

MegaFon Leader in First Count of Cell Phone User Migration

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A man looking for new cell phone.

MegaFon is the cell phone operator that has benefited most so far from the law allowing subscribers to keep their number while changing service providers, Vedomosti reported Friday.

Data compiled by the Central Science Research Telecommunication Institute, or ZNIIS, shows that between Dec. 1 and Jan. 13, 2,598 users have switched providers, with 42.5 percent choosing MegaFon.

Of the remaining number, 810 joined MTS, with VimpelCom gaining 504 new clients. Tele2, Rostelecom and its subsidiaries, Tattelecom and SMARTS received 144, 21, 14 and 1 new users, respectively.

The data is seemingly at odds with traditional market patterns: in last year's third quarter,

MTS took 30 percent of the market, while MegaFon occupied second place with 28 percent of the market. However, rival providers have been quick to say it is premature to draw conclusions from the statistics.

The figures do not reflect the real picture as no information is given about the number of new contract subscribers, which adds up to tens of millions of new users on a quarterly basis, said MTS spokesman Dmitry Solodovnikov.

MTS also has the highest customer loyalty of the top three providers, with only 9.1 percent of clients choosing to leave the operator, Solodovnikov added.

Since the end of the New Year's holidays, a further 5,495 users have applied to switch providers — more than double the number who applied during the first six weeks of the law's enactment in December — so the landscape could still change, said Vladimir Kalinin, a spokesman for ZNIIS.

The subscriber migration process is being rolled out through the end of the first quarter, while statistics on the number of users choosing to switch providers will be published weekly by ZNIIS.

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