to address and phone number, the top three pieces of information consumers want to see about a business when looking up driving directions are hours of operation (88 percent), reviews (54 percent) and website (52 percent). About a quarter of respondents would also like to see deals and specials listed.

Respondents to the Infogroup survey can be divided into two groups: planners (85 percent) and people who make decisions on the fly (15 percent). Despite this difference, both groups have remarkably similar experiences with location-based services and devices. **Unfortunately, too often that involves the best-laid plans – or spontaneous choices – going to waste.**

# The Consumer Experience: Being Led Astray

The Infogroup survey found that more than half of consumers using online or mobile information as their guide have visited a business to find it permanently closed. An almost equal number have shown up at an old location for a business that has moved. As a result, 44 percent of respondents said they have had an outing “ruined” because of outdated business listing information.

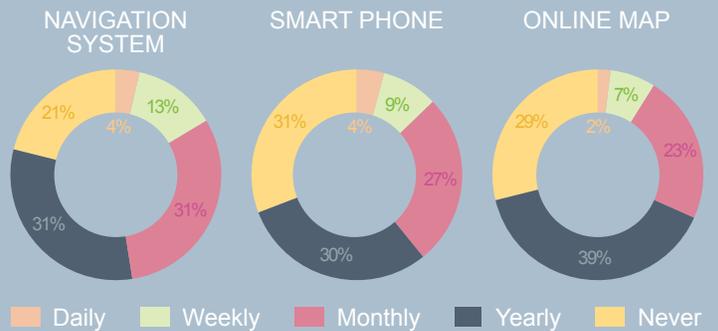
WHICH OF THESE SITUATIONS HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WHEN VISITING A BUSINESS OR RESTAURANT USING ONLINE OR MOBILE INFORMATION?



Before consumers even get to their destination, they can get derailed by outdated business data. A third or more of consumers who use navigation systems, smart phones or online maps get incorrect driving directions at least once a month. Worse yet, between 10 and 15 percent get bad directions from those sources at least once a week.

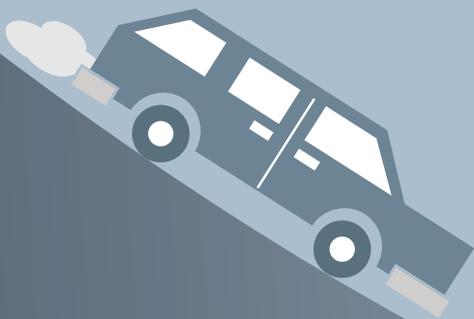
Almost half of consumers (48 percent) who use standalone GPS or in-car systems are steered wrong at least once a month. Smartphones and online maps provide nearly as many frequent errors at 40 and 32 percent, respectively.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET INCORRECT OR OUTDATED DRIVING DIRECTIONS FROM YOUR NAVIGATION SYSTEM, SMARTPHONE OR ONLINE MAP?

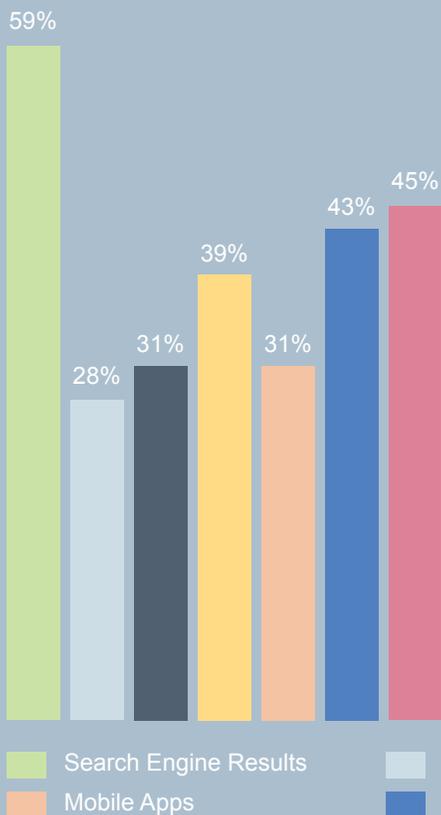


Being led far from your destination or through a nonsensical route by a GPS device is a common (and sometimes comical) experience. A recent Michelin [survey](#) found that 63 percent of drivers have gotten lost following their GPS device, and 7 percent have been directed to the wrong location more than 10 times.<sup>4</sup> The source of the problem is often the underlying outdated business data.

