

September 7, 2004

Fido ads to cost Microcell \$120,000

By: Rachel Ross

Microcell Telecommunications Inc. is driving ahead with a \$120,000 advertising campaign, despite an ongoing hostile takeover bid from competitor Telus Corp.

The new ads for Microcell's City Fido cellphone network will cover the hubcaps of 300 Toronto taxi cabs for the next two months.

Unlike regular hubcaps, these circles don't spin: the ad is fully readable even when the vehicle is moving. It's that lack of spin that catches the eye, according to **AdFleet** Advertising Inc., the Vancouver agency behind the campaign.

"The car looks like it's floating as it's driving by," **AdFleet** president Ian Klassen said.

Klassen said Microcell is paying \$200 per cab a month for the caption campaign, which promotes the company's new City Fido phone service.

The ads, which Klassen calls "captions," attach to special, non-rotating pads that fit around bearings attached to the wheel's lug nuts.

Klassen said advertisers found the world of outdoor advertising had become a little boring.

"We're coming out in a format which is something you don't see every day," he said.

"That makes it memorable."

AdFleet rolled out caption campaigns in Los Angeles a few months ago, with ads for brands such as Taco Bell and Jiffy Lube.

Similar ad technology was attached to a handful of cabs in Toronto a few years ago, but Klassen said this is the first time caption ads have been launched on such a large scale.

While the ad campaign is slated to run for two months, Microcell's future is less certain. Telus executives could be calling the shots at Microcell before the taxi cab ads come to a stop.

Telus Corp., Canada's second-largest phone company, recently extended its bid for Microcell for a third time. The Competition Bureau is examining the current bid, which expires Sept. 20. A Microcell spokesperson said the company continues its "strategic review of alternatives" but declined to comment further on the bid.