

# InfoCommerceReport

## DAG Interactive, Ocean-7 Team to Launch Next Yellow

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Inspired to create an online directory service for consumers that is easier to use than current offerings, DAG Interactive, a subsidiary of publisher DAG Media, and Ocean-7 Development Inc., a technology provider, have teamed up to produce Next Yellow.

Next Yellow ([www.nextyellow.com](http://www.nextyellow.com)) matches a consumer's need to appropriate service providers and vendors. But instead of just providing the consumer with general contact information for the vendor (such as address and phone number), Next Yellow helps make the actual connection between the two parties by utilizing a messaging system to notify the businesses of the consumer's need.

According to Mark Alhadeff, president of Ocean-7 Development, searching for a service provider on Next Yellow is easier than it is on other directory sites. To use Next Yellow, consumers must complete a request for the product or service they desire. DAG Interactive has simplified this process by implementing the "type ahead" feature, which essentially types an entry for the user. For example, if a user begins to type in "plumbing," plumbers, plumbing bathroom-supplies and plumbing-supplies all appear in a pull-down menu; and the user can then click one to enter it in the designated field.

To complete the request, consumers must then include their zip code so businesses within their local area can be identified. They can also add additional information that can help narrow their search. And finally, they must indicate how many providers they would like to hear from and how quickly they would like that contact to be made (such as urgent, in one week).

On the back end, the DAG Interactive technology matches the consumer's requirements with businesses listed in the Next Yellow database. When matches are found, Next Yellow sends a message to the businesses that their services have

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its keynote speaker:**



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Chief Marketing Officer and  
SVP, Global Solutions  
D&B Corporation**

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been requested. The business owner can view the lead and then contact the consumer. "In our model, you're not sitting there making these calls. They're going to call you," said Alhadeff.

"We're turning the entire thing on its head. [Consumers] used to look up and find vendors; now we send the vendors your lead," said Alhadeff. Among the weaknesses of other sites, Alhadeff says, are that they aren't using the latest technological features, which Next Yellow employs. These include the type ahead feature which Alhadeff claims gives the user a positive, yet not cluttered, Web experience.

"As Assaf [Ran, DAG Media's chief executive officer], was developing his yellow pages products, he developed a referral service," said Alhadeff. "He realized the referral service was a real value add. But he also realized to make it scale, it was going to take some technology." DAG, which publishes and distributes Yellow Pages and business directories, and Ocean 7 began working on the project and building the technology last December.

The service is free for consumers. Next Yellow will generate revenue from a combination of monthly fees collected from participating businesses as well as site advertising. Currently, businesses are not being charged to appear, said Alhadeff.

An Alpha preview version of the site, which will enable DAG Interactive to test the service with users, went live in mid April. The site is scheduled to officially

launch in June. "We intentionally built this application on a modular basis, so it's very flexible," said Alhadeff. "The system will be learning from requests and it will get better [over time]."

*Commentary:* This highlights two interesting trends, the need for online consumer yellow pages to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace, and the blurring of lines between buying guides/yellow pages and lead generation services. While the notion of one-stop marketplaces for online vendor selection and ordering went down in flames with the dot com collapse, what's red hot right now, and a much more important and sustainable concept in our opinion, is what ICR refers to as hard sales leads. A hard sales lead (or inquiry for that matter, and the distinction between the two is admittedly blurred) is when a publisher sells not on the basis of impressions or anonymous click-throughs, but the ability to put names and contact details for interested potential buyers in the hands of advertisers. Hard sales leads, as you might suspect, are hard to generate in quantity, but incredibly easy to sell to advertisers, and generally carry super-premium pricing. Watch for the frenzy around hard sales leads to further accelerate.

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