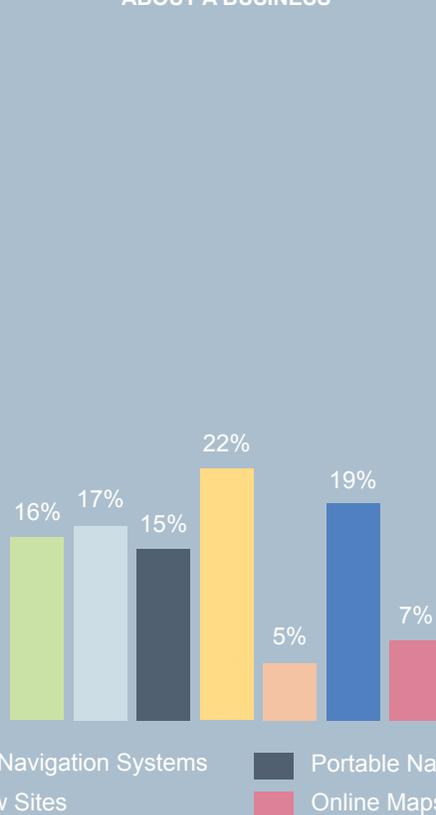
While search engines are a go-to source of information for most consumers, they’re not immune to errors. Nearly 60 percent of consumers have received incorrect business information through search at some point, but they also consider search engines the most reliable source. This disparity likely stems from the sheer volume of searches being conducted. Eventually, a search engine will get something wrong, but it’s reliable most of the time.



**EVER GIVEN INCORRECT OR OUTDATED INFORMATION ABOUT A BUSINESS**



**MOST LIKELY TO GIVE INCORRECT OR OUTDATED INFORMATION ABOUT A BUSINESS**



**MOST LIKELY TO GIVE CORRECT INFORMATION ABOUT A BUSINESS**



Online directories fare the worst and are most likely to provide outdated business information. People making spur-of-the-moment decisions agree with the majority on the search engine’s superiority; however, they rate review sites as most likely to steer them wrong.

Regardless of the source, consumers have grown accustomed to tolerating a certain margin for error in local business listing data. But the survey shows patience is wearing thin.

**PLATFORMS VARY IN WHAT THEY GET WRONG**

The type of incorrect business information that consumers encounter most often depends on the platform they use most frequently. Here’s a look at the most common experience when visiting a business broken down by respondents who chose each tool as their primary source:

- Review Sites: Operating hours changed – 61%
- Mobile Apps: Operating hours changed – 58%
- Search Engines: Operating hours changed – 57%
- Navigation Systems: Wrong address – 57%
- Online Maps: Out of business – 57%
- Online Directories: Out of business – 46%

**CONSUMERS FIND ANOTHER WAY TO DINE**

When people make plans to go out to dinner, they’re determined to eat. If consumers arrive at a restaurant to find it closed, they:

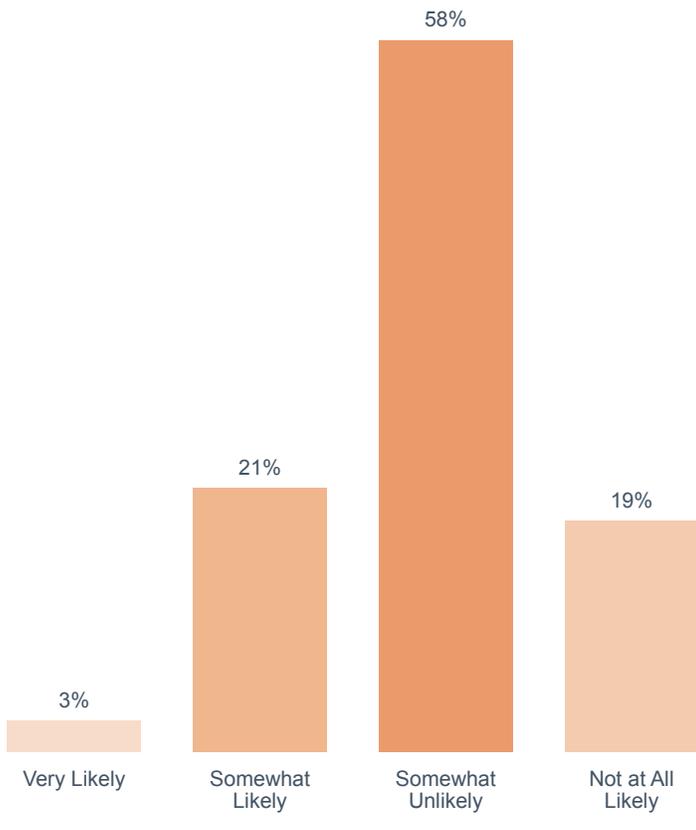
- Find another restaurant using a mobile device – 52%
- Walk or drive around to find somewhere else – 35%
- Find another restaurant using a navigation system – 9%
- Go home – 4%

