



## Taxi Marketing

Given that matchbooks provide only a tiny platform on which to make a sales pitch, what selling points have taxi companies been most keen to make? This survey attempts to answer that question.

Our survey sample consists of 467 matchbooks representing 467 companies (one matchbook each). All the matchbooks in the survey mention at least one specific taxi-related selling point. Matchbooks offering only general claims, like "best in town," were excluded.

The matchbooks excluded from our survey (354 out of the total matchbook population of 821, representing 213 out of 680 companies) did *not* mention specific selling points.

This implies many companies relied on other forms of advertising than matchbooks, or (in smaller centers) were so well known to their customer base that any kind of advertising was deemed superfluous.

A testament to the local focus of taxi companies is the fact that of 821 matchbooks, 118 (14 percent) do not even mention a home town, and another 22 mention a town but no state or province.

The rationale is simple: why waste space telling your customers where they live?

The essential matchbook content boils down to the company name and the all-important phone number.

In fact, one company in our gallery found even the company name dispensable ([page 104](#)).

## The Top Ten

(Totals add up to more than 100% because most matchbooks offered more than one selling point.)

- **24 hour service (214 = 46%)**

Most ads specifically mentioned 24 hour service, but many offered "day or night" service or claimed "We never close" or "We never sleep." Some companies had day and night phone numbers, implying that the owner was willing to get out of bed to take a trip.

- **Radio dispatched (94 = 20%)**

World War II saw great advances in two-way radio communication, with equipment shrinking in size and cost. Cab companies were quick to adopt the new technology, just as they had been among the first telephone users back in the 1880s.

- **Courteous / friendly service (88 = 19%)**

"Courteous" implies a master-servant relationship and was often reinforced by ad images of uniformed drivers respectfully saluting customers or opening a cab door for them.

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