

My name is Mike Townsend and I live in Dunellen, NJ and have been a VZW customer for 15 years.

I have championed the cause for cellular phone accessibility for as long as I have been a VZW customer, having begun my VZW association shortly after Dr. O'Dey's work had asked VZW to provide accessible phones for blind customers.

When I began with VZW, we used an AudioVox 9155, the first phone that Dr. O'Dey tried to use and found impossible or difficult to access.

We have been through the Lg series from the 45, to 46, to the 8300 series, and now use a 8360, which is adequate, but we can't text or access many of the features that fully accessible phones can, like calendar, clocks, etc.

I have championed the LG cause, and have written letters to both VZW's executives and LG's and have received no response for either.

I belong to a blindness list of LG phone users, and we have explored the various ins and outs of phone access and together, we have formulated and written the same letters to VZW and LG for their references as to what we'd like to see in phone accessibility and have heard no direct response.

However, in the last month or so, the introduction to the VZZW lineup of the Samsung Haven has stemmed the tide of inaccessibility to a certain point, and for some, the new Samsung Haven seems to fit the bill, with menus that talk across the board, but that does not have internet capability, which negates Bluetooth use or an essential contact back up assistant, that allows for contact monitoring and updating of informational back up to keep your contacts up to date.

While I can appreciate the Nuance software making the phone fairly fluid for most users, I think that VZW is continuing in its tradition to go the cheap and easy route, and not the route that they should. I wouldn't mind paying a price for a phone that would give me what I want, yet less so in terms of what's out there now with the Smartphones and add-on third party software from Nuance or MSS.

Secondly, I'm diabetic, and with the sensation in my fingers lessening each day I need a phone that has somewhat larger buttons and more tactile feel to it. I can't use a Touchscreen, but haven't put my hands on an Iphone, which has not yet been released to VZW, and I don't know if it will be, though there are rumors to that effect.

What blind folks need is a phone like the Iphone that has equal accessibility, through a standard issue phone that has built-in speech and workable applications at a reasonable cost that is usable by all blind people, whether they're diabetic or not, that gives access to all platforms and all venues with

reasonable speed and accuracy that will allow us to be put on an equal partnership in accessibility with our sighted counterparts, and that is possible, but hasn't happened as of yet.

Thanks for your time and interest in this matter.