# The Consumer Expectation: Just Get It Right

What happens when an online directory gives consumers the wrong hours or their GPS directs them halfway across town? Some consumers get angry, bringing the discrepancy to the attention of the business owner (16 percent). Some get even, saying they're unlikely to return to that location (85 percent) or use that website, app or service again (77 percent).

The majority of respondents (69 percent) blame the app or service when information is out of date. About a quarter of consumers (26 percent) blame the business, and a small percentage of people blame the device.

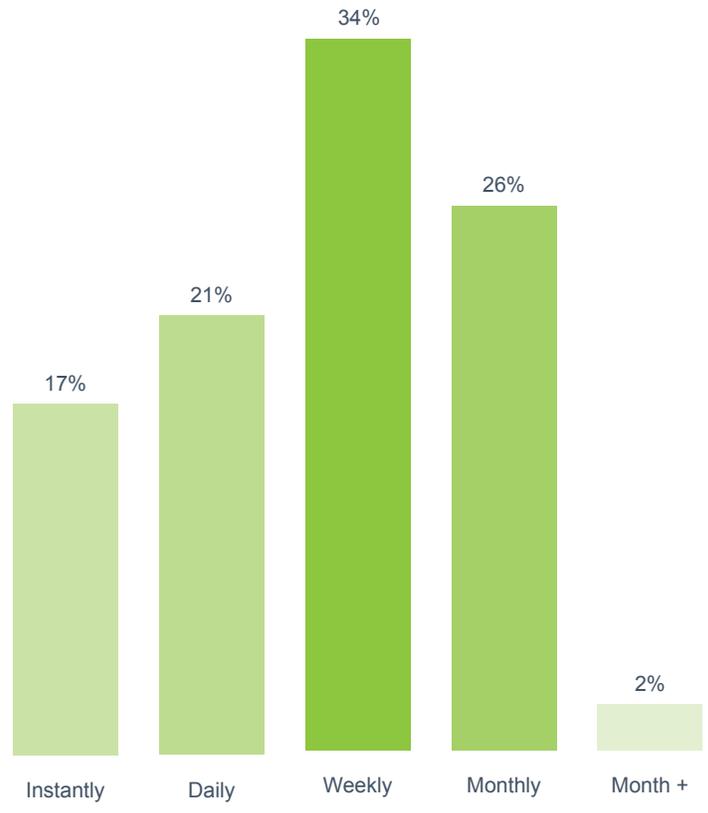
HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO USE A SERVICE AGAIN THAT PROVIDED INCORRECT OR OUTDATED BUSINESS INFORMATION?



So what do consumers expect when searching for local businesses? Three-quarters of survey respondents said they want business data to be updated at least weekly, with 17 percent saying they expect information to be updated instantaneously and 21 percent wanting fresh data daily. But regardless of how often they think data should be updated, the survey shows that when all consumers search for something, they expect it to be correct.

Demand is clearly growing for real-time business listing information. And consumers don't necessarily care where it comes from; they just want it to be right. For location-based service providers, it's time to get serious about implementing real-time data.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU EXPECT BASIC DIRECTORY INFORMATION ABOUT BUSINESSES TO BE UPDATED IN ONLINE LISTINGS, SEARCH TOOLS AND APPS?



