

UNICOM PRESS RELEASE

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UNICOM REPORTS ANOTHER STRONG YEAR OF TRADING AS PROFITS CONTINUE TO RISE

Photo available

Telecom service provider Unicom, which specialises in business-to-business connections, has reported a 13.5% increase in sales and a 23.6% rise in profits to the end of April 2008, its ninth trading year.

The Manchester-based business saw turnover increase from £36.7 million to £41.6 million, with pre-tax profits at £9.5 million compared to £7.7 million to the end of April 2007.

"2007/08 has been another excellent year of trading and forecasts for 2008/09 are equally positive – we're expecting turnover to reach £45 million and profits are projected to rise to more than £11 million," said Tony Eagleton, Unicom's Finance Director.

"We attribute our continued success to the fact that we provide our customers with highly competitive prices - fixed for three years, and we ensure that all customers genuinely receive the highest possible levels of customer service," said Eagleton.

"We're a relatively small business with a small, closely-knit and efficient management team – and we are absolutely clear in our minds about what makes the difference to our customers: a UK call centre with real people answering the telephone, 98% of calls answered within six seconds, and managers and directors who are hands-on and accessible.

"Our customer retention level is currently running at 86% against a sector average of around 70%. Of the 14% we lose, only a third go to competitors, the remainder being businesses that close or move premises for one reason or another, which is obviously beyond our control."

Unicom has 70,000 customers, primarily small or owner-managed businesses with telephone bills of approximately £1,000 a year. The specialised nature of the telephony and broadband products offered by Unicom provides significant savings for its business users.

"We've not actually had a price increase since we started offering our telecom services in 2001," said Tony Eagleton.

"We use BT Openreach's infrastructure and network, so beyond the occasional glitches any provider can expect, our service is as robust as they come."

Ends

About Unicom

Unicom, part of Universal Utilities PLC, is a telecommunications service provider specialising in the small business market. It currently provides telecom, broadband and website services to 70,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £42m, with 10 regional offices situated around the UK.

Unicom has attracted its small business customers by offering discounts of up to 60% off BT's prices, at the same time as keeping customers on the BT network. Unicom currently supplies in excess of 450 million minutes of call time to its small business customers each year. Unicom differentiates itself by offering a high standard of personal customer service, with no premium rate 0845 or 0870 numbers, no recorded messages or menus, and no overseas call centres. Unicom boasts one of the highest customer retention rates in the industry.

Unicom was ranked 26th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2006, 89th in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 index in December 2006 and 96th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2007. In September 2007 it achieved a ranking of 95th in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index. The company employs 500 people.

Further information:

Megan Codling or Iain Macauley

mc@pressrelations.co.uk / im@pressrelations.co.uk

07795 848586 / 07788 978800

www.switchingon.com