

UNICOM

PRESS RELEASE

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DOUBLE SUCCESS FOR UNICOM Images available at www.unicomimages.co.uk

Telecom service provider Unicom, which specialises in business-to-business connections, has gained the internationally recognised ISO 9001 certification days after being named as one of the UK's fastest growing tech companies.

"ISO 9001 is an accreditation awarded to only five per cent of businesses – the perception is that that figure is much higher," said Chris Earle, Unicom's Operations Director.

"In an intensely challenging business where we are under scrutiny from a vast audience this is a tremendous endorsement of our team's efforts to provide the best possible customer service. Following a 6 month preparation and assessment period the ISO 9001 certification was awarded by outside experts who are used to judging standards on a daily basis in a wide variety of trades and industries. With one of the highest customer loyalty levels in telecoms, and now ISO 9001 certification, it clearly indicates that we're amongst the best."

Unicom was also named in the Sunday Times list of the UK's fastest growing tech companies by turnover growth over a three year period – its fifth Sunday Times listing in three years. In both 2006 and 2007 Unicom was ranked by both profit growth and turnover growth over a three year period – the only company nationwide to be ranked by both profit and turnover.

Manchester-based Unicom has regional headquarters in Birmingham, Ipswich, Leeds, Milton Keynes, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent.

"Some companies may enjoy growth in terms of either profit or turnover, but it is unusual for companies to enjoy such growth in both profits and turnover at the same time, our quality of customer service is a key factor." said Chris Earle, Operations Director, Unicom.

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

"Unicom customers can expect calls to be answered in under 4 seconds, by a real person based in the UK. We've not actually had a price increase since we started offering our telecom services in 2001, and we've never used 0870 numbers. These factors have ensured our customer churn rate to competitors is less than 5%, which is the best in the industry." said Chris Earle.

About Unicom

Unicom, a trading name 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, and employs 500 people at its 10 regional offices situated around the UK.

Unicom has attracted its 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 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.

This year Unicom launched a new directory enquiry service, 118 777. Based on calls from a BT or Unicom telephone line, 118 777 is 34% cheaper than 118 118, and 30% cheaper than 118 500 and 118 247. Calls from other networks may vary.

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, and in September 2008 a ranking of 88th, in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index. In October 2008 Unicom became ISO 9001 certified.

For the year ending April 2008, Unicom reported pre-tax profits of £9.8m on a turnover of £41.6m (with profits up 29.2% and turnover up 12.3% from April 2007). Unicom expects profits to be in excess of £11m on a turnover of more than £45m for this year.

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