## CLOSED BUSINESSES GET THE BLOOD BOILING

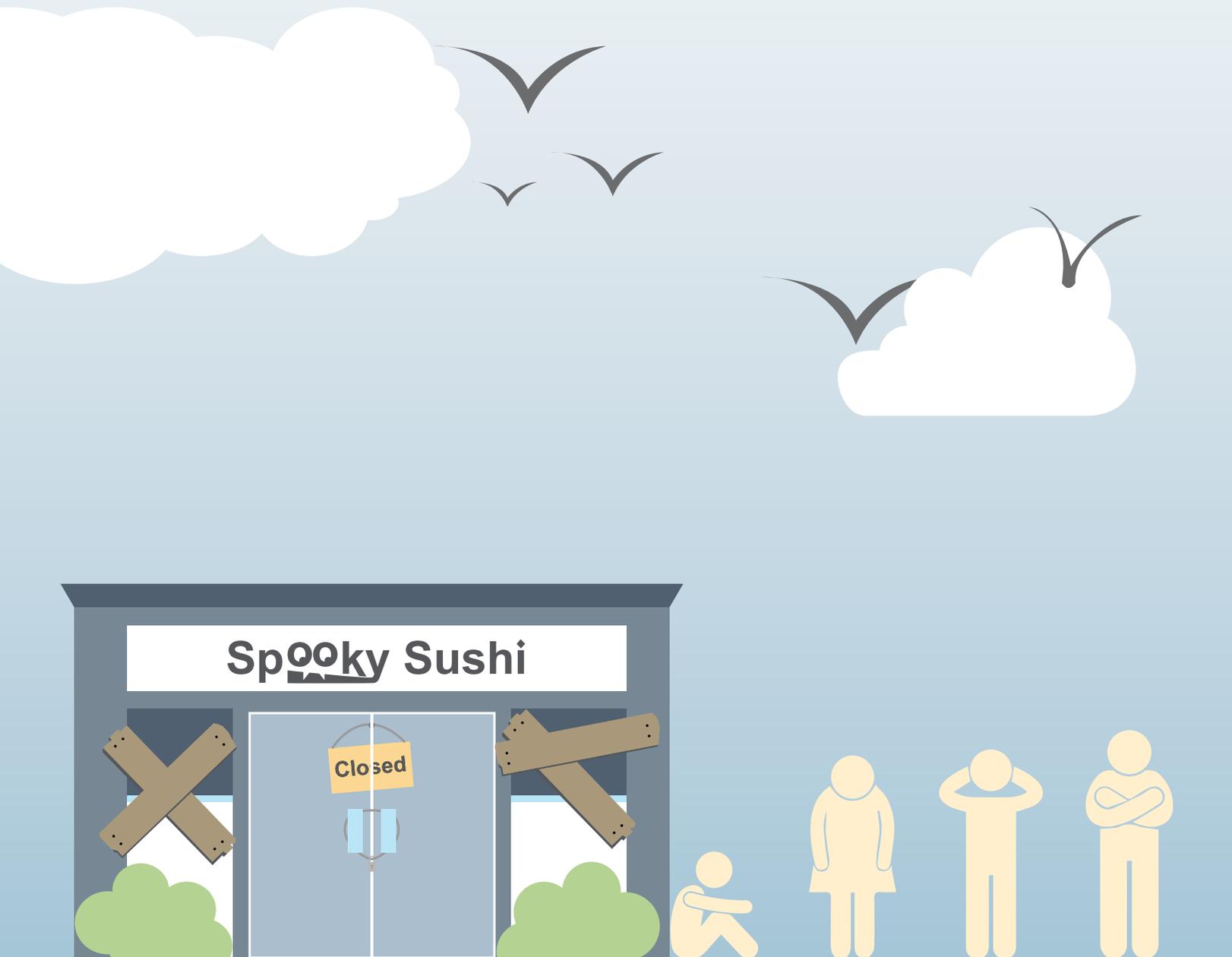
Survey respondents ranked the following situations in order of which would make them most angry:

- Visiting a closed business – 56%
- Finding a business has moved – 13%
- Business changed operating hours – 10%
- Prices not as advertised – 10%
- Visiting a website for a closed business – 8%
- Calling a wrong business number – 2%

## GOING BEYOND BASIC BUSINESS LISTING INFORMATION

Consumers are more likely to use a website, app or other service that provides the following details about a restaurant. Below is the percentage of consumers who said they would be “likely” to adopt a website, app or other service that offers the following information:

- Menu change – 84%
- Table availability – 83%
- Top dishes – 77%
- Happy hour specials – 76%
- Live entertainment – 70%



# Takeaways

Anyone in search, navigation, app development or marketing knows that real-time business data isn't yet a reality in most cases. But because our research shows that consumers are starting to demand it, companies can no longer skate by with data that's just "good enough."

