

# 2020 CCW Nashville - Caller ID





### Caller ID Reputation

Over the past few years, carriers have been crowdsourcing spam call data from third-party call blocking apps. This has had serious consequences for many reputable businesses such as healthcare professionals which are being flagged erroneously. Caller ID Reputation enables companies to receive a notification when their phone numbers are flagged on all major call blocking apps or networks. Caller ID Reputation CEO Joseph Alcaraz provided additional details.

***We talked about the many companies you have been involved in running. Can you tell me what motivated you to start Caller ID Reputation?***

Over my 20 years in the industry, I've seen the alarming growth in robocalling and spam calling, along with the nuisance behavior of telemarketers pushing illegitimate products and running phishing scams. In observing this phenomenon, I've been paying attention to not only the major networks but also focusing on the major call blocking applications and the way that they identify calls for businesses. As an entrepreneur in the B-to-B space, I instantly noticed when some of the methods of preventing such calls was starting to go in the wrong direction for legitimate businesses. With many numbers being inaccurately flagged, I knew that what needed to be done was to aggregate the information from all the major data generators and aggregates. In taking this action, I could give the companies that I worked with one place to go to identify what their customers see across every major network and call blocking app.

One personal experience that amplified my focus on the problem took place when my mother was in the hospital two years ago. While she was shuttling between the emergency room and though the ICU, as the individual with power of attorney, I was not receiving important calls that should have rang through to my phone. These calls either went straight to voice mail or were picked up by call blocking apps that I was testing. One of the hospitals she was in was a customer of mine and I was handling all their content management and HIPAA compliant do-not-originate inbound numbers. I instantly knew that something was amiss when I saw the group being flagged. I was able to pull a full profile of every complaint and all the details tied to it. It became immediately apparent that the complaints being filed were due to someone using their phone numbers in spoof attempts to pose as the hospital to fish out information and generate leads for unscrupulous health insurance providers. The light went off in my mind that there was business value here. I have a company called Doctor Genius, a growth platform for medical and dental practices, and decided to run a scan on all my do-not-originate numbers and see what was happening. It quickly became evident that many healthcare organizations were having the same problem with phone numbers being incorrectly blocked. This set us in motion to find additional partners that have more than a million subscribers. Our clients include solar energy companies, satellite providers, public utilities...it's a problem that is ubiquitous across all business models. When we do scans, we see that approximately 20% of all legitimate businesses have numbers that are inaccurately flagged. All carriers have different standards, and many people only see that they have received a spam call, but when you look further into it, it is often a legitimate call that has been blocked.

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### ***How does your program work and how do companies who think it's a good idea get started?***

We give potential clients an opportunity to see what our product can do by running a free 15-day scan where they can monitor their numbers daily. This contrasts to others in our space who provide monthly reports. Having been in the contact center field, we are aware of the value of companies having immediate knowledge that their number has been flagged. Given the increasing difficulty of building trust over the last decade, this is particularly critical. Just about every consumer already has their guard up in taking calls and having them come from a number designated as fraudulent makes it exponentially more difficult.

We get inquiries from all spaces: we focus on companies that have 100 or more reps on the phone because we see the inaccuracies there. But the more we track this and the more aggregators we bring on, we realize that even smaller businesses are being affected. Our top priority is to identify everything going on in the network. We also have an enhanced caller ID product. Testing is one of my passions, so we meticulously evaluate everything. We test 18 phones on every network to determine any gaps.

We look forward to seeing every cell phone tower and every carrier have the right equipment to have the product be effective 100% of the time and allow incoming calls to have the company's logo and the reason for calling. Right now, every Fortune 1000 company has what we call a Spam Department. That may not be how they choose to think of it, but it is how it's categorized by the networks. Companies might be calling 30-, 60-, 90-day aged leads or making calls on accounts receivable. When these businesses call someone who frequently changes his phone to escape, he is going to flag the caller, especially if he has a call blocking app. These providers want to make their app valuable by enabling people to block anyone. If a handful of people have done this and it becomes a threat, the company will be put on a higher alert and monitored more closely. If complaints go above a certain threshold, it will be flagged. We have a hygiene process that helps clean the numbers. After that, we have a strategy that we walk all our customers through. As things tighten up, spammers will be spoofing more private cell phone numbers.

### **Is there any way to prevent spoofing?**

We opened perhaps the biggest can of worms ever when Voice over IP (VoIP) was brought into the space. It's going to come down to the validation process on the front end from the carriers who allow these VoIP companies to operate. I know how easy it is to set up an out-of-the box 3rd party solution, get IPs and start operating, often without ever even communicating with a carrier. That is the most pressing problem. There needs to be a true validation for every business, which is what we are doing with the companies with which we work. We give them a Level 2 verification. Not only do we do a Mail PIN verification; we check to ensure the email is at their business and validate every phone number to make sure it rings to the business.

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***What type of results have companies that work with you experienced and what are their key needs?***

Companies that work with us have seen improvements in their Answer Seizure Rates (ASRs), enabling them to not only connect with more people, but increase sales. Before they partnered with us, half of the databases that had opted in with them were never receiving their calls but were being sent to voicemail. This stimulates a cadence that make the calls more of a true nuisance where companies become more aggressive in trying to reach them, such as in the case of aged leads or collection calls. Even if a company has a contact center platform that enables them to implement event-based rules, such as sending a text after voice mail, there are regulations involved in testing and the numbers will still be flagged.

Companies need to have full awareness of what is going on both with their current staff and current reputation on the phone networks. The immediate need is to find out what numbers have been flagged and why, then learn what departments may have been causing these issues. After 90 days of working with us, they can get a feel for where they are and build a strategy for moving forward.