HERE ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU CAN PREPARE TO IMPLEMENT REAL-TIME IN THE REAL WORLD:

## 1. Invest in technology:

This is the biggest obstacle in most cases to implementing real-time data. Many companies are relying on legacy systems that can't ingest real-time feeds, meaning they manually upload new datasets on a fairly infrequent basis. For example, Infogroup's Data Axle™ is capable of delivering updates every 15 minutes, but many companies still choose to manually upload data on a monthly basis. Prep your systems now and start gradually moving toward real-time data – from monthly to weekly to daily to true real-time. Invest in the necessary technology – focusing on open-source solutions that provide distributed storage and search capabilities – and hire a qualified team or partner before your competitors fully embrace real-time data.

## 2. Don't skimp on the data:

When it comes to data quality, you get what you pay for. Know the source of your information and ask questions about how it's collected, vetted and updated. For example, Infogroup makes 100,000 phone calls a day to survey businesses and manually verify information. According to the Small Business Administration,<sup>5</sup> 50 percent of small businesses close within five years. Too many cheap providers are flooding the market with cheap data that doesn't keep up with the pace of change, and it's difficult to transition to a new data source once systems have been implemented. And after seeing these survey results, don't think that consumers won't notice. The location space is not where companies should be skimping.

## 3. Change your company culture:

Too many companies still don't see the value of real-time data and think it's acceptable to be behind on the information by a certain degree. That approach won't cut it much longer. Consumers will start gravitating toward the services and devices that provide the most timely, reliable information. This shift in perception and expectation requires a new corporate mindset.

## 4. Claim your local business listings:

This one is for the business owner instead of the data provider. While you can't control all the information provided about your business, you can claim your online listings on search engines, review sites and directories. It's impossible to "own" all the data out there, but you don't have to sit hopelessly by – only 37 percent of businesses have claimed a listing on a search engine<sup>6</sup> – as consumers partially blame you for incorrect or outdated online information about your company. Alternately, seek out services that claim listings on your behalf, like Infogroup's Express Update or Bulk Update service.

# Conclusion

Consumers either don't care or don't care to distinguish who's really at fault when presented with outdated information about a local business. **They simply expect to get the data they're looking for when they need it – and right now, that's not happening.**

Through its real-time Data Axle™, Infogroup makes 1.8 million changes to its business database each month, including 130,000 businesses that close and 150,000 new businesses that open. Every day, 23,000 businesses change their name, address, phone number or website. That's a dizzying amount of data that makes real-time technology and a real-time mindset imperative for any company in search, navigation or other location-based services.

**Consumers think real-time business data should have arrived with the mobile revolution.** Yet many location-based service providers still think it's acceptable for their business data to be "mostly right" or "almost updated." That has to change, or else some business data providers will go the way of the print directories.

# Methodology

The survey conducted on behalf of Infogroup polled 953 random U.S. consumers using an online questionnaire between Aug. 9 and 12. The margin of error is 3.3 percent. Chart numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

# About Infogroup

Infogroup's 1,900 employees enable clients – from local businesses to the Fortune 100 – to increase sales and customer loyalty by leveraging our proprietary Data Axle™ of contextually relevant real-time information on more than 235 million individuals and 25 million businesses to deliver the complete spectrum of value added data and innovative targeted marketing solutions. For more information, visit: [www.infogroup.com](http://www.infogroup.com).

## FOOTNOTES

1. <http://www.marketingcharts.com/wp/interactive/smartphone-adoption-by-us-mobile-subscribers-continues-steady-growth-25846/>
2. <http://searchengineland.com/are-yellow-pages-toast-four-years-later-we-review-ad-value-116199>
3. <http://brandongaille.com/local-search-statistics-and-local-search-factors/>
4. <http://www.prnnewsire.com/news-releases/survey-most-drivers-using-gps-say-it-has-led-them-astray-211818721.html>
5. <http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/sbfaq.pdf>
6. <http://brandongaille.com/local-search-statistics-and-local-search-